



Violence Continues

Violence in El Salvador continues today, much as it was last March, above, when the funeral Mass for murdered Archbishop Oscar Romero was in progress. As U.S. Catholic opposition mounts against the Reagan administration's policy of providing American military aid to the El Salvador junta, the prophetic words of Archbishop Romero seem, for many, equally pertinent today. He pleaded with then President Carter for a guarantee that "your government will not intervene directly or indirectly with military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressure to determine the fate of the Salvadoran people."

Graduate Mass Planned

Graduates of Jesuit schools and their spouses are invited by McQuaid High School to a Mass and reception at 5 p.m., Saturday, March 21 at the high school, 1800 S. Clinton Ave.

The reception is open to all graduates of Jesuit high schools

Father John Podsiadlo, SJ, will give a homily on "Service to the City." Father Podsiadlo is a 1958 graduate of McQuaid and is currently working as chaplain of the Monroe County Jail and with the Spanish Apostolate.

Reservation deadline is March 16. They may be made by calling McQuaid, 473-1130; Mrs. Robert Siconolfi, 881-6350; or Mrs. Frank O'Brien, 248-5662.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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Sister Mary Garozzo, MPF



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

Jesus Continues To Call

God calls all of us in some way. A religious vocation is one form of a process of spiritual unfolding that goes on in every human life. Sisters, by professing the "evangelical counsels," respond to a divine call. They have dedicated their lives to His service, constituting a consecration which is deeply rooted in Baptism. They witness in a specific way to the very

clear call of the Lord when He said to His Apostles, "Follow Me," and they left their nets to answer His call.

The call from the Lord to the religious life is a priceless, delicate, fragile grace. The Lord continues to make it heard in the hearts of many young people. Through the Church, Christ presents Himself today as yesterday, as the One who proclaims the measureless love of God the Father. This is the good news which is proposed to the faith of every Christian. But when

the Lord calls someone in this way, through an interior illumination and the voice of the Church, to serve Him as a Sister, He stirs up in her a desire and demands an absolute choice for His Person and for the work of the Gospel: "Follow Me."

This call is compelling; it can really overwhelm the human heart. The decision to answer the call presupposes a willingness to acknowledge our sinfulness. But for a person who is serious, upright and generous, the values of God's Kingdom can win the day; pure and simple joy, the thirst for God encountered in prayer, the service of others, concern for their spiritual needs. An effort must be made to free oneself from the materialism of the times to make the decision to answer the call. Jesus continues to call.

Scriptures do a beautiful job of summing up the most essential elements of a call. Every important call consists of four elements: a divine encounter — a deep experience of God; a work commission given — some special task in direct relation to God's work and word; the objection to God's call — there are always difficulties experienced; and finally, the assurance of God's help — He is always faithful to His promises.

Jesus spoke of the wheat to be harvested for His heavenly Father and continues to call laborers today. Truly, the harvest is great, but the laborers are few and it is always harrowing time.

Sister Mary Garozzo, MPF, is religious education coordinator at St. Mary of the Lake Church, Watkins Glen.)

Insights In Liturgy



Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ

In Emptiness, We Are Filled

The opening statement of the first reading for Ash Wednesday is a good place to start when seeking a deeper sense of the value of fasting: "Return to me with your whole heart, with fasting..." This statement calls us to integrity, wholeness, and urges us to empty ourselves, not just from mental preoccupations, but to literally empty our whole being. St. Bernard said it like this: "If the mouth alone be guilty, it alone should fast, but if the other members have sinned, why should they not fast?" The dying and subsequent rising of the Lord Jesus that is the identity of the Church that we all are, affects our whole person.

The emptiness, of course, is not an end in itself. Moses

spent 40 days fasting on Mount Sinai in preparation for the revelation of God, in preparation for a fullness, a wholeness not able to be attained through the eating of food. Jesus also spent 40 days fasting in the desert — a time that firmly established him wholly in relation to his Father as obedient, faithful servant, loyal even in temptation, strong in the fullness of God's presence.

Should we choose to fast, we freely choose to die. We willingly choose to be without, to be hungry, to feel in our body a concrete experience of the desire for God.

How many times have we found ourselves absorbed in our work or in someone so deeply that we never give food a thought? We don't feel hunger until a moment of emptiness when we are no

longer filled with that person or the task before us. This is what our experience of fasting should be: to be so filled with God, so occupied with His presence, that nothing else counts and would only distract.

Fasting, and subsequent hunger is a daily experience. Reflecting on our experience of hunger in the light of two-thirds of the world going to bed each night feeling the same way or much worse, is invaluable. A more concrete expression, however, is to go all the way with our fasting for the good of others as did the early Christians: "When someone is poor among them... they fast for two or three days and send the poor people the food they have prepared for themselves." Now there's a challenge!

"Fasting from" is not limited to food. Fasting could be refraining from useless noise in order to sit quietly, to rest in the Lord. Or, refraining from voicing our opinion and being an open listener to others. Fasting may be accepting exactly what the day offers us, in food, in experience, in encounters and holding back from non-acceptance and negative comments.

Whatever form fasting may take, it is indeed meaningful to us particularly in this season when we attempt to deepen our Baptismal awareness and come to new insights into our living out the Paschal Mystery. We freely choose to die and that means not rebouncing ourselves, but rather saying yes to who we are — meaningful, alive, and dignified by our immersion in the Lord Jesus, by the fullness we have all received.



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