

# **Four Women Martyrs of El Salvador: Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel, Jean Donovan, Maura Clark**

*December 2*

## **Environment Suggestions:**

Christ Candle, Latin American cloth, Bible, four candles.

## **Hymn Suggestions:**

Blest Are They (Haas)	Unless A Grain of Wheat (Farrell)
Unless A Grain of Wheat (Hurd)	Eagle's Wings (Joncas)
God Has Chosen Me (Farrell)	

## **Psalm Suggestions:**

72; 75; 86; 127; 146

## **Reading Suggestions:**

Matthew 5:3-12; Matthew 10:37-39; Luke 6:20-26; John 12:24-25

## **Leader:**

Their laughter is silent now. Their voices of concern can no longer be heard. Sporadic gunfire invades the stillness of the afternoon. Their energy is not visible now. And there is sorrow in the eyes of those who loved them. Their words of prayer that resounded through the hushed evening are quiet now. The people whisper, hushed, frightened and concerned. Their gospel message has been silenced by death. Tears flow freely in the evening rain as the people remember.

## **Reader 1:**

*Lights a candle from Christ candle and holds it, reading the words of Sr. Maura Clarke:*

"The endurance of the poor and their faith through this terrible pain is constantly pulling me to a deeper faith response. My fear of death is being challenged constantly as children and old people are being shot... I want to stay on now. I believe that God is present in His seeming absence."

## **All:**

The light shines on in darkness; the darkness cannot overcome it.

**Reader 2:**

*Lights candle from Christ Candle, holds it, reading the words of Jean Donovan:*

"I think that the hardships one endures maybe is God's way of taking you out into the desert to prepare you to meet and love Him more fully."

**All:**

The light shines on in darkness; the darkness cannot overcome it.

**Reader 3:**

*Lights candle from Christ Candle, holds it, while reading words of Sr. Ita Ford:*

"Am I willing to suffer with the people here, the powerless? Can I say to my neighbors, 'I have no solutions to this situation; I don't know the answers, but I will walk with you, be with you? Can I let myself be evangelized by this opportunity?'"

**All:**

The light shines on in darkness; the darkness cannot overcome it.

**Reader 4:**

*Lights candle from Christ Candle, holds it, while reading words of Sr. Dorothy Kazel:*

"El Salvador is a country writhing in pain—a country that daily faces the loss of so many of its people—and yet a country that is waiting, hoping, and yearning for peace."

**All:**

The light shines on in darkness; the darkness cannot overcome it.

**Leader:**

Let it be heard and known far and near that Christ the light of the world continues to live in his people. Maura, Jean, Ita, and Dorothy, thank you for sharing this message with us. Amen.

**Gospel Canticle:**

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it cannot bear fruit.

**Intercessions:**

We have Maura, Jean, Ita, and Dorothy supporting us in the search for meaning in our world. Now we pray with confidence.

**Response:** God of our redemption, hear our prayer.

For a rebirth of hope in our world, hope that cannot be changed, we pray...

For a rebirth of justice that will prevail through our dedication to it, we pray...

For a rebirth of truth in our communities, our nation our world, we pray...

For a rebirth of courage to live lives rooted in gospel faith, we pray...

For a rebirth of remembrance of the legacy left to us by these four women, we pray...

For what else shall we pray? *Pause to add any further intentions.*

**Closing Prayer:**

Loving and Compassionate God, make us prophets of your word. Open our ears and our hearts to hear the words of your prophets, our sisters Ita Ford, Maura Clark, Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan, as they challenge us to take you at your word, to feel within us your urgent cry for justice in our world. May we take that cry as our own and become instruments of your justice and peace as we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father:**

**Blessing:**

Echoing the words of our sister, Ita Ford, we ask our loving God to help each of us to find deep meaning in our lives, something worth living for, even worth dying for. Now let us pray for God's blessing:

God, our redeemer and our hope, bless this community which has come together to remember our beloved martyrs of El Salvador, Maura, Jean, Ita, and Dorothy.

*pause*

God, our redeemer, you promised us life, and so we come to you with confidence in our redemption. AMEN.

God, our hope, you have given us the example of these martyrs so that we can find the way to fullness of life in this world. AMEN

God, our strength, you have promised us everything we need to follow you on the path of truth and justice so that we can go from this place with the assurance that you accompany us on the way. AMEN.

### **Concluding Hymn**