Sister Dorothy Stang SNDdeN
1931-2005

KEY DATES
• Born June 7, 1931 in Dayton OH - one of nine children in a German/Irish farming family.
• Attended Julienne High School in Dayton, joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1948.
• Her religious name was Sister Mary Joachim.
• Taught 3rd grade at St. Victor School in Calumet City IL (1951), Grades 4 and 5 at St. Alexander School in Villa Park IL (1951-53) and all grades at Most Holy Trinity School in Phoenix (1953-66).
• Began ministry in Brazil in 1966 in Coroata, in the state of Maranhao.
• In the early ‘70’s migrated with farmers to the state of Pará: PA-70 then Jacundá. Arrived in the Prelazia of Altamira and was missioned by the bishop to work on Eastern Transamazonian Highway in 1982 and in the early ‘90’s settled in Anapu.
• February 12, 2005, shot six times and killed by hired gunmen in Boa Esperança, federally designated sustainable development area of Anapu, Pará.

HER DREAM
• That poor farmers would be able to safely live and work on their land.
• Where the farmers could grow crops to sustain their families and community, but not harm or deplete the natural resources of the rainforest.
• Where families could care for one another, and live in peace -- with dignity.
• Her dream was in direct opposition to powerful ranchers who wanted the land for their own use.
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HER WORK

- In the ‘70s, the Brazilian government promised land to farmers who would develop it. Sister Dorothy taught them how to farm the land without depleting natural resources.
- Sister Dorothy also worked with the families to build strong Base Christian Communities -- a Gospel model based on the premise that, by being faithful to Jesus and working cooperatively, each community has the power to live in dignity. Education was at the core.
- During her nearly 40 years as a missionary in Brazil, she successfully implemented programs that created self-sufficient communities of people committed to their own independence and to protecting the Amazon rain forest.
- At the time of her death, she had started:
  - 35 Base Christian Communities, all committed to sustainable farming
  - 39 schools, several with a sustainable agricultural curriculum
  - a women’s center where classes were held on health care, prenatal care, child development and basic first aid
  - a team of agricultural technicians and experts to help farmers in the area
  - a factory to make and sell banana flour
  - a pastoral program to reduce infant mortality rates
  - faith formation classes for children and adults and parish leadership teams
  - adult literacy classes

HER WORDS

- Pray for us and for a world where all can live -- plants, animals and humans -- in peace and harmony.
- I have learned three things are difficult: As a woman to be taken seriously in the struggle for land reform; to stay faithful to believing that small groups of poor farmers will prevail; and to have the courage to give your life in the struggle for change. My faith sustains me.
- We can’t talk about the poor. We must be poor with the poor and then there is no doubt how to act.
- Together we can make a difference bringing peace, joy, caring, and love to a world that is losing sight of our guiding star -- the goodness of the real God.
- We must ask ourselves what we need and not what we want.