

# To Look Through Each Other's Eyes

"COULD A GREATER MIRACLE TAKE PLACE THAN FOR US TO LOOK THROUGH EACH OTHER'S EYES FOR AN INSTANT" -HENRY DAVID THOREAU



## Chile: A First - Chilean Mercy Novice Professes First Vows

By Sr. Elaine Kolesnik, RSM

An estimated 900-1,000 people packed San Luis Church, Santiago, Chile, on Sunday night, Nov. 27, for the profession of first vows of their relative, their friend, their countrywoman - Graciela Lagos Donoso, a native-born Chilean and the first Chilean sister of the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester.



SR. GRACIELA

Sister Jean Marie Kearse, superior general, who was visiting the Mercy missionaries in Santiago at the time, received the vows in the name of the congregation during the rite of profession.

It was "a first" for Graciela but also for Sister Jean Marie, who conducted a profession rite for the first time in Spanish.

Sister Graciela, or Chela as she is familiarly called, is in pastoral ministry in Santiago, working with adults and youth in a deprived area.

She chose for the theme of her profession liturgy a quote of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy: ("Founded on Calvary in order to serve a crucified Redeemer.")

All the Sisters of Mercy missionaries in Santiago participated in the profession Eucharistic liturgy. Sister Jane Kenrick was the Mistress of Ceremonies; Sister Kay Schwenzer, Mercy director of novices in Chile, presented Chela for the profession rite; Sister Janet Caulfield and Sister Margaret Mungovan were witnesses to the signing of the vows. They all sang the "Salve Mater" at the end of the profession rite.

Three Sisters of Mercy from Australia who work with the Rochester

Mercies in Santiago were also present, as were two Mercy sisters (not Rochester Diocese) working in Argentina, where Graciela spent part of her novitiate.

Celebrant of the Eucharist was Father Gerard Bellew, a Columban father. Father Patrick Egan, also a Columban father and pastor of San Luis parish, proclaimed the gospel. The homilist was Father Damian Acuna, vicar of the Northern Zone, Santiago.

Sister Janet Korn, now back in the States and a member of the Council of the Mercy congregation, was among the first Mercy Sisters to go to Chile in 1965 and recalls that Graciela, now 29, was there to welcome them when they arrived in San Luis Parish, her home parish.

"It's been a long association," Sister Janet remarked, "and a joyful one."

Sisters Janet Caulfield and Jane Kenrick have both served in Chile since 1966; Sister Margaret Mungovan since 1971; and Sister Kay Schwenzer since 1976.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH FOR THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



Dear People of the Rochester Diocese; Today inaugurates a Courier-Journal monthly feature focused on the missions.

With this page we hope to strengthen the bond of communication between our local faith community and the missionaries that we send to preach the gospel.

May this medium serve as a link with the reality of the mission scene, at home and abroad.

Fr. Robert C. Bradler

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## The Courier-Journal Monthly Mission Page

# Brazil: The First Twenty Years

By Sr. Ellen Kuhl, SSIJ

Much has changed in 20 years. When the first five Sisters of St. Joseph set out for Brazil in 1964, they were responding to a request from Pope John XXIII to share their talents with the people of Latin America. They quickly became involved in parish organizations, education and health works there.

Over the years, the bishops and other Church leaders in Latin America named new priorities. Courageously, they stood in solidarity with their poor and oppressed. They challenged themselves and their missionaries to affirm their people's struggle for justice and freedom; they called for societal change. Church structures were reorganized; Basic Christian Communities were formed; efforts were made to bring about unity among all their

people - rich and poor alike.

The Sisters of St. Joseph welcomed the bishops' challenge. They serve several areas of the country and are involved in a number of different ministries, but they are united with their people as they struggle to find a way to live out the Gospel mandate to work for peace and justice. They encourage the people's participation in Basic Christian Communities and workers' groups. Some, like sisters Elaine Hollis, Kay Foss and Dolores Turner, work in urban areas, where they recently helped a Mother's Club to set up day-care facilities for the children of working mothers. Others work in more rural areas. Sisters Jean Bellini, Marlena Roeger and Katherine Popowich work with the Pastoral Commission on land, which de-

fends the rights of rural laborers and exposes abuses by large landholders. Sisters Barbara Orczyk and Christel Burgmaier provide health care and preventive health education in another isolated rural area.

The newest mission is also among the most primitive; it is located in the Prelature of Sao Felix, an area populated by many poor squatters, farm workers and Indians, who are often the victims of discrimination as their land is "colonized." Sisters Jean Bellini and Suzanne Wills have spent countless hours traveling, on foot or by bicycle, among the forest villages, educating the people about their rights and trying to promote understanding and faith-rooted unity between the natives of the region and those who have come to settle there

Currently, the Sisters of St. Joseph congregation is taking another new step by accepting young women into the Formation Program developed by Sisters Ellen Kuhl and Elaine Hollis. Several young women will formally be welcomed into it this month in a ceremony officiated by Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, during her first visit there as Superior General.

And the number continues to grow. Sisters Maureen Finn and Patricia Frisk will soon leave Rochester to enter this special missionary ministry. They expect to begin their language and cultural studies in Brazilia in March.

The hope of 20 years continues to be made real in the response of gentleness, love and support of these 13 sisters for their people.



Sister Jean Bellini (center) visits with some of the local laundry women in the town of Santa Terezinha, Brazil. Below, Sister Suzanne Wills (right) stops to chat during her visits around Vila Rica in Brazil.



## Update from a Former Missionary

By Fr. Daniel P. Torney

It is almost 18 years since the deep and affectionate relationship between the diocese of Rochester and the people of Bolivia was formed. Many things have changed in almost two decades. There have been birth and growth, Third World development in the best sense of the word. And there has been death. The abduction and murder of Father Luis Espinol sprinkled martyr's blood on the parish of San Jose Obrero.

The children who played on the hill when

the adobe church with the tin roof was first built are now grown to adulthood. Several young men have come to Rochester to study at St. John Fisher and at St. Bernard's Seminary, and several young men from Rochester lived and worked at San Jose as part of their education. The library, the medical clinic and the parish center are not just brick and mortar monuments. They are sacraments of autonomy, self-reliance and commitment on the part of the parish council and the people of the "hill."

Whatever the original motive for sharing our diocesan personnel and funding with the Archdiocese of LaPaz, Bolivia - undoubtedly a generous and naive mission endeavor - what has resulted has been ecclesial and personal development. Philosopher and economist Dennis Gaulet states "traditional value systems usually contain in latent form a great dynamism for development." But this latent power is not produced "when so-called experts from outside are looking for pre-determined re-

sults." In those places in Latin America where self-determination has unleashed the power of development, not just in the economic sense but in a physiological and even religious sense, people gain self-esteem as well as clean water.

This has been the story of San Jose Obrero. The "gringo team" from Rochester left LaPaz in 1974, but the departure has not meant abandonment or failure. The paradox of that separation has been the continuous ties and richness for both dioceses over the

years: Father Peter Deckman is still in Bolivia in the Riberalta area working with the Maryknoll Fathers, and periodic visits from the bishops of Rochester and other friends of San Jose Obrero deepen our commitment to our brothers and sisters in Bolivia.

In these decades of human development when the struggle for dignity and freedom arises there also arise the opposition and the bloodshed. Archbishop Jorge Manrique of LaPaz, a close friend and bishop of the parish of San Jose and a frequent

visitor to Rochester, has had to show the same courage and resoluteness as an Archbishop Romero or a Bishop Camara.

In "Honorary Counsel," a powerful story of social change laid in Argentina and Paraguay, Graham Greene sketches this decade of Latin American politics, religion, and society. One of his characters observes: "Caring is the only dangerous thing." In the story of the parish of San Jose Obrero - St. Joseph the Worker - in Bolivia, the caring and the loving will go on.

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