

What U.S. aid has wrought and bought in Salvador



Every day, more than \$1 million of our tax dollars aid the government of El Salvador. Since 1980, the United States has supplied a mostly military allowance estimated at \$3.6 billion.

What have our dollars purchased?

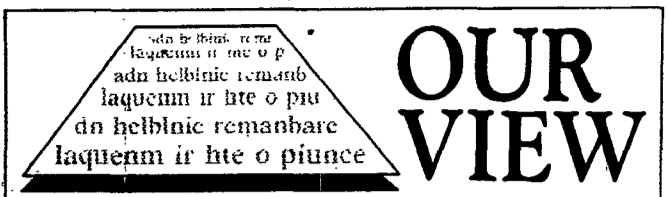
- The Nov. 16 deaths of six Jesuit priests and two women, whose bodies are said to have been riddled with bullets from U.S.-made M-16 rifles.

- A victory this month for the Salvadoran military, which used the most sophisticated weaponry our money could buy to overcome a major offensive by Marxist rebels at the cost of about a thousand casualties.

- A 10-year civil war which has cost El Salvador an estimated 70,000 deaths, along with countless kidnappings and tortures, and hundreds of thousands of refugees — to whom the United States only recently granted refugee status.

"Violence visited almost daily upon the poor and suffering people of El Salvador is an ever-growing source of grief to us," said Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, now archbishop of Louisville, Ky., on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Conference in 1980.

The U.S. bishops have continued to oppose military aid and intervention in El Salvador's internal affairs through the administrations of three U.S. and two Salvadoran presidents. Recognizing that the United States is not alone in using Central Americans as bloody pawns in a global chess match, the bishops declared in 1981 that "outside military assistance from any source to any party is not a useful contribution but simply intensifies



the cycle of violence." Yet Americans recoil. Yet, as though the United States had no part in what happened, we recoil from the "barbarity" of the killings at Central American University and demand, as the price for continued aid, that the murderers be brought to justice.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration urges patience and claims to be nurturing a fragile democracy. If we abandoned the government of President Alfredo Cristiani, administration officials warn, its replacement would likely be much worse — a military dictatorship.

With the kind of nurturing we've provided, who needs a crushing heel? Our money and military hardware have retarded the development of a genuine popular will in El Salvador to the point that, tragically, the Bush administration is probably right in its predictions for El Salvador's future.

Robbed of their most rational and respected leaders by the mindless violence of left- and right-wing extremists, the remnants of El Salvador's shattered middle class may want peace at any price.

Who could blame them?

— The Editors

Women touched by abortion can save others pain

To the editor:

One can ask, can any good come from an abortion?

After reading Marie's story (Courier, 11-2-89), and many others, we can answer with a resounding yes!

Many who have had an abortion in the past have discovered the infinite mercy of Our Lord. Through repentance and reconciliation, they have found peace and forgiveness. Some, like Marie, have shared their pain with others, and by so doing, prevented yet another abortion. We have God's word affirming the good that He can accomplish from our past mistakes, "We know that God makes all things work together for good for those who love Him who have been called according to His decree" (Romans 9:28). Marie tells of a woman who asks that she speak for them, "I can't speak but you can." "Maybe if I speak," Marie says, "a woman who might have killed herself will call the Puzzle Project. Maybe a woman who feels that God is unforgiving can experience what I've experienced."

To Marie and to others like her, who have experienced God's mercy, I also ask that you speak out. I ask that you speak on the sidewalk in front of the killing centers. I ask that you share your pain and God's healing with the women before they have

their abortions. In this way you can help prevent immediate deaths. You can prevent untold agony and pain. More important, you can help stop the agony and heartbreak Jesus experiences with each abortion, and the sin of a world that has turned its back on Him.

Those of us who sidewalk counsel can also say, "we can't speak but you can." Abortion for us is not a first hand experience; we can only tell these women the

Catholics impose abortion morality on others

To the editor:

It was refreshing to read your columns on the abortion issue. In particular that there are Catholics in Rochester and elsewhere that do not believe in the idea that under no circumstances should abortion be allowed. It is a very difficult question, but I myself have prayed and thought about it for some time. When a mother's life is in danger, or a victim of rape or incest, it must be allowed.

You see I bought into the notion in the beginning that all abortion was wrong. In the town I came from before moving to Rochester I used to participate in "anti-abortion" rallies and marches. Then a very close friend of mine died having a "back alley abortion."

She was the victim of incest, she died

pain they will experience from the experiences of others. Can you not give back to Jesus a little of the love He has given you? Will you join us, and speak? For the babies, for the mothers, and for Jesus? Please call Ray at 716/621-3906, or Mary, 244-1609, to join this ministry of love, prayer and reparation to our Loving and Merciful Lord.

Janet M. Parulski
Lakecrest Avenue Rochester

needlessly. It hurts to talk about it. I cannot speak what kind of things happen here, but I can tell you that the group I was from was self-centered and at times almost violent towards pro-choice people. This was not being Christian, and not respecting the lives of the women it affected.

Fortunately I see, as does most of America that there is middle ground forming ...

My brother is from the Episcopalian faith and no less Christian than myself, and they hold this common ground as theirs. Why must we Catholics force our morality on others? If we accept it, fine, but let's not shove it down someone's throat.

Most importantly, I agree that there is more pressing human issues that need attention, and as Catholics, we are obligated by our nature to do these things.

J.J. Smith
Chestnut Street
Rochester



Articles raised questions

To the editor:

I have two thought-provoking questions in response to two articles printed, one last week, one the week before.

In the wonderful article on Bishop Sheen: Why would someone so intelligent and so committed to collegiality decide to disregard this central aspect of Church doctrine in one situation which proved so devastating to him as Bishop? In the article on the unnamed Bishop accused of pedophilia: Why wasn't the same anonymity and protection given to Father George Stallings, founder of the Black Catholic splinter group? Anyone have answers ... or further wonderings?

Father William M. Kelly, Ph.D.
Trumansburg

Letters demonstrated to one reader that Gospels are alive

To the editor:

I often wonder about the relevance of the Gospels in our times. Many times it seems to me that the application of the Gospel message to everyday life is contrived by the homilist.

However, two letters in the Nov. 2, 1989, edition of the *Catholic Courier* demonstrated to me that the Gospel stories are very much alive today. The first letter, a stinging, self-righteous scolding of the women working to change a human rule, was wrapped around the second, very gentle, letter which mentioned the shortage

of priests and then expressed the writer's heartfelt gratitude for the presence and support of a deacon in the time of need. Your placement of these two letters with such contrasting tones reminded me of the passage from Luke's Gospel read on the previous Sunday (Oct. 29), namely, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Thank you for making that Gospel reading real for me.

Edward Gutman
Whiting Road
Webster

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