

and purpose. I hope my life will be such a life. And if it is, it will be due to my long association with the Jesuits, the UCA, and the people of El Salvador. And for that, I thank you—all of you—you who are here tonight, and those who are with us every day in spirit. You are truly "presente" in my life.

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 16, 1999]

#### MARTYRS IN EL SALVADOR

(By Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.)

Ten years ago in the early morning darkness of Nov. 16, army soldiers burst into the Jesuit residence at the University of Central America (UCA) in San Salvador and brutally killed six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her young daughter. It was not the first assassination of church leaders: 18 Catholic priests, including Father Rutilio Grande and Archbishop Oscar Romero, and four North American churchwomen have been killed in El Salvador since the late 1970s—more than in any other nation in the world. And the murder of priests and nuns continues to scar the history of other countries, including India, Guatemala and most recently East Timor.

While we still grieve their loss the 10th anniversary of the Jesuit assassinations offers an important opportunity to reflect on the enduring legacy of the martyrs.

Far from silencing those dedicated to promoting justice, peace and the alleviation of misery for all in the human family, the Jesuit murders spurred the people of El Salvador—and the world—to witness a higher truth. Shortly after the murders, a U.N. Truth Commission was formed to investigate the killings. Although the government initially claimed that FMLN guerrillas had committed the murders, the Truth Commission determined that the government had in fact ordered the killings.

In an appalling step five days after the report was released, the Salvadoran National Assembly gave amnesty to those convicted. But through the U.N. Truth Commission, an essential truth about state violence in El Salvador was uncovered, as well as the deeply disturbing fact that 19 of the 26 Salvadoran officers involved in the slayings had been trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Ga.

The murders—and the unfolding truth about who committed them—helped significantly undermine the power and prestige of the armed forces and provided impetus for the peace process. Signed on Jan. 16, 1992, the peace accords ended a war that had cost the lives of 75,000 citizens and represent the triumph of another of the Jesuits' essential goals—peace through dialogue.

While still fragile, the peace in El Salvador has enabled some political and judicial reform and provides the critical foundation for future advances. Since the end of the civil war, there have been two open, democratic elections, featuring candidates from both the National Republican Alliance Party (ARENA) and the opposing National Liberation Party (FMLN).

The macroeconomic indicators show that inflation is at its lowest level in nearly three decades. Newly elected President Francisco Flores of the ARENA Party has promised continued economic improvement and a vitally needed reduction of poverty. But many grave challenges face him and the people of El Salvador.

Approximately 40 percent of Salvadorans live in dire poverty. More than a third of citizens lack safe drinking water and ade-

quate housing. And more than half the population lacks adequate health care. Education for all, a fundamental goal shared by the slain Jesuits, also continues to elude the country—more than 30 percent of Salvadorans are illiterate.

Violence continues to be a national scourge. A joint U.N. commission in 1994 reported that while military death squads had ceased to operate after the peace accords, criminal gangs or illegal armed groups were committing summary executions, posing death threats and carrying out other acts of intimidation for political motives. The Washington Office on Latin America reports that violent crime continues to threaten the still tender democratic political order. Unless the government can address the problem of citizen security, while respecting human and civil rights, the country may slip back into a state of war. Continuing the work of the martyred Jesuits is more important than ever.

As we look ahead, the Jesuit martyrs offer us a lasting model of courageous service to humanity. At a time when torture, intimidation and death-squad executions of civilians were daily occurrences, my Jesuit brothers regularly endured threats to their safety and well-being. During the civil war, the UCA campus and the Jesuit residence were bombed at least 16 times. But the Jesuit's teaching and research, their pastoral work, and their advocacy of social reform continued despite all challenge. They knew and accepted the great personal risk their work entailed—the risk of their lives.

In the days prior to his death Father Ignacio Ellacuria, president of UCA, had refused the opportunity to remain in his home country, Spain, and wait out the period of unrest in El Salvador. Father Ignatio Martin-Baro, academic vice president was asked, "Why don't you leave here, Father? It is dangerous." He responded: "Because we have much to do; there is much work." The spirit and conviction of these men endures through the efforts of those who bravely stepped forward to take their places, including Father Charles Beirne, S.J., who took over Martin-Baro's position in the aftermath of the assassinations and Father Chema Tojeria, S.J., who now serves as Father Ellacuria's successor. Their spirit endures in the human rights volunteers from around the world—people from organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Amnesty International and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights—all active in El Salvador.

It lives in the Salvadoran people. And the spirit of the Jesuit martyrs endures as we in distant countries around the globe learn from their example of steadfast commitment to the poor, to education and to a future built on freedom and justice, not opposition and bloodshed.

#### TRIBUTE TO OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

#### HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 16, 1999*

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and to congratulate the outstanding accomplishments of ten distinguished teachers from New Jersey. These great individuals

have dedicated over twenty years each to educating and uplifting New Jersey's brightest little stars: our youth. They have truly demonstrated a solid commitment to building strong foundations for their students; in and outside of the schoolrooms.

As a result of their diligent work towards promoting leadership in our children, these teachers will be honored by the Phi Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. on November 20. Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, a national business women's sorority, is devoted to projecting the philosophy of the pursuit of excellence in all worthy endeavors among youth.

The teachers being honored during the Apple for the Teacher program, part of the National Education Week celebration, are: Carolyn S. Banks; Gloria J. Barteel; Henry B. Clark; Phyllis K. Donoghue; Victoria Gong; Mary Jo Grimm; Gail D. Lane; Robin C. Lewis; Simone Wilson; Kathleen Witche.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all my colleagues join me in congratulating these superb teachers on their efforts to improve the community. When our teachers demonstrate such initiative, we as a nation prosper.

#### MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

#### HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 16, 1999*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to pay tribute to a place where children are second to none: Miami Children's Hospital, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary on March 21, 2000.

This world class children's hospital had its humble beginnings with a vision by our former Ambassador to the Vatican, David McLean Walters. After his granddaughter's sorrowful death from Leukemia, Ambassador Walters decidedly vowed to create a facility where South Florida's children could receive the best possible care, and where no child would lack excellent medical care. With his bold leadership, he worked tirelessly to raise funds through the Miami Children's Hospital Foundation, and what began as a humble idea twenty years ago is now commonly referred to as the Pinnacle of Pediatrics.

Today, under the exceptional steering and superb guidance of its current President, Tom Rozek, Miami Children's Hospital continues to administer superior care to scores of infirm children not only in South Florida, but throughout the entire United States and, indeed the world.

Essential to the achievement of excellence has been the dedication of a talented medical staff administered with tender, loving care and the support of a caring South Florida community.

Our future can only be as good as our children, and with the strong commitment to their health and future that is permeated at Miami Children's Hospital, it is evident that our future will be blazing brightly.