

People's Page

"Martyrs in a Martyred Land"

*Religious Service to Remember Six Jesuits and their Two Co-Workers
Murdered by the Salvadoran Military, November 16, 1989*

by William R. Callahan, SJ and Maureen Fiedler, SL

N.B. Red ribbons will be put on during the service.

(Note: The Latin American acclamation "Presente" is used many times in this service. It is a traditional way of affirming the work of the people named and of making them present as a sign of our solidarity in their struggle).

ALL STAND

Gathering Song - "Were You There When They Crucified My God?"

Were you there when they crucified my God?

Were you there when they crucified my God?

Oh -- oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my God?

Verse 2 - Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

After presentation of 8 candles: BE SEATED

Litany of the Martyrs

Narrator - For Oscar Romero, shot down for preaching the Good News of freedom and God's special love of the poor, we cry out:

ALL - Presente! (pray-sen-tay!) Presente! Presente!

Narrator - For Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan, Dorothy Kazel and Ital Ford, we cry out:

ALL - Presente! Presente! Presente!

Narrator - For the peasants of El Salvador, killed in the brutal war, we cry out:

ALL - Presente! Presente! Presente!

Narrator - And so U.S. funds kept flowing, flowing, flowing.

Song - (one verse) Were you there when they crucified the poor?

Were you there when they crucified the poor?

Oh -- oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified the poor?

After each invocation following biographies of the eight martyrs:

Narrator - For...., we cry out:

ALL - Presente! Presente! Presente!

After "Presente" for Celina Maricet Ramos:

Song - (one verse) Were you there when they shot them in the night?

Were you there when they shot them in the night?

Oh -- oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they shot them in the night?

ALL STAND

Litany of Commitment

Narrator - Let us stand to make our commitment.

ALL - What can we do? How can we help?

Response after each question - We will! We Will!

When Narrator indicates - You will receive sheet remembering the eight martyrs. After that, participants will pin red ribbons on each other and have the opportunity to sign special petitions and contribute to the work for justice and peace in El Salvador.

Final Blessing

Narrator - This final blessing is for El Salvador and our own mission of peace:

ALL - (*extending your hand forward*):

May Almighty God bless us,
God who creates us,
Jesus who saves us,
And the Spirit of peace and love who sets us free.

Narrator - Let us go forth in confidence and commitment to work for peace in El Salvador.

ALL - Amen! Amen! Amen!

Closing Song - "We Shall Overcome" (*or other appropriate selection*)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome some day,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome some day.

Nosotros venceremos, nosotros venceremos, nosotros venceremos hoy,
En mi corazon, yo creo que nosotros venceremos hoy.

We shall live in peace...
Justice shall be done...

We are grateful to Stephen Kroeger, SJ of Detroit for the drawings used in the slides of the eight martyrs, and to Lee Miller of the Religious Task Force on Central America for her drawings of the 4 U.S. churchwomen.

We recommend:

Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador

by Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuria, et al.

This book includes a moving reflection by Jon Sobrino, SJ on the martyrdom of the six Jesuits and two women. Jon Sobrino, SJ, a renowned liberation theologian, was a member of the Jesuit Community of San Salvador and escaped death only because he happened to be out of the country at the time of the massacre. It also includes writings by all six martyred priests. 140 pp. \$9.95 paper.

Available from: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545. Call: 1-800-258-5838.

El Salvador: A Spring Whose Waters Never Run Dry

Moving testimonies from the past 10 years of life in the base communities of El Salvador.

120 pp. paper \$6.00 plus \$1.50 postage.

Available from: EPICA, 1470 Irving St., NW, Washington, DC 20010.