

Sister Mary Carmel Kruckow, 83; taught for 48 years

Sister Mary Carmel Kruckow, a Sister of Mercy for 60 years and a teacher in diocesan schools for 48 years, died of cancer Aug. 10, 1989, at the order's motherhouse, 1437 Blossom Road, Rochester. She was 83.



A Corning native, Sister Carmel entered the Mercy novitiate on Aug. 28, 1929, at the age of 24, and professed perpetual vows on Sept. 3, 1934. A graduate of Nazareth Normal School, she pursued further studies at St. Bonaventure University in Olean.

Sister Carmel began her teaching career

with assignments at St. Ann's, Hornell, (1932-34) and St. Patrick's, Owego, (1934-36). In 1936, she began the first of three stays at St. Andrew's, Rochester, (1936-59, 1960-66, 1979-80). She also served as St. Andrew's principal from 1963-66.

Sister Dorothy Loeb, RSM, a former student of Sister Carmel's at St. Andrew's, remembers her as a favorite teacher. "We all felt she was part of us, and we felt close," Sister Loeb said. "She was firm and serious in the classroom, but very warm and friendly outside. She really cared."

"I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for her," observed Sister Mary Agnes

Theresa Georger, RSM, who began her teaching career at St. Andrew's when Sister Carmel was there. "She was very prayerful and would always lift me up to a higher level. She never thought of herself, but was always there when I needed her, with an outstretched helping hand."

Sister Carmel's teaching career also included stints at St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester, (1959-60) and St. Rita's, Webster, (1966-79). She retired from teaching in 1980, and for the past nine years had lived at the motherhouse.

On Aug. 4, a Mass was celebrated in the motherhouse in honor of Sister Carmel's 60th anniversary as a Sister of Mercy. Father Thomas Mull, pastor of Sacred

Heart Cathedral, Rochester, officiated at the Mass, and also celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial for her on Monday, Aug. 14. She was interred in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Rochester.

Sister Carmel is survived by three sisters, Sister Mary Alphonsus, RSM, of Hornell, Sister Mary Kruckow, RSM, of Ithaca, and Hattie Kimbell of Waverly; two brothers, Andrew Kruckow of Elmira and John Kruckow of Wellsburg, N.Y.; and several nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Contributions in Sister Carmel's memory may be made to the Sisters of Mercy Infirmary, Rochester.

Guns

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the ears (of the government) were on us."

The Piersantes, too, felt they were being watched. "We could not speak out loud," Lillian Piersante said. "Any time we spoke about the conditions, we either had to go behind closed doors, or where we knew we couldn't be heard."

The threat was directed not so much to the visitors as to the Salvadorans who spoke with them, they acknowledged. Studer, with family in El Salvador, also had to be cautious about what she said. But, she noted, the danger comes from both the right and the left.

"The average people there are as threatened by the left as by the right," Studer said. Rebels cut down power lines, destroy reservoirs and kill civilians. She also reported wide-spread rumors that the rebels kidnap teenage girls and take them off into the hills.

Studer said the battles between government forces and rebels are killing innocent people who get caught in the cross-fire, driving people from their homes, ruining the countryside and destroying business and industry. As a result, the economy has been devastated.

"It's true the people are being treated in inhuman ways in the civil war," Studer said. "But the greatest low-grade suffering is being felt by the people in the middle — not on the left or the right — because of the economy, the inflation, the stagnation."

Among those trapped in the middle are the refugees, most of whom have had little or nothing to do with the rebels. Nevertheless, their homes and villages were destroyed, their relatives killed, and they were forced to flee for their lives as government and rebel forces battled.

Currently, thousands of refugees live in U.N.-sponsored camps in Honduras. But conditions in those camps are poor, Sister Weider noted, because they lack food, water and adequate sanitation. She went to Honduras in July of this year to meet with refugees because the United Nations wants to close the camps, some of which have been operating since 1980.

Sister Weider said the refugees have been offered three options: remain in Honduras and become Honduran citizens, move to a third country such as Canada or Australia, or repatriate to El Salvador individually and be sent where the Salvadoran government chooses. But the Honduran government has said it is not interested in accepting the refugees as citizens, and other countries have said that because of immigration quotas, most of the refugees would not be let in.

As for the third option, Sister Weider said the refugees are hesitant because approximately 80 percent of those who have repatriated individually thus far have ended up displaced, and some have simply disappeared. Instead, the refugees hope to go back en masse, as the did in October 1987, and November 1988. To do this, they need foreigners to accompany them, since government troops are less likely

to attack groups that include foreigners.

In addition to the civil war and refugee problems, the Salvadoran people must now contend with a new government headed by Alfredo Christiani, who took office as president of the country in June. Christiani leads the ARENA Party, which has been linked to right-wing death squads. Sister Weider reported that before the March election that brought ARENA to power, "the Salvadoran military came to Santa Marta and told (the people) that after ARENA won the election in March, they would have a bomb for every house."

The party has already imposed anti-terrorist laws that Studer described as "extremely repressive." She reported that Salvadoran radio and television news programs were actually quite open in discussing fighting and human-rights abuses, but that people are now worried that the new laws will be used to silence the media.

"People tell us that it is more and more repressive" since the election, Sister Weider reported. "I've seen reports (in which) the human rights groups are documenting more and more cases of human rights abuses."

Lillian Piersante observed that the repression and abuses are not being reported in the U.S. media, which has made continued visits by delegations from the United States and other countries especially important. These visitors can witness what is happening and report back to their own countries, thereby forcing the Salvadoran government to curtail its repression.

Returning visitors can also appeal to the

U.S. government to change its support for the Salvadoran government. Studer said that while in El Salvador, she asked a Mar-yknoll priest there what message she should bring back to the United States. "He said (for the United States) to stop sending military aid and send more material aid, and to get both sides (in the civil war) to negotiate," she said.

Studer contended that the U.S. government needs to change its policies, because under the current situation, the right wing gets "big bucks" from U.S. foreign aide, and the left is "pretty much invulnerable." Unless something is done to change the situation, she suggested, the civil war will just drag on, and the people will continue to suffer.

Each of the four Rochesterians who visited El Salvador said they were impressed by the Salvadoran people and touched by their suffering. The Piersantes, who say they hope to return to the Central-American nation as missionaries some day, were particularly moved.

"I've never seen faith in people like I saw in the Salvadoran people," Joe Piersante said. In the midst of the war and their poverty, the people were willing to help each other, sharing what little they had. "When you hear the Gospels read, they come alive there," he said. "The people are living the Gospels in their lives."

"As scary as it was at times," Lillian Piersante observed, "it was almost a retreat for me in the sense that I was able to meet Jesus face-to-face in the people of El Salvador."

Under fire

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formation, he noted, was that the church was "committed to share the condition of the poor out of solidarity."

Part of that commitment would express itself through the Christian base communities, the bishops remarked. Basic Christian communities have organized food co-operatives, alcohol-rehabilitation programs and literacy programs, among other projects, Berryman observed. While only 10 percent of the Catholic parishes in Central America have contained base communities, he noted, their influence has extended beyond their small numbers.

"To this day, many base communities are essentially pastoral, not political — at least not in any conflictive way," Berryman explained. "What has attracted attention however, has been the political potential of these groups ..."

Up until three years ago, Father Menjivar noted, his Salvadoran parish contained some of these communities, but all of them were disbanded as a result of government persecution. "They were ordinary people," he said of the communities' members. "Only they change the way to think, the way to believe. They were more active."

The political potential Berryman mentioned became a reality for some of the base community members, Father Menjivar said. "Some of them became members of unions ... especially farm-workers' unions," he recalled.

The base communities may represent a

perceived threat to El Salvador's right-wing government, which has been engaged in a civil war with leftist rebels for the last nine years, but the Catholic church as a whole seeks to reconcile the opposing factions, rather than take sides, Father Menjivar said.

"The church is a community to which people from both sides belong," he said. Despite its solidarity with the poor, the church doesn't necessarily favor the leftist rebels in the Salvadoran civil war, he commented.

"Never has the church encouraged the people to use arms, because we can see the example of the people who took up arms," Father Menjivar commented. "We have experienced ... years of civil war, and (the rebels) have not solved the situation. No side has solved the situation because they

are using arms. For this reason, the church is trying to convince them to dialogue. Dialogue is the only way to understand, to survive."

Father Menjivar expressed hope that El Salvador's president, Alfredo Christiani, a member of the right-wing ARENA party, could succeed in reaching agreement with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the leftist insurgents' group. He noted that if Christiani is convinced he can strike a deal without foreign interference, he may compromise with the rebels.

Nonetheless, Father Menjivar's superior, Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas, criticized Christiani for announcing that the church would not be included in any future negotiations with the rebels. The archbishop unsuccessfully mediated peace talks between the government and the rebels in

1984 and 1985, and has frequently served as the go-between in negotiations for temporary cease fires.

But Father Menjivar said the government's exclusion of the church may mean it's serious about reaching an agreement with the rebels. "(The government leaders) want to feel themselves to find the El Salvadoran way." The priest also disagreed that one should be skeptical of Christiani because of his alleged connections with right-wing death squads. "There really is nothing clear about this," he said.

What the vast majority of Salvadorans want, the priest concluded, is an end to the bloody war. "The whole people hope they can have an agreement," he said. "It's possible with this ruling government that we can have a better chance to resolve the conflict."

Event to commemorate invasion of Poland

On Friday, Sept. 1, Bishop Matthew H. Clark will gather with members of Congress, state and city officials, local veterans' groups and members of clergy to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Poland. The gathering will take place in the atrium of Rochester City Hall at noon.

As part of the day, churches and synagogues throughout Monroe County have been asked to ring their bells at 7 a.m., and to light their facilities from 8-10 p.m. Congregations are also asked to incorporate in-



formation about the anniversary in their bulletins the weekend of Aug. 26-27 and to include an intercession in the prayers for Sept. 2-3.

The day of commemoration was organized by the Rochester Polonia Civic Center.

Reunion marks 50 years

ROCHESTER — Holy Rosary School's class of 1939 will celebrate its 50th reunion beginning at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Ridgmont Country Club.

For information, call Mary Louise Buckley Martin, 716/663-5185, or Marina Maccallini Infantino, 663-3511.

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