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Loretto's \"Jubilee for Justice\" in Washington

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NCR Today

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It was surely one of the most unusual jubilee celebrations in the history of women's religious communities.

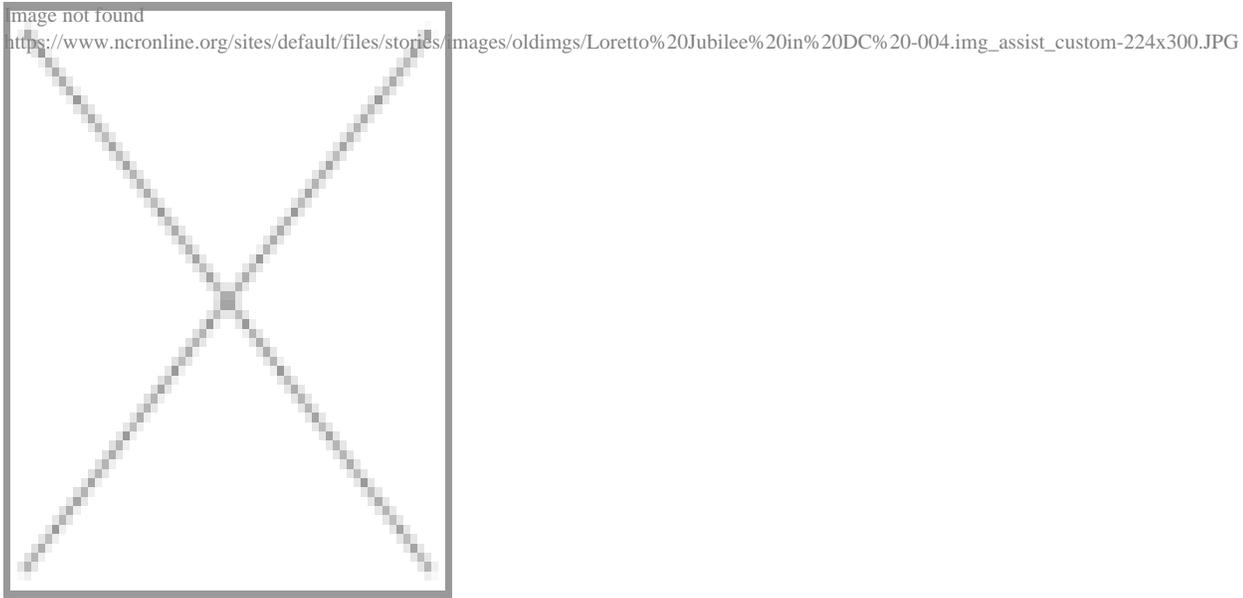
There we were, 30 members and friends of the Loretto Community travelling around Washington, D.C. on a bus Sept. 15, the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary and the feast day of the Loretto Community ? especially fitting since the original name of the Loretto community was ?Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross.?

When those of us who planned the day began thinking about it, we asked why Loretto's typically had come to Washington from our usual centers in the Midwest and West.

The answer? To protest injustices.

More than a few of us had spent time in the D.C. jail for nonviolent protests of various sorts. In fact, our

founding document, I am the Way, calls all of us in the Loretto Community to ?work for justice and act for peace because the gospel urges us.?



With that in mind, we framed an afternoon of prayer around seven sites that symbolize or perpetrate injustices we have protested, travelling by bus to each of the sites.

The seven included: the Supreme Court, the U.S. Capitol, the D.C. jail, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the IMF/World Bank, the Vatican Embassy and the offices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

At each site, we named several injustices and then sang a ?litany of the saints? to renew our hope that ?another world is possible.?

?Saints? included the living as well as the dead, members and non-members of Loretto: everyone from Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, to Carol Coston and Simone Campbell; from Rachel Carson and Chico Mendes, to Wangari Maathai and Mahatma Gandhi; from our own Mary Luke Tobin and Dorothy Day, to Pope John XXIII and Bishop Tom Gumbleton.

And those are but a few of the names.

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Our entourage included several Loretto volunteers, all in their 20s. One of them, Bob Shine, said the event for him was ?a celebration of life where all have a place and voice. ... I feel challenged to recommit to working for justice and acting for peace.?

We concluded the afternoon with the great hymn by Marty Haugen, ?All Are Welcome,? signaling the kind of world and church we want to see.

We ended the celebration with a simple supper and some wine, rejoicing in a wonderful day ? and 200 years.

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