



Heartland International Mission

Resource Guide

BOOKS

Title Information	Author	Description
Bitter Grounds. Hyperion, 1998	Benitez, Sandra.	Bitter Grounds, Sandra Benitez's American Book Award-winning novel, chronicles the lives of three generations of women in war-torn El Salvador. After losing most of their family during the massacres of 1932, Mercedes Prietas and her daughter Jacinta go to work for Elena de Contreras and her family, who own enormous coffee and cotton plantations. During the next 40 years, the women of both families help each other endure the many hardships that come their way. Benitez manages to portray both the poor and the rich women in this book as complex, sympathetic characters. Like the heroines of Los dos, their favorite radio soap opera, the women in this novel suffer heartache, unrequited love, betrayal, and the loss of loved ones. One by one, all of Jacinta's family members are killed amid the country's political turmoil. Elena's heart breaks when she discovers her best friend in bed with her husband on the eve of their daughter's marriage. The Contreras family struggles to retain control of its land during the late 1970s government-mandated redistribution of wealth. Through it all, the women sustain each other, even after circumstances separate them.
Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador. Orbis, 1990.	Sobrino, Jon. Ignacio Ellacuría, et al.	A haunting, prophetic collection of writings by the six Jesuit priests of the Central American University massacred by Salvadoran soldiers in November, 1989. In a moving memoir Jon Sobrino recalls years of work with each of the priests and celebrates the ideals they embodied.
Faith of a People: The Life of a Basic Christian Community in El Salvador, 1970-1980. Orbis, 1986	Galdámez, Pablo.	Pablo Galdámez is the pseudonym of a European priest who has served as a missionary in El Salvador. This book is a history of the small Salvadoran community in which he served during the years 1970-1980. The book describes the radicalization of Galdámez' faith as he works and lives with Salvador's poorest citizens and struggles with them for human dignity and justice.

From Grandmother to Granddaughter: Salvadoran Women's Stories. University of California Press, 2000.	Gorkin, Michael Peneda, Marta and Leal, Gloria.	The life histories and testimonies of nine Salvadoran women from different generations shape this intimate portrayal of contemporary El Salvador. The authors interviewed a grandmother, mother, and granddaughter from three Salvadoran families: La Familia Nuñez, members of the upper class; La Familia Rivas, from El Salvador's growing middle class; and La Familia García, from the campo, the Salvadoran peasantry. The voices we hear convey a deep sense of the world of Salvadoran women and how life is lived in that Central American country today. Each woman tells her own life story, and interspersed with recollections of childhood, marriage, and childrearing are revealing accounts of El Salvador's turbulent political past and present. Reflected in the stories are the vast changes in educational and occupational opportunities for women and the shifts in male-female relationships. Class differences are still a fundamental part of Salvadoran life, but changes are occurring in this area as well. From Grandmother to Granddaughter is a vivid and authentic portrait of today's El Salvador that convincingly illustrates how individual lives can reflect the larger changes within a society.
Here I am, Lord: The Letters And Writings Of Ita Ford. Orbis, 2005.	Evans, Jeane.	Biography of Ita Ford, US churchwoman martyred in El Salvador in 1980, written via her personal writings.
I was Never Alone, A prison diary from El Salvador. Ocean Press, 1992.	Diaz, Nidia.	A leader in the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front recounts her capture and imprisonment by the Salvadoran government and eventual exchange for the president's daughter
Inside El Salvador. Albuquerque, NM: Interhemispheric Relations, 1995.	Barry, Tom; Murray, Kevin.	Guide to El Salvador's Politics, Economy, Society and Environment.
Like grains of Wheat: A Spirituality of Solidarity. Orbis: 2004.	Dennis, Marie and Swedish, Margaret	Highlights the stories of American church members as they accompany the poor in Central America.
One day of Life. Vintage International, 1991.	Manlio, Argueta..	Awesome for the authenticity of its vernacular style and the incandescence of its lyricism, One Day of Life depicts a typical day in the life of a peasant family caught up in the terror and corruption of civil war in El Salvador. 5:30 A.M. in Chalate, a small rural town: Lupe, the grandmother of the Guardado family and the central figure of the novel, is up and about doing her chores. By 5:00 P.M. the plot of the novel has been resolved, with the Civil Guard's search for and interrogation of Lupe's young granddaughter, Adolfinia. Told entirely from the perspective of the resilient women of the Guardado family, One Day of Life is not only a disturbing and inspiring evocation of the harsh realities of peasant life in El Salvador after fifty years of military exploitation; it is also a mercilessly accurate dramatization of the relationship of the peasants to both the state and the church.

Rebel Radio: The story of El Salvador's Radio Venceremos.	Lopez Vigil, Jose Maria.	From Publishers Weekly Daily during the 1979-92 civil war in El Salvador, Radio Venceremos ("We Will Win"), voice of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front, broadcast exhortations, instructions and propaganda, mostly from the mountain jungle of Morazan Province. The author, a radio journalist with the World Association of Community Broadcasters, combines reminiscences of radio station veterans with excerpts from broadcast transcripts. In vivid and often funny language, these tough men and women describe how they lugged crude radio equipment from place to place, transmitting news, playing music, lecturing and airing live reports of helicopter assaults, civilian massacres and battles between guerrillas and government troops. Though a peace accord was signed in 1992 between the government and rebels, Radio Venceremos continues to broadcast. Photos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.
Revolution in El Salvador: From Civil Strife to Civil Peace, 2nd Ed. Westview Press, 1995.	Montgomery, Tommie Sue	A somewhat dense, but very thorough historical account of economic, political and social events in El Salvador concentrating on the period from 1960 to the present. Montgomery gives the historical context for the current crisis and provides important details and data on issues such as the involvement of the Catholic church in Salvadoran society, the oligarchy-army rupture in 1979, and the various land reforms of the 70's and 80's.
Salvador Witness: The Life and Calling of Jean	Carrigan, Ana.	Biography of Jean Donovan, one of the four US Churchwomen martyred in El Salvador in 1980.
Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics and Revolution in Central America. Orbis, 1994.	Berryman, Phillip.	Chronicling over a decade of war, revolution, and social change, Phillip Berryman offers the most up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the interplay between religion and politics in Central America. Concentrating on Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, Berryman shows how, during the 1980s, each country became the setting for a profound drama of faith and oppression, revolution and retrenchment.
Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology. Orbis, 1996.	Ellacuría, Ignacio and Sobrino, Jon. eds.	Abridged ed. of <i>Mysterium liberationis</i> : fundamental concepts of liberation theology, originally published: Maryknoll, New York: CollinsDove, 1993.
The Hour of the Poor, The Hour of Women: Salvadoran Women Speak. New York: Crossroad, 1992.	Golden, Renny.	From Library Journal: Golden's painful, at times brutal oral history of the truly dispossessed of El Salvador chronicles the fate of impoverished women who are made a part of the Salvadoran economic struggles while reaping few benefits. Covering diverse aspects of female militancy--martyrs, organizers, revolutionaries--this book excels when it gives voice to these faceless, nameless participants and victims. Conversely, Golden can be quite vitriolic, particularly in setting the scene. One needs to move past this outraged rhetoric (which is admittedly justified, but a bit overwhelming for the inquisitive but uninitiated reader). The lives themselves testify to a greater commitment and understanding, and it is this element which will ultimately convince the reader. Some familiarity with base Christian communities and liberation theology is helpful. Recommended for women's studies and growing liberation theology collections.

The Massacre at El Mozote. 1994.	Danner, Mark.	In October 1992, the international community was shocked to hear of the recovery from shallow graves of 25 bodies, all but two of them children, near the ruined church of Santa Catarina in the village of El Mozote, El Salvador. Shortly thereafter, another 100 corpses were discovered elsewhere in the village. After 11 years of investigation, political pressure, and intense lobbying efforts by human rights groups, civil libertarians, and concerned individuals, the truth of what really happened in 1981 in this remote Salvadoran village finally began to emerge, a flashback to the infamous My Lai massacre of the Vietnam War. The situation in El Mozote was similar: villagers caught in the political crossfire between rival groups during a brutal war, trying to remain on friendly terms with their own soldiers while fearing to alienate the opposition. Danner's well-written account, which first appeared in <i>The New Yorker</i> and has been expanded here, does a good job of presenting evidence based on eyewitness accounts and reveals the callousness of U.S. Central American policy (the killers were American-trained soldiers of the Salvadoran Army). Especially recommended for Latin American collections.
The Same Fate as the Poor. 2d edn. Orbis, 1994.	Noone, Judith M. M.M.	The Story of Maryknoll sisters Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Carla Priette
The Violence of Love.	Romero, Oscar A.	These selections from the sermons and writings of Archbishop Oscar Romero share the message of a great holy prophet of modern times. Three short years transformed Romero, archbishop of San Salvador, from a conservative defender of the status quo into one of the church's most outspoken voices of the oppressed. Though silenced by an assassin's bullet, his spirit—and the challenge of his life lives on.
The Weight of All Things. Hyperion, 2001	Benitez, Sandra.	Set in El Salvador during the civil war of the 1980s, Benitez seamlessly blends fact with imagination, evoking the trauma of war more vividly than any newspaper account. Nine-year-old Nicolas de la Virgen Veras lives with his grandfather Tata in Chalatenango, El Salvador, but on March 30, 1980, his mother, Lety, who works in San Salvador for Don Enrique, brings him to the city to witness the burial of a martyred saint, Archbishop Romero. In a bloodbath based on a real-life event, 35 people in the crowd of 80,000 are killed and 450 wounded by soldiers' fire. Lety dies protecting Nicolas. When her body is taken away, Nicolas cannot believe she is dead and tries first to find the hospital for the wounded, then to get home to find Don Enrique's address. As he journeys through the bleak Salvadoran landscape, Nicolas is caught in the violent clashes between the National Army and guerrilla rebels. Held at different times by each faction, Nicolas must rely on his wits and faith in the Virgin Mary if he is to survive. Benitez's novel is both political and spiritual, beautifully illuminating the effects of war on the innocent. Like the Sumpul River of Nicolas's hometown, which alternately rages and soothes, Benitez's style is both quiet and intense. Her achievement here is considerable; in this brief narrative, she gives voice to the silenced. Those who seek a deeper understanding of Latin American conflict and who appreciate Benitez's moral stance will find the novel especially gratifying.

FILMS & MOVIES

Title Information	Where to Find	Description
<p>Enemies of War. PBS, 1999.</p>	<p>www.pbs.org/itvs/enemiesofwar Check local and university libraries</p>	<p>ENEMIES OF WAR, shot on location in El Salvador, Mexico City and Washington, D.C., looks at the war from the perspective of civilians like Margarita Acosta de Alas. This Salvadoran mother of five explains how her husband Rigoberto fought with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) rebels. ENEMIES OF WAR includes interviews and conversations with an American congressman sent on the inquiry into El Salvador, a former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador and other diplomats, a Salvadoran opposition political candidate, a spokesperson for the FMLN and two Jesuits who teach at the University of Central America. The documentary looks at the historic Peace Accords of 1992 - when thousands of FMLN rebels gave up their weapons to United Nations (U.N.) forces and 102 Salvadoran officers, many of whom were named in the Truth Commission Report, were dismissed or forced to retire. It also explores the findings of the U.N. Truth Commission on El Salvador.</p>
<p>Innocent Voices Luis Mandosky, Oscar Orlando Torres (2004)</p>	<p>Widely available online and in most video stores.</p>	<p>Based on the true story of screenwriter Oscar Torres's embattled childhood in 1980's El Salvador, Innocent Voices is the poignant tale of Chava, an eleven-year-old boy. Chava suddenly becomes the "man of the house" in a time when the government's army is forcibly recruiting twelve-year-olds to battle against the peasant rebels of the FMLN. It is a story of life, love, the hope of peace, and the ennobling power of the human spirit.</p>
<p>Justice and the Generals. Documentary, 90 min First Run/Icarus Films (2002)</p>	<p>Amazon.com Check local and university libraries</p>	<p>In late 1980, the bodies of four American women were exhumed from a crude grave in El Salvador. The women - Ita Ford and Maura Clarke, nuns of the Maryknoll Congregation in New York; Dorothy Kazel, a nun in the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland; and Jean Donovan, a lay missionary from the Cleveland Mission - had been abducted, raped, and murdered. An investigation led to the trial and conviction of five Salvadoran National Guardsmen. But who was behind the murders? JUSTICE AND THE GENERALS offers unique insight into a new chapter in international human rights law, an important step forward in the campaign to bring military commanders to justice for crimes committed within their ranks. At the same time, as it follows efforts to hold human rights abusers accountable, JUSTICE AND THE GENERALS also maps the confusion, barbarism, and, ultimately, the tragic heart of a conflict whose wounds, two decades later, are far from healed.</p>
<p>Massacre at El Mozote. 60 Minutes documentary, ca. 1993.</p>	<p>www.afsc.org Check local and university libraries</p>	<p>A startling examination by "60 Minutes" of the massacre of 800 mothers and children by the U.S. trained and equipped Salvadoran military in the early 1980's. Chilling factual evidence that vindicates Ray Bonner's original reporting of the massacre, which was covered up by the U.S. media under Reagan's pressure.</p>
<p>Romero. Starring Raul Julia. Vidmark Entertainment video.</p>	<p>Widely available online and in most video rental stores.</p>	<p>Romero is a film (1989) depicting the life of assassinated Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, played by Raul Julia. Richard Jordan played the role of Romero's close friend and fellow martyred priest Rutilio Grande.</p>

Roses in December. The story of Jean Donovan by Ana Carrigan and Bernard Stone. Maryknoll World Productions. Tel. 1-800-227-8523 Amazon.com Check local and university libraries

The film begins with the exhumation of four American women tortured, raped, and murdered by the right-wing government of El Salvador on December 2, 1980. The women -- Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline; Ita Ford and Maura Clarke, Maryknoll mission sisters; and Jean Donovan, a young laywoman from Cleveland -- were providing food, shelter, medical care and burial to the poor. They were targeted for assassination by a death squad within the U.S.-supported Salvadoran military as part of a policy of suppressing the poor and "liberation theology." The award-winning documentary focuses primarily on the life of Jean Donovan through archival news footage, interviews, home movies, and diary readings. Neither dry nor doctrinaire, "Roses in December" is a painful, absorbing look at the consequences of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy and U.S. intervention in Central America, and how that policy instigated -- and then tried to whitewash -- the brutal deaths of the four American charity workers.

School of the Americas; School of Assassins, Available from Maryknoll World Productions

A short documentary, narrated by Susan Sarandon, depicting efforts of US activists to close the School of the Americas (SOA) a military training facility.

ORGANIZATIONS

Name	Website
CISPES	www.cispes.org
Global Exchange:	www.globalexchange.org
North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)	www.nacla.org
The ROMERO	www.romero.org
The SHARE Foundation	www.share-elsalvador.org

