



STUDY

FOUR U.S. CHURCHWOMEN & CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY

Awake to the dangers of ministering in a war-torn country, the four churchwomen remained faithful to their Gospel call to serve the poor. From the moment they set foot on the sacred land of El Salvador to their final breath in their shallow graves, they witnessed Gospel compassion and solidarity. They walked with and beside

the widow, the hungry, the frightened children, the families of the disappeared, and the tortured. It was the unfaltering faith of their beloved community that sustained them.

We pause to reflect on how the legacy and memory of the four churchwomen live in the Salvadoran community and inspire us by their witness of Christian solidarity.

Weeks before her death Jean Donovan wrote about her spiritual journey, "I want to get closer to God and going to El Salvador is the only way I think I can ... I don't know how the poor survive. People in our position really have to die unto ourselves and our wealth to gain the spirituality of the poor and the oppressed. I have a long way to go on that score. The poor can teach you so much with their patience and their wanting eyes."

[Click here](#) to read an article on the 40th anniversary in the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns November-December 2020 issue of NewsNotes.

[Read the interview with Bishop José Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador](#) on how the community of Chalatenango seeks to preserve the memory of the four churchwomen.

Other resources on the lives of the four American churchwomen:

- [The Murder of US Churchwomen in El Salvador That Exposed a Government Coverup \(13 mins.\)](#)
- [U.S. Catholics and Latin America: Commemorating the U.S. Churchwomen \(1980–2020\)](#)



ACTION

THIS DEC. 2, COMMEMORATE THE WITNESS OF ITA, DOROTHY, MAURA & JEAN

Pax Christi USA is supporting the [40th anniversary commemorations](#) of the martyrdom of the 4 U.S. churchwomen — Dorothy Kazel, OSU, Maura Clarke, MM, Ita Ford, MM and Jean Donovan — in El Salvador in December 1980. LCWR and the SHARE Foundation have invited [individuals, sister parishes, educational institutions, faith communities, women religious](#) to celebrate the gift of these four women and remember all

of those who dedicated their lives to working for justice in El Salvador and throughout the world. The anniversary is an opportunity to offer their story to a new generation hungry for a share of their love, selflessness and courage. Pax Christi USA is inviting our members, local groups, regions and all throughout our community to participate in this anniversary.

[Click here](#) to find a toolkit and read more information [at this link](#) about this effort.

Additional actions to consider:

- Share an email with family, friends, and colleagues letting them know why the 40th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the four U.S. Churchwomen is important to you. Invite them to join the various commemorations.
- Host a Virtual Film Screening & Conversation of [Roses in December](#) (46 minutes) with your local group.
- The InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia (IRTF) formed in response to the deaths of four churchwomen. View IRTF's [Memory and Resistance: A Social Justice Art Show](#). The artwork honors the memories of past and present advocates on whose shoulders many of us have stood and who inspire us to envision a world of peace and dignity for all.
- Ask your Member of Congress to co-sponsor the [Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act \(HR1945\)](#) to end US military and police aid to Honduras.