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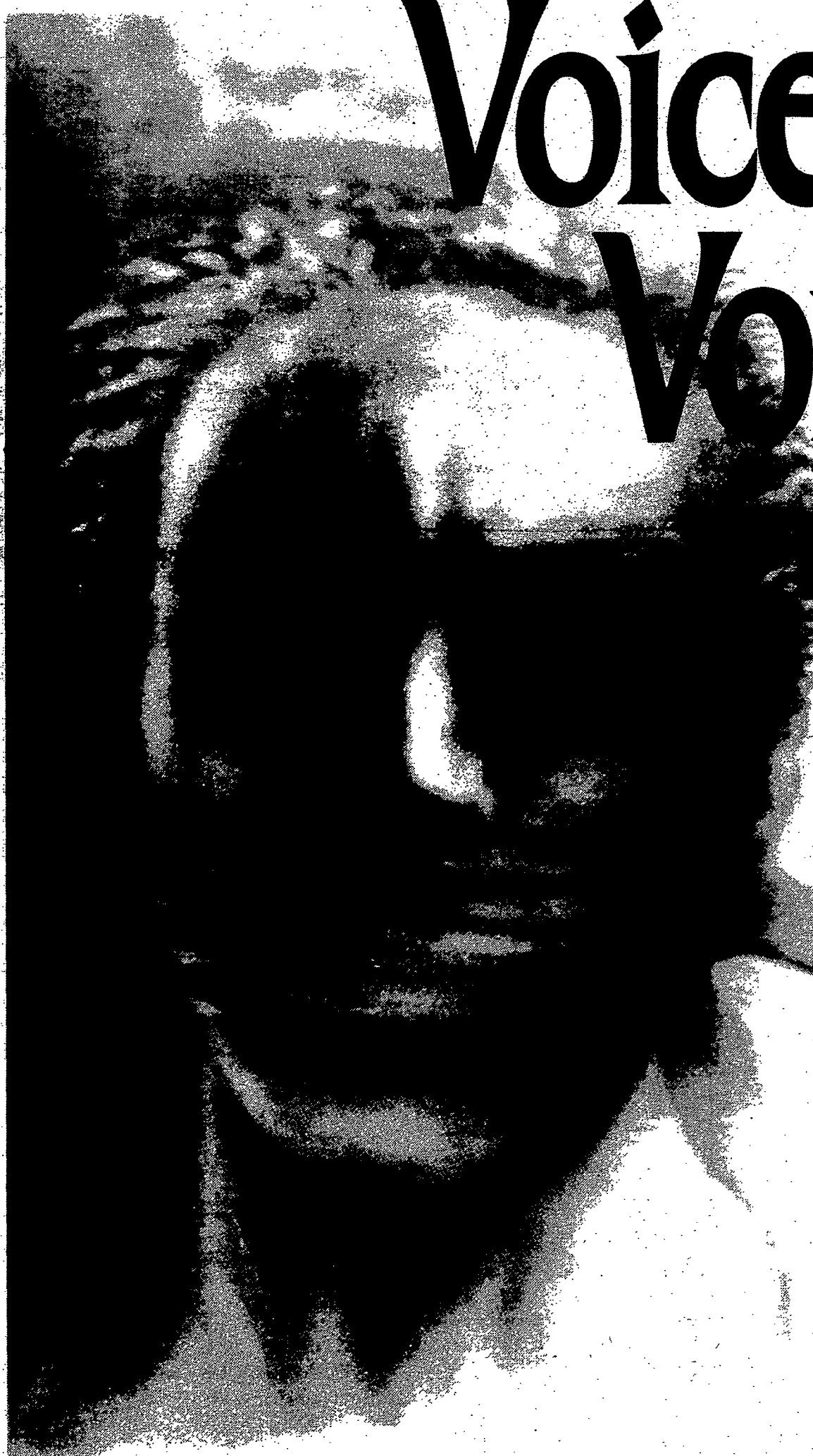
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Voice of the Voiceless



When Sister Anne Curtis, RSM, justice coordinator for the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester, was a missionary in Chile from 1987 to 1991, she was moved to tears by government actions on at least two occasions that she can recall.

The first came when she was tear-gassed and arrested during a demonstration led by a Jesuit priest against state-sanctioned torture. The demonstration took place while Chile was still ruled by a military dictatorship that was eventually held responsible for killing more than 3,000 people during the 1970s and '80s.

"The church was really the only voice and protector of human rights during the dictatorship," Sister Curtis said in a recent interview with the *Catholic Courier*.

The second time came when she and her pastoral team watched on TV the installation of Chile's civilian government in 1989. A little girl presented the president with a copy of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the government pledged its support.

"It was so poignant," Sister Curtis said of the moment the document was presented, adding that there wasn't a dry eye among the pastoral team members. "It represented the hope of the people moving away from the horrors of the past."

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Story by Rob Cullivan

Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

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