

# JESUIT CONFERENCE

the Society of Jesus in the United States

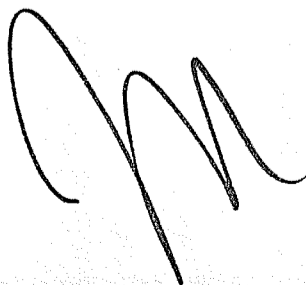
## STATEMENT OF U.S. JESUIT CONFERENCE

The United States Jesuit Conference is gratified by the statement issued for November 18, 1991 by Representative Joe Moakley as Chairman of the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador. We wish to thank Representative Moakley and the membership of the Task Force for the many hours spent and miles travelled in behalf of the pursuit of the full truth in the "Jesuit Case". We are grateful not only on behalf of our brother Jesuits and their colleagues whose blood was spilled so brutally and violently but also on behalf of those people in El Salvador who still live in fear of such cruelty and violence.

Representative Moakley's statement is to be commended for its fairness and objectivity, giving credit where it is due and admitting the real limitations under which the investigation of the Task Force has had to work. It concerns the Jesuit Conference that personal fear and endangerment can make a mockery of the pursuit of justice in El Salvador.

Along with Representative Moakley, we find it difficult to believe that Col. Benevides

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carried out the brutal murders of these innocent civilians on his own. We at the U.S. Jesuit Conference cannot be satisfied that the intellectual authors of this deed can elude the pursuit of justice. If the darkness created by intentional covering up and destruction of evidence is allowed to succeed, the possibility of the dawning of a day of true justice in El Salvador is more doubtful.

We agree with Representative Moakley, that many forces may act against the further pursuit of justice in this case. However, the U.S. Jesuit Conference wishes to go on record in stating that the price of neglect of justice in this case may be too high. The "Jesuit Case" and the "Jesuit Trial" is not simply about the deaths of our Jesuit brothers and their colleagues. This case and trial has important implications for the life or death of justice itself in El Salvador. If justice cannot be pursued and effected in this case of national and international notoriety, what hope is held out to the people of El Salvador for justice in their lives and those of their children? The full truth must be sought in this case.