



The Four Martyred Churchwomen: Allies in Today's Struggle for Social Justice

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Donna Whitson Brett

SISTER DOROTHY KAZEL

“I realize my narrowness and how I have to grow into awareness of the universal brotherhood of man. Maybe that’s what El Salvador is all about—expanding my narrow vision. Do with me, Lord, what you wish.”



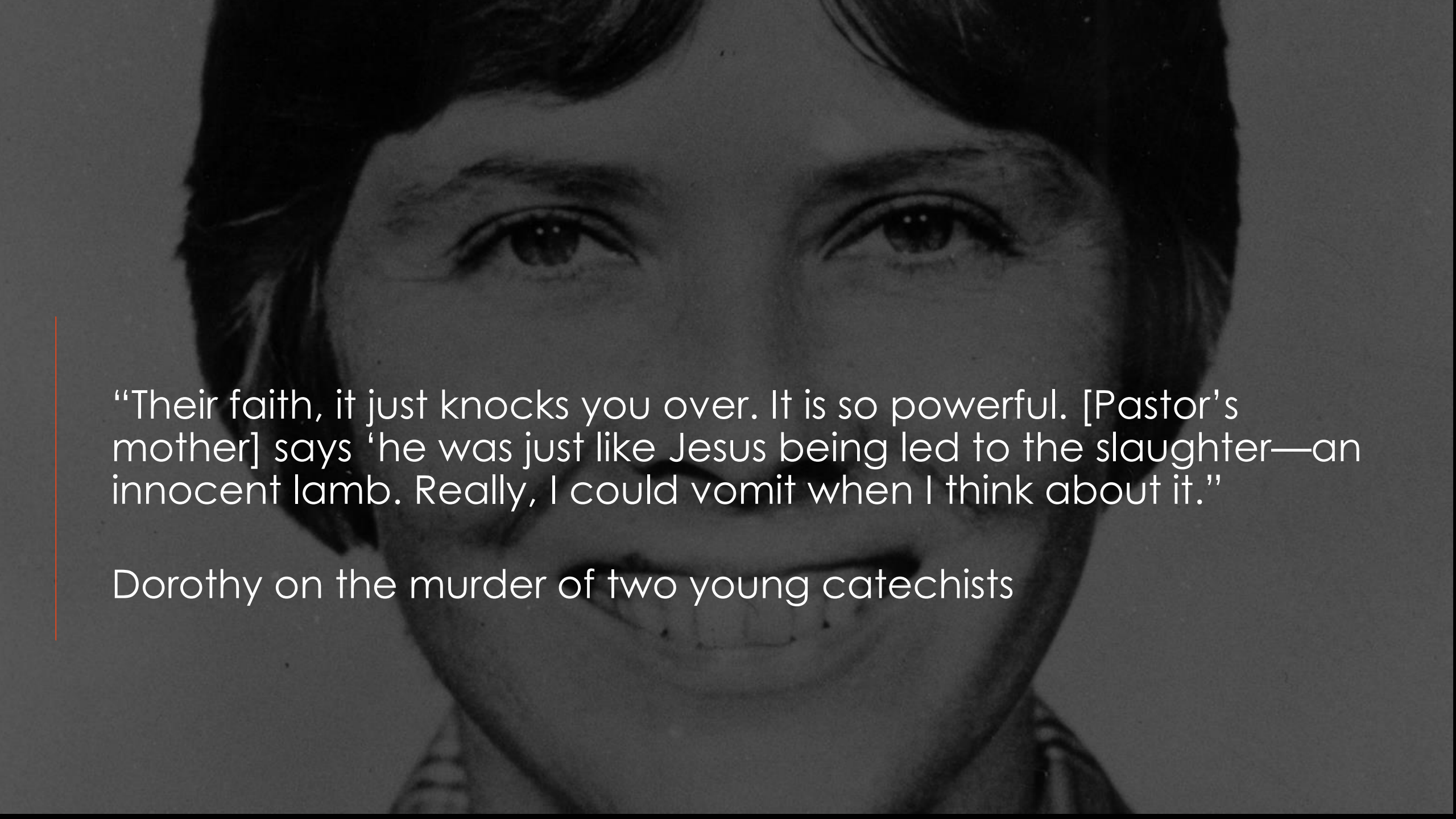
“ Dorothy would be the first to jump in the truck and learn how to drive a stick shift, or the first to hop on a motorcycle—just fully open and accepting of new challenges. ”

Sister Martha Owen



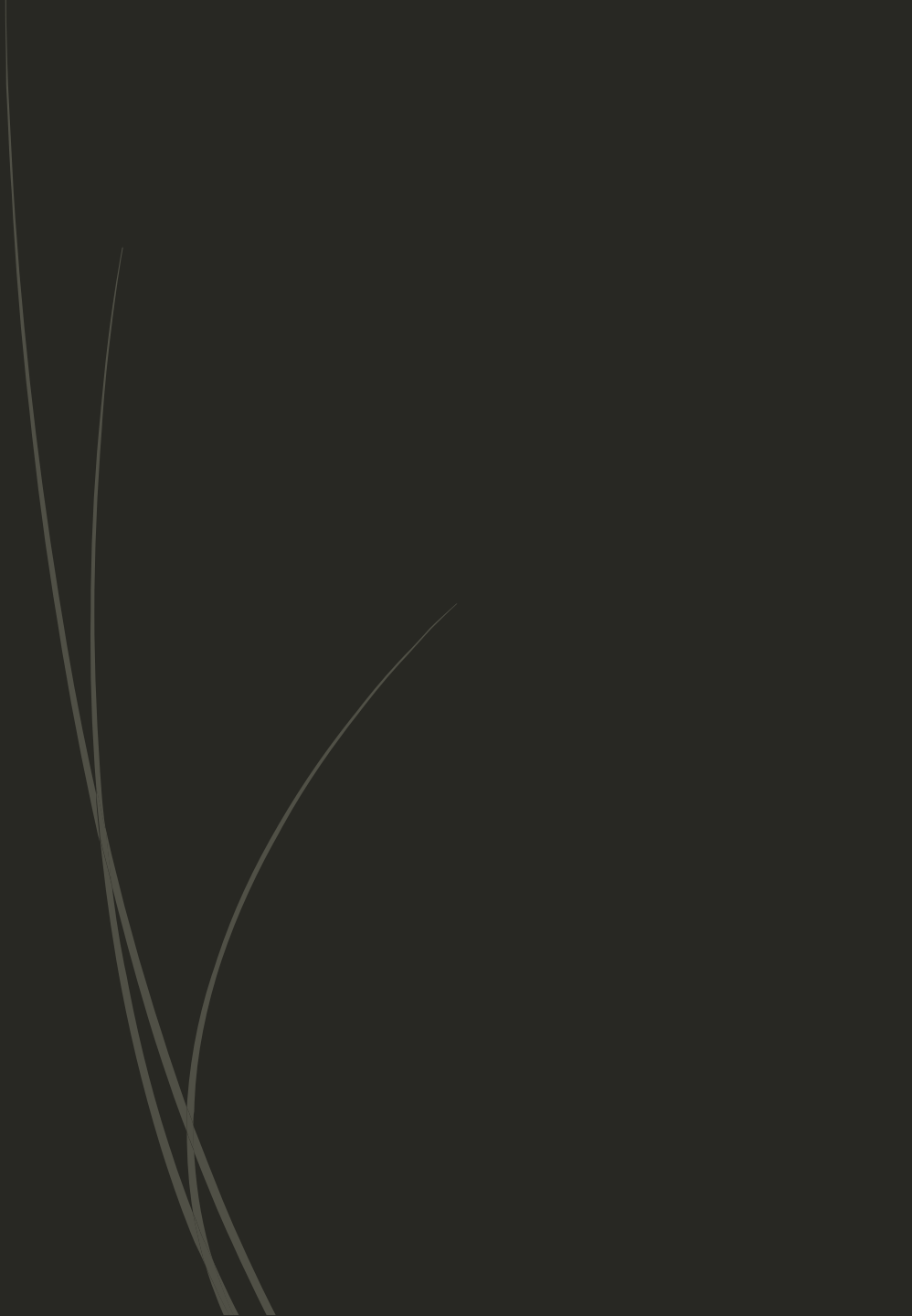
“ I am nowhere near thinking
about going home.
Realistically, I could not
leave Salvador right now...
I'm committed to the
persecuted church here. ”

Dorothy



“Their faith, it just knocks you over. It is so powerful. [Pastor’s mother] says ‘he was just like Jesus being led to the slaughter—an innocent lamb. Really, I could vomit when I think about it.’”

Dorothy on the murder of two young catechists



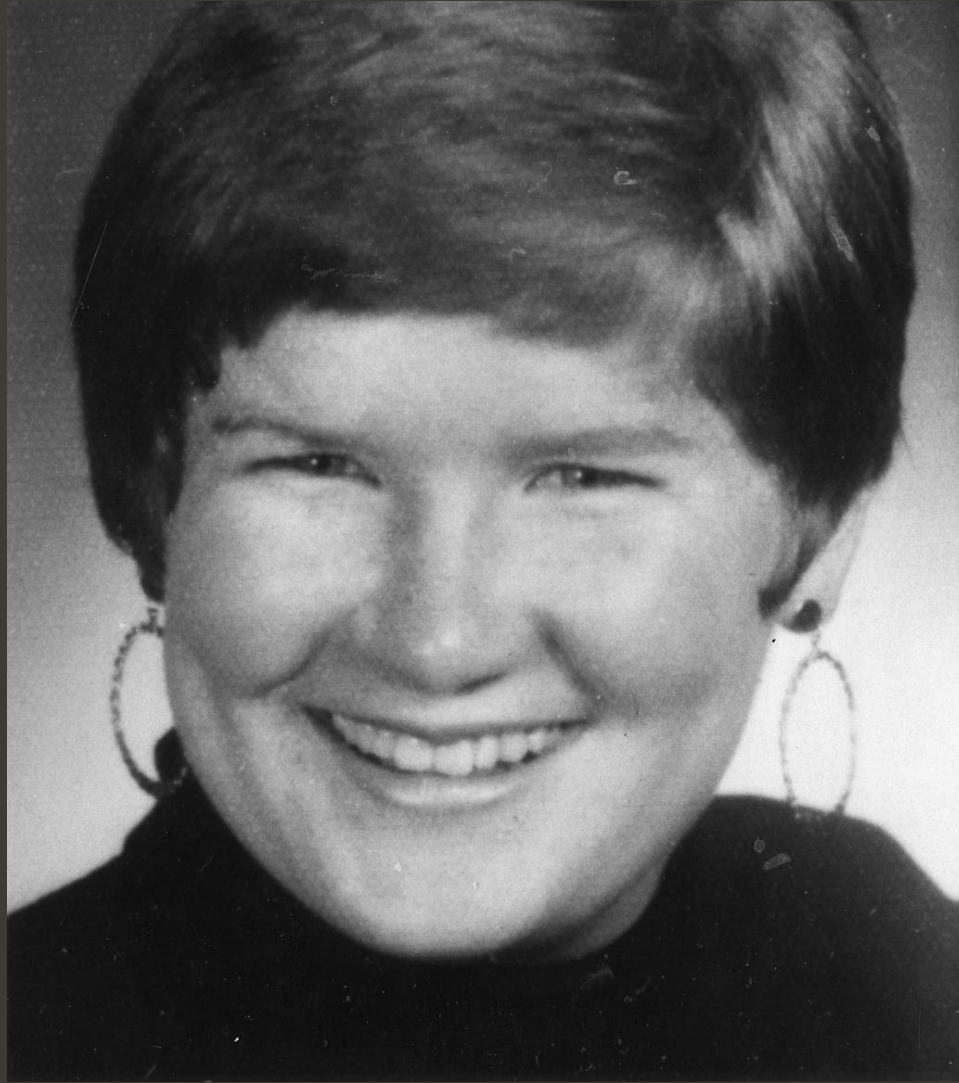
“They chopped up women, cutting off their breasts, and spearing the kid in their wombs. You wonder—it’s just so damn diabolical, it makes you want to weep.”

Dorothy

“ I am
prepared
and ready
to die.”

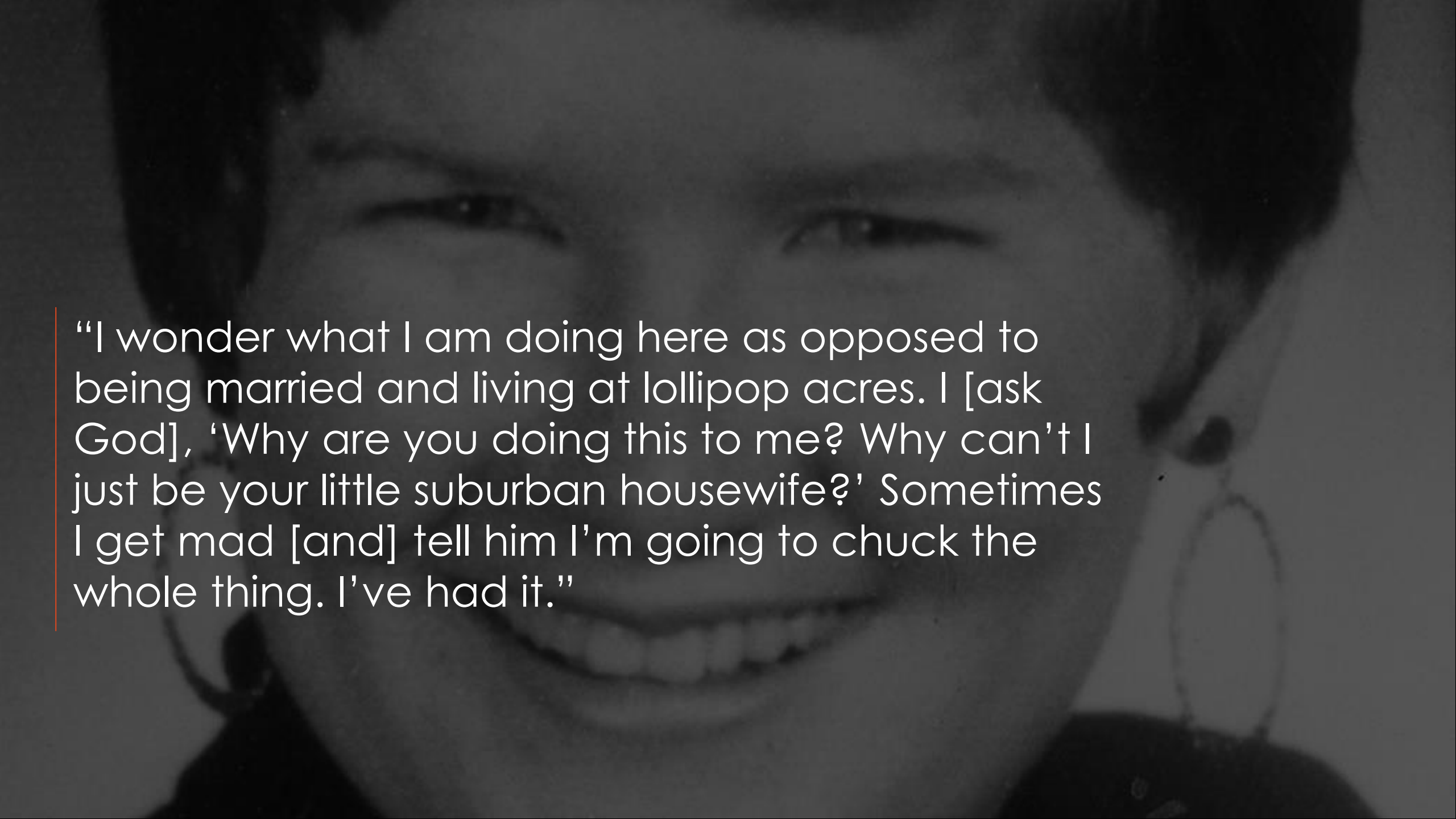
Dorothy





JEAN DONOVAN

“Why am I here?
Why would God
want me? I am so
inadequate, no
good. If I had chosen
one or two different
paths, I might not
even believe in God
let alone be a
missionary.”



“I wonder what I am doing here as opposed to being married and living at lollipop acres. I [ask God], ‘Why are you doing this to me? Why can’t I just be your little suburban housewife?’ Sometimes I get mad [and] tell him I’m going to chuck the whole thing. I’ve had it.”

“And so the Peace Corps left today, and my heart sank low. As these poor people beset with tragedy increase, the help available departs. I love life [and] I’m not up for suicide. Several times I have decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could except for the children, the poor, bruised victims of adult lunacy. Whose heart could be so staunch as to favor the reasonable thing in the sea of their tears? Not mine, dear friend, not mine.”

Jean



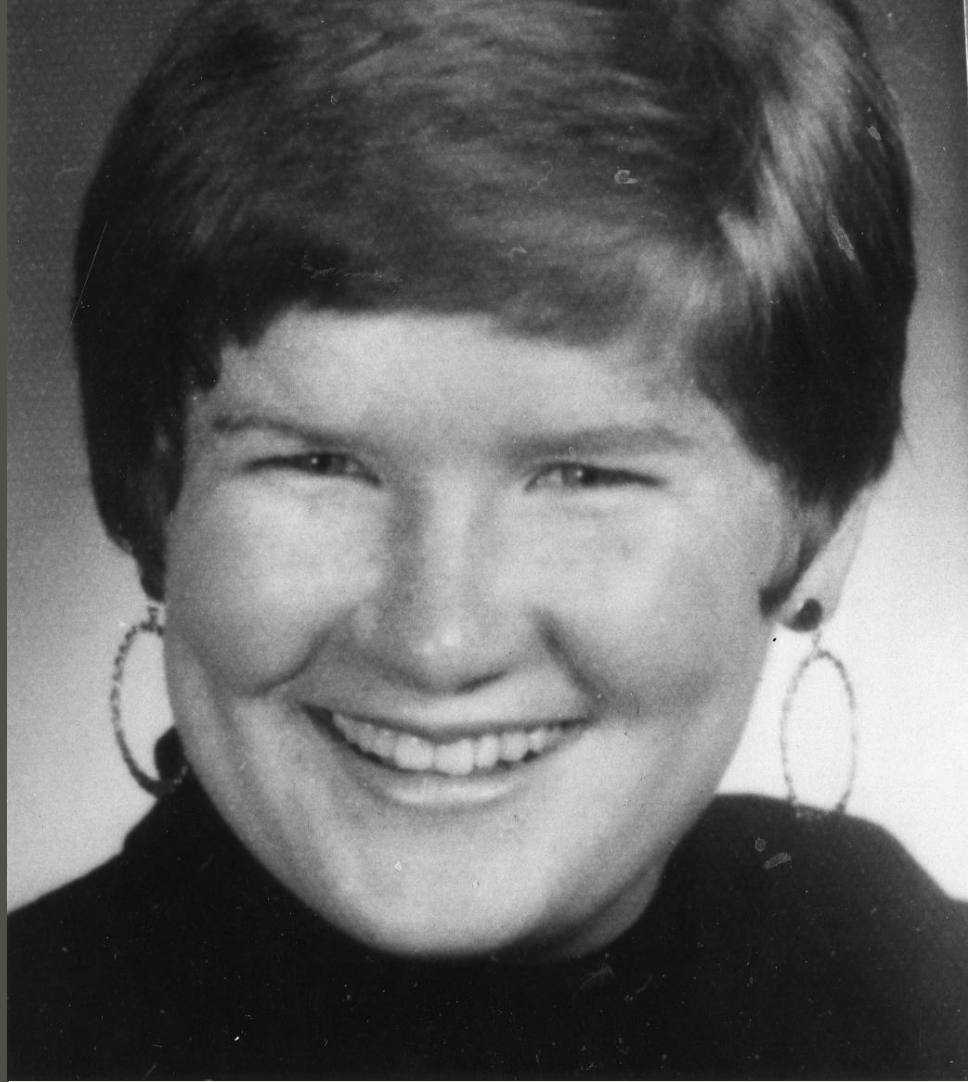
I don't know how the poor survive. People in our positions really have to die unto ourselves and our wealth to gain the spirituality of the poor. They can teach you so much with their patience and wanting eyes. I am trying now more and more to deal with the social sin of the first world.

Jean

“They don't shoot
blonde, blue-
eyed North
Americans.”

Jean





“I just hope I’m not found on a ditch bank with all the markings of torture.”

Jean



SISTER MAURA CLARKE

“Don’t worry, dear Hearts. I’ll stay out of riots and fights but we must lend support to those who have the courage to give themselves for change.”

"I entered into a time of sadness and wept over my separation from the people I love. I saw the tortured people who fight for justice today in the place of Christ, and I pictured the rulers and the military as the high priests."

Maura



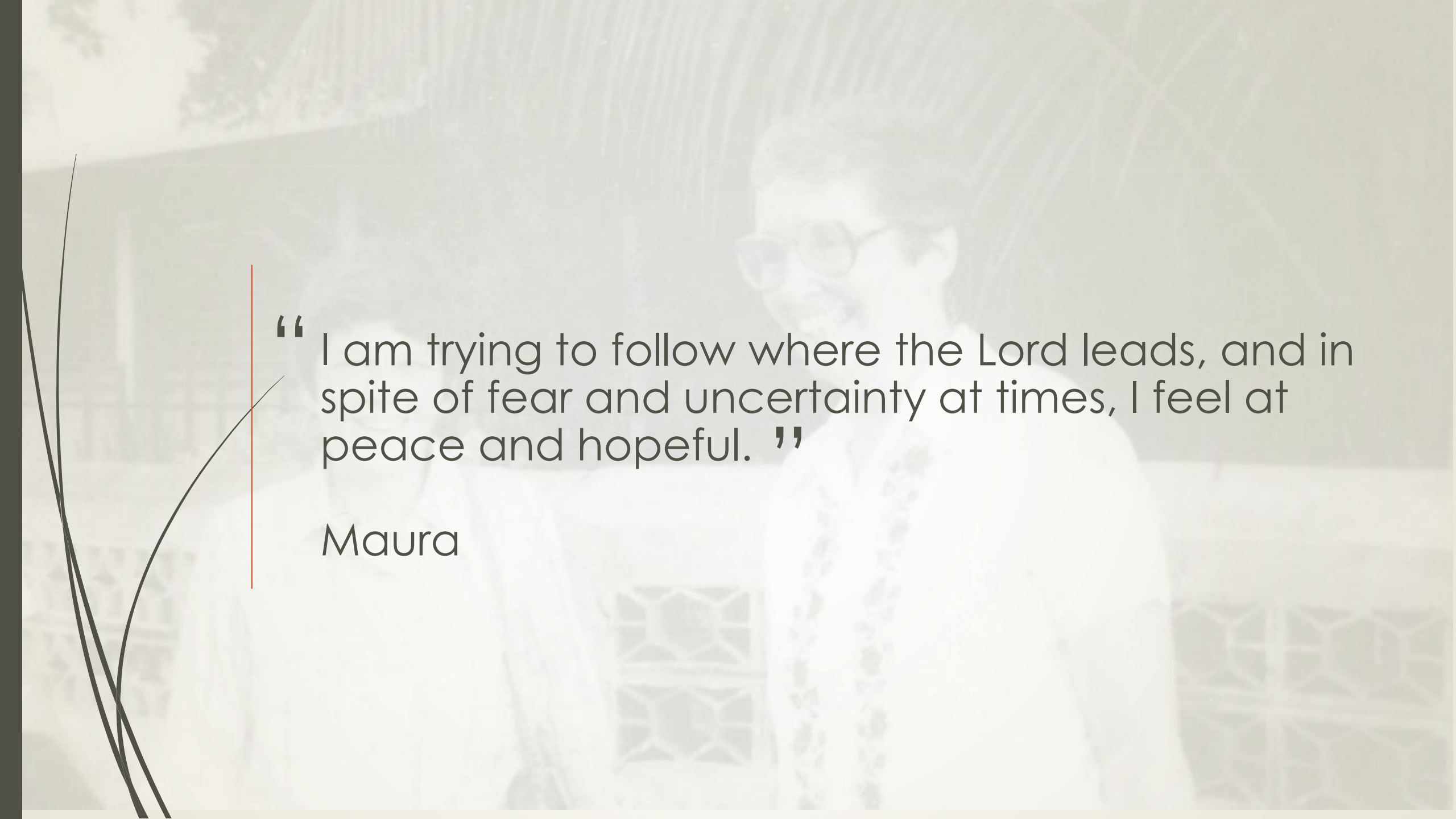


“These are the most rugged and faith-filled men and women who are religious leaders of their pueblos. It takes courage for them to continue any celebrations of the Word or meetings because anyone suspected of being attached to the church is in serious danger. I was so impressed by them. The poor really strip you, pull you, challenge you, evangelize you, show you God.”

“The way innocent people, families, children are cut up with machetes and left for the buzzards to feed on happens every day... There are many hungry people hiding and struggling. Being here with Ita and working for the refugees has its sweetness, consolation, special grace and is certainly a gift. The courage and suffering of these people never ceases to call me.”

Maura





“ I am trying to follow where the Lord leads, and in spite of fear and uncertainty at times, I feel at peace and hopeful. ”

Maura

SISTER ITA FORD

“These were not pious foreign missionaries [living in a] comfortable American-style house, but educated young women who lived in a little wooden house like [the people] did, who traveled on foot and by bus and who shared their bread and their friendship. The coup had been a great proving time, for their house had been searched [like] their neighbours’. They had shared the terror when the tanks had driven between the little houses and over some of them.”

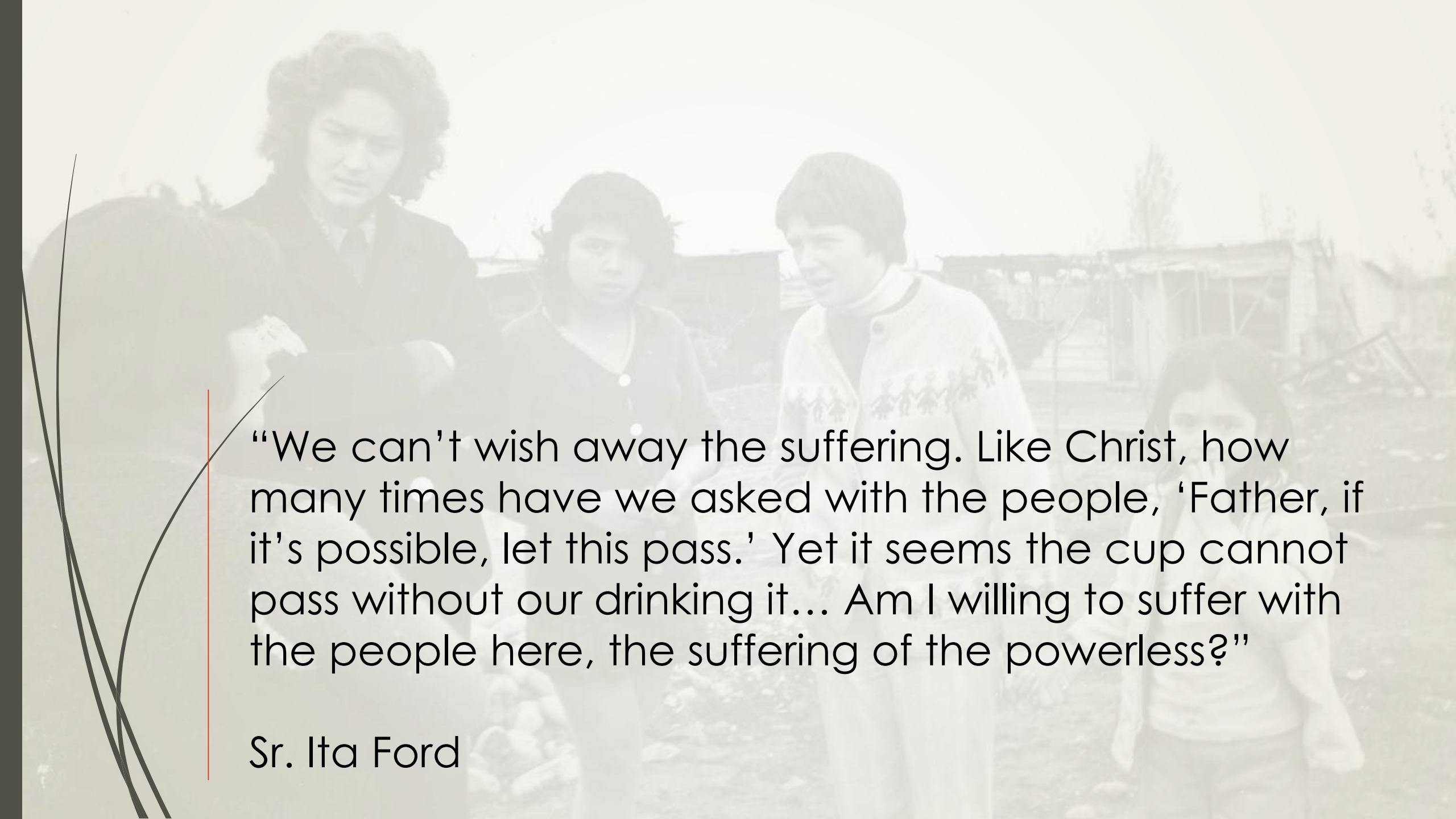
Sheila Cassidy, M.D.



“ We are privileged to have shared this, to know and feel a little of the suffering of the powerless, of those without a voice. ”

Sr. Ita Ford





“We can’t wish away the suffering. Like Christ, how many times have we asked with the people, ‘Father, if it’s possible, let this pass.’ Yet it seems the cup cannot pass without our drinking it... Am I willing to suffer with the people here, the suffering of the powerless?”

Sr. Ita Ford

“It’s a privilege to come to a church of martyrs and people with a strong committed faith. I have a strong conviction that I’m where I should be.”

Sr. Ita Ford



“What’s more important to me now is trying to understand just what the future might be, if there really were bread for all the people, if there really were justice.”

Sr. Ita Ford



“Yesterday, I stood looking down at a 16-year old boy who had been killed. The reasons why so many are being killed are complicated. One is that many people have found a meaning to life, to sacrifice, to struggle and even to death! For them their life has had a purpose. I hope you come to find that which gives life a deep meaning for you. Something worth living for, maybe even worth dying for.”

Sr. Ita Ford

On the night before they were murdered and left on a deserted roadside, Ita read this prayer by St. Oscar Romero:

“Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, believe me, brothers and sisters, one who is committed to the poor must risk the same fate as the poor. And in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, to be tortured, to be captive and to be found dead.”

