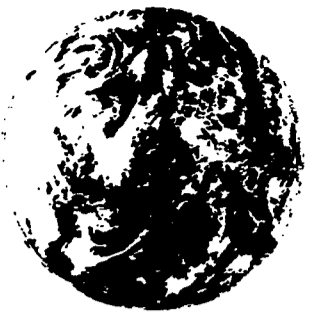


To Look Through Each OTHER'S EYES

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



Logo by Maureen Servas

Reverse Mission: A Happiness to Be Shared

"In 1964, when I went to Brazil, I was sure of myself. I knew what was right and wrong, and I had been able to communicate that security to my students," recalls Sister Ann Lafferty. "Now," she says, "never would I say that I had arrived anywhere. I am in a constant state of re-thinking and re-evaluating."



SISTER ANN LAFFERTY

Sister Ann arrived in Brazil holding several assumptions -- about fairness and honesty in government; about democracy and capitalism as the best political and economic systems; about hard work and cooperation insuring success. Her experience had born out the truth of these assumptions.

But she recalls an event which sparked a reformation of her attitudes. "Grain was scarce, but the market had been artificially manipulated in order to keep prices rising. People knew where the grain was stored, and their hunger drove them to storm the warehouse to ransack the supplies of grain."

She was puzzled when the bishops spoke out, approving the action, telling the people they had a right to the grain if they were hungry. This is traditional church teaching, but it has not been actively promulgated in our culture that enshrines the right of private property. "Events such as these," she explains, "caused me to sift and sort culture from theology, God from the people who claim to speak for God."

She also heard reports that our government was operat-

ing schools in some South American countries in order to train personnel in practices of torture. This, as well as the escalating involvement of our government in Central America, caused shame and embarrassment to Sister Ann and the sisters in Brazil. They wrote to President Reagan. His reply was patronizing and condescending, saying in effect that people making these decisions know what is best. It should not be any concern of theirs.

On another occasion, a friend was picked up by the police, beaten, and imprisoned because he looked suspicious and carried no I.D. Sister Ann was shaken by this. As a religious in the United States, such things had never happened to her friends. She comments that in her mind these things always happened to "them,"

to "those others" who must have done something wrong if they were in trouble with the law.

It is quite different, however, when "those others" become friends, which has been the general experience of the sisters in Brazil. This is the basis of the concept of "reverse mission." The missionaries' experience, standing alongside the marginalized in third world countries has transformed them.

Sister Ann feels that the challenge before her is not to forget. She sees herself continuing to be in mission up here. She has no program; she does not lecture or show slides, but it is in her being, in her conversation. She would like to shake us free from our moorings limiting us to one value system. She would encourage us to re-examine our concepts of and attitudes towards the givens in our life. She approaches this, not in a judgmental or accusing way, but more as the good teacher that she was, pointing out what is good. But, her notion of the good has undergone a drastic revision.

"Why?" I ask. "You must realize that this is not an easy mission. Most of us would rather not hear some of these things, especially if they require from us more than a token donation."

"Because," she replies, "it has brought me to an awareness of what it means to be a Christian which has given me a greater happiness. I am a happier person now than when I had all the security of my convictions in 1964. Happiness is to be shared."

Sister Ann Lafferty was elected to the central administration of the Sisters of St. Joseph in March, 1983, after serving 15 years on the Brazilian mission. She still sees herself as a missionary. "If I did not," she said, "I never could have returned."

"Insertion among the poor, leaving the protection of institutions, and adopting the lifestyle of the poor, without the accoutrements of a normal bourgeois life, has brought about a profound conversion for many 'religious.' The principal aspect of this conversion is an almost total commitment to the cause of the poor. More and more these religious have engaged in the struggle for justice with a single accord with the oppressed and the impoverished. This experience changed once and for all, not only the agenda of the religious and their congregations, not only their lifestyles, but still more radically their understanding of the essence of the Christian life itself, of what it means to be a Christian." - Father St. Smith, SJ, former vice president of the USGMA, recently at the Montreal Mission Congress.

Attempt Made on Life Of Mission's First Pastor

By Sister Elaine Kolesnik, RSM

"This is one more proof of the campaign of scare tactics being used against the Catholic Church."

This was the opinion of two lawyers in Chile, quoted in the local press there, regarding the attempt on the life of an Irish Columban priest recently.

The priest, Father Kevin O'Boyle, was the first pastor of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester at San Luis, Santiago, in 1965 when the congregation first began to work in Chile. Furthermore, it was at his request that Sister

Mary Bride Claire, then superior general of the order, inaugurated the Mercy Chilean mission at that time.

As reported recently in La Tercera, a Santiago newspaper, a shot fired from a .38 caliber gun narrowly missed Father O'Boyle when he was in his room in Holy Spirit Parish in Iquique, a city in northern Chile, where he is a member of a three-priest team.

A photo in La Tercera shows him pointing out where the bullet entered his room through the ceiling around 10:25 that Saturday morning, bouncing off the

floor and lodging in the desk, and, according to the paper, "passing within half a meter of the priest whose life was miraculously saved."

The lawyers, quoted above, German Valenzuela and Patricio Carrasco, are on the Commission of Human Rights and denounced the attempt before Iquique's tribunal of justice. The attacker(s) is unknown.

Father O'Boyle had spent many years in Chile, then served as spiritual director of the Columban seminary in Ireland, and had just returned to Chile earlier this year.



Sister Jane Kenrick, RSM, outside chapel of Guadalupe, Santiago, after celebrating a paralytic liturgy.

Mercy Sisters Open Third Community

The Sisters of Mercy of Rochester recently opened a new house in Santiago, Chile, bringing to three the number of Mercy Communities there.

Sister Jane Kenrick, and Sister Graciela Lagos Donoso, a Chilean Sister of Mercy of Rochester, wrote "to share the joy" of opening Comunidad de Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia, Our Lady of Mercy Community.

"It's a small, typical 'poblacion' house," they said, "and has a little chapel, three bedrooms, living-dining room, kitchen and bathroom. It's identical to everyone's house in the area."

The two settled in there this past February "with the mission to start a house for postulants. Right now," they note, "there is a possibility of two joining us during the year. The idea of the house is that it be a place where young women and men interested in religious life can come to talk, pray and discern."

Both sisters do pastoral work, Chela with the sick and Jane with a catechetical team.

The other two Mercy houses are at San Luis and Santa Ana. Former Mercy houses, San Andres and Santa Catalina, are now closed.

Chilean Laity Lead Evangelization Week

By Lia Gonzalez (The following article by Ms. Gonzalez was translated from Spanish by Sister Margaret Mungovan, a Sister of Mercy in mission to Santiago. About 35 persons attended the "semana intensiva," intensive retreat week given by a team of 10 native Chileans. Though Sister Margaret met several times with the team to help them organize the week, the retreat was run and presented by the laity.)

The week of April 9-13 was of double satisfaction for the community of Sanat Ana. We had an evangelization week prepared by members of the community for our community. This was different from two years ago when this same retreat was given to us by members of another community. This shows that we are taking seriously our mission of evangelization -- not only evangelizing others, but ourselves as well.

The themes were, it would seem, simple, but treated as they were, in depth, they were profound. Monday evening we began with "The Presence and the Love of God" and "How We Respond through Prayer." Reflecting about this, we see that we are obliged to struggle just to stay alive, and at times we see God as guilty for our problems. We consider Him as a punishing God, and we don't stop to think that He is full of love for us. We close ourselves up in our own selfishness without seeking how to return this love by turning ourselves outwards towards our brothers and sisters.

On Tuesday we looked at "The Compassion of Jesus towards the Sick and Suffering" and "How to Pray for the Sick Whom We Know." Observing the public life of Jesus, we see that His principal concern was for the poor, the sick and the suffering. His was a holistic healing. This same mission He left to His apostles and, therefore, also to us. A prayer group of the commu-

nity gave testimonies of healings through prayer.

Wednesday we treated "Inner Healing" and "Pardon and Reconciliation." This day was the very center or heart of the week, a sort of rebirth. Deeply-buried hurts and painful memories which had hindered a true healing of spirit rose to the surface. However, through the prayer for inner healing we came to sense a real reconciliation with God, with ourselves and with our brothers and sisters.

Thursday we talked about "The First Pentecost and its Effects on the Apostles" and "Pentecost Today." We saw the importance of the Holy Spirit, who filled the apostles with courage and certainty, and the contrast with ourselves who think of Him so seldom. We also reflected about the necessity of Pentecost today in order to speak a language which everyone can understand: the language of love.

"Preparation for the Sacrament of Penance" and "The First Christian Community and Our Community" were the Friday themes. In spite of the fact that the first part was very similar to that of Wednesday, we were now much more open to reconciliation since the reflections and prayers of the previous days had their effects on us. In the second part, we noted that we are in no condition to share our material goods because we have none, but we discovered all the spiritual riches we have that we can share, such as love, time, solidarity, etc.

The team that organized the week was very satisfied with the constancy and the participation of the community. When it was suggested that we repeat this experience, everyone agreed. Therefore, since then, we have been preparing ourselves to present the retreat to other groups.

(Lia Gonzalez is a member of the Santa Ana community, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, El Salto, Santiago.)

For the past several months, this mission page has been appearing regularly in the Courier-Journal. To help us plan for future issues, we would appreciate your response to the following questions. Send your reply to Lourdes Perez-Albuerne, 750 W. Main St., Rochester, NY 14611.

1. How thoroughly do you read the mission page article? completely skim only pass over

2. How do you rate the following elements of the page?

	Good	Fair	Poor
a. content of articles			
b. length of articles			
c. quality of writing			
d. use of pictures			
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3. Should the page be continued in its present form? Yes No

4. If not, what recommendations do you have?