

### AFMIX XI Capstone Reflection

Throughout my AFMIX journey, I have encountered many Veteran themes. In Semester #1, we learned that Ignatius was a war veteran, and only after he was injured in the war did he chart a new course for the remainder of his life. During Semester #2, we learned about the Daily Examen, its format and purpose. I titled mine The Hamilton Examen (attached), after Alexander Hamilton – a veteran of the American Revolutionary War. In semester #3, my small group had two of Veteran employees who shared stories that resonated with my experience as a Christian and a Veteran. During this 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, I also made a point of walking “The Mission Mile.” One of the landmarks is the Shrine of Our Lady, Queen of Victory and Peace. This site holds special significance for me as one of the names on the Shrine belong to my ROTC mentor and good friend 1LT Michael Runyan. In our final semester while working on my Coat-of-Arms (attached), I used the colors red and blue because they signify courage and valor respectively and are representative of the United States. Red is also the color of the Field Artillery, which is the Army branch in which I served. I also used the colors black and gold because they are representative of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, the unit I served in during my time in the Army. The green boarder is also representative of the US Army.

These themes inspired me to look at what I have learned over the last two years through the lens of the seven Army Values. As well as how those align with the ideals and actions of the Jesuits past, present, and future.

**Loyalty** – The Jesuits were unwaveringly loyal to each other. The time and effort they spent writing to one another words of encouragement and motivation to continue God’s work is truly inspiring.

**Duty** – Jesuits are motivated by their mission and the Jesuit vision – namely the ones spelled out in the *Do You Speak Ignatian?* (pg. 5-6 attached).

**Respect** – By finding God in all things, Jesuits in turn recognize that everything is a unique creation of God and deserves the utmost respect.

**Selfless Service** – The pilgrimages conducted by the founding Jesuits are a symbol of their dedication to selfless service. These trips were difficult and at times may have seemed hopeless. However, the Jesuits persevered, not for their own glory but for the glory of God.

**Honor** – Honor is the action of living these values. For centuries, Jesuits have not only talked the talk but they have walked the walk. This dedication to loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage is evident in programs like the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) and AFMIX that are focus on carrying the Jesuit mission far into the future.

**Integrity** – The Xavier Student Commitment in part reads, “We act with integrity, justice, and generosity.” Acting with integrity is woven into the fabric of our mission.

**Personal Courage** – Perhaps the most poignant example of personal courage are the Martyrs of the Universidad Centroamericana in San Salvador. Pages 7-15 (attached) in *The Martyrs of the University* demonstrate the personal courage these men demonstrated in their lives and in death.

### **The *Hamilton* Examen**

Look around, look around at how lucky I am to be alive right now!

What did I stand for today?

Is that what I would fall for?

Did I help build something that is going to outlive me?

When my time is up, who will tell my story?



RICK

Yes, that is the last name...

these are only "pointers" to a Reality beyond human naming and beyond our limited human comprehension. Still, some conceptions are taken to be less inadequate than others within a given tradition founded in revelation. Thus, Jews reverence "the Lord" (the name of God, *YHWH*, is holy and its vocalization unknown); and Muslims worship "Allah" (the [only] God).

Christians conceive of the one God as "Trinity," as having three "ways of being"—(1) Creator and covenant partner (from Hebrew tradition) or "Father" (the "Abba" of Jesus' experience), (2) incarnate (enfleshed) in Jesus,\* the "Son," and (3) present everywhere in the world through the "Spirit." (The terms are put in quotation marks to indicate that they are not to be taken literally; there is no gender in God.) Ignatius of Loyola\* had a strong Trinitarian sense of God, but he was especially fond of the expression "the divine Majesty" stressing the greatness or "godness" of God; and the 20th-century Jesuit\* theologian Karl Rahner could talk of "the incomprehensible Mystery of self-giving Love."

The reluctance of some of our contemporaries to use the word *God* may be seen as a potential corrective to the tendency of some believers to speak of God all too easily, as if they fully understood God and God's ways. All words for God and images of God are inadequate, so it is important to use a variety of them, making it clear that no one is definitive.

**Gospel (literally "good news")**—The good news or glad tidings about Jesus.\*

Plural. The first four works of the Christian scriptures (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) that tell the story of Jesus\*—each with its own particular theological emphasis—and thus invite a response of faith and hope in him.

**Ignatian**—Adjective, from the noun Ignatius (of Loyola).\* Sometimes used in distinction to Jesuit,\* indicating aspects of spirituality\* that derive from Ignatius the lay person\* rather than from the later Ignatius and his religious order,\* the Society of Jesus.\*

**Ignatian/Jesuit Vision, Characteristics of the**—Drawing on a variety of contemporary sources which tend to confirm one another, one can construct a list of rather commonly accepted characteristics of the Ignatian/Jesuit vision. It...

- sees life and the whole universe as a gift calling forth wonder and gratefulness;
- gives ample scope to imagination and emotion as well as intellect;
- seeks to find the divine in all things—in all peoples and cultures, in all areas of study and learning, in every human experience, and (for the Christian) especially in the person of Jesus;\*



- cultivates critical awareness of personal and social evil, but points to God's love as more powerful than any evil;
- stresses freedom, need for discernment,\* and responsible action;
- empowers people to become leaders in service, "men and women for others,"\* "whole persons of solidarity,"\* building a more just and humane world.

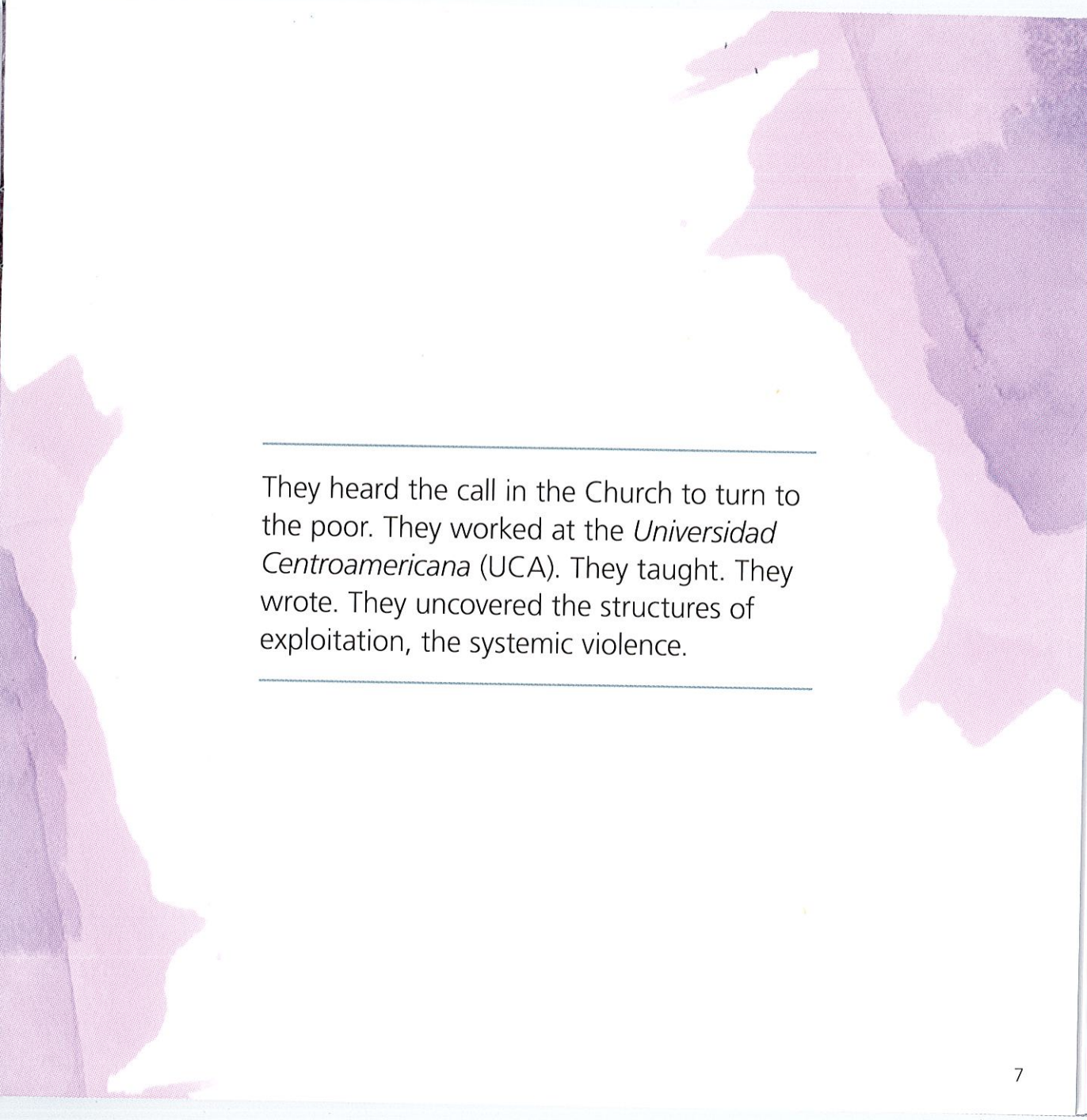
The relative consensus about these should not be taken to indicate that the six characteristics exhaust the meaning of the living Ignatian\* tradition. Like the living tradition of Christian faith, of which it is a part, no number of thematic statements can adequately articulate it. At the heart of both traditions stands the living person of Jesus,\* who cannot be reduced to a series of ideas.

No one claims that any of these characteristics are uniquely Ignatian/Jesuit. It is rather the combination of them all and the way they fit together that make the vision distinctive and so appropriate for an age in transition—whether from the medieval to the modern in Ignatius' time, or from the modern to the postmodern in ours.

**Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556)**—Youngest child of a noble Basque family fiercely loyal to the Spanish crown (Ferdinand and Isabella), he was named Inigo after a local saint. Raised to be a courtier, he was trying valiantly to defend the fortress town of Pamplona in 1521 when a French cannonball shattered his leg. During a long convalescence, he found himself drawn away from the romances of chivalry that had filled his imagination from an early age to more spiritual reading—an illustrated life of Jesus\* and a collection of saints' lives.

After his recovery, he set out for the Holy Land to realize a dream of "converting the infidel." On the way he stopped first at the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat, where he made a confession of his whole life and held an all-night vigil before the Black Madonna. Next he spent almost a year in the nearby town of Manresa and was led to a new direction for his life. Initially, self-hatred over his past life made him let his hair and nails grow and practice extreme forms of penance. He was in torment, tempted to suicide. Finally he greatly tempered his austerities, began to find peace and came to a conviction that instead of withdrawing from the "world" he could use his human gifts to "help souls"—an entirely new apostolic spirituality


Ordered to leave Palestine after being there little more than a month, Ignatius decided that he needed an education in order to be able to "help souls." In Barcelona, he went to school with boys a quarter his age to learn the rudiments of Latin grammar, then moved on to several Spanish university cities. In each he was



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They heard the call in the Church to turn to the poor. They worked at the *Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA). They taught. They wrote. They uncovered the structures of exploitation, the systemic violence.

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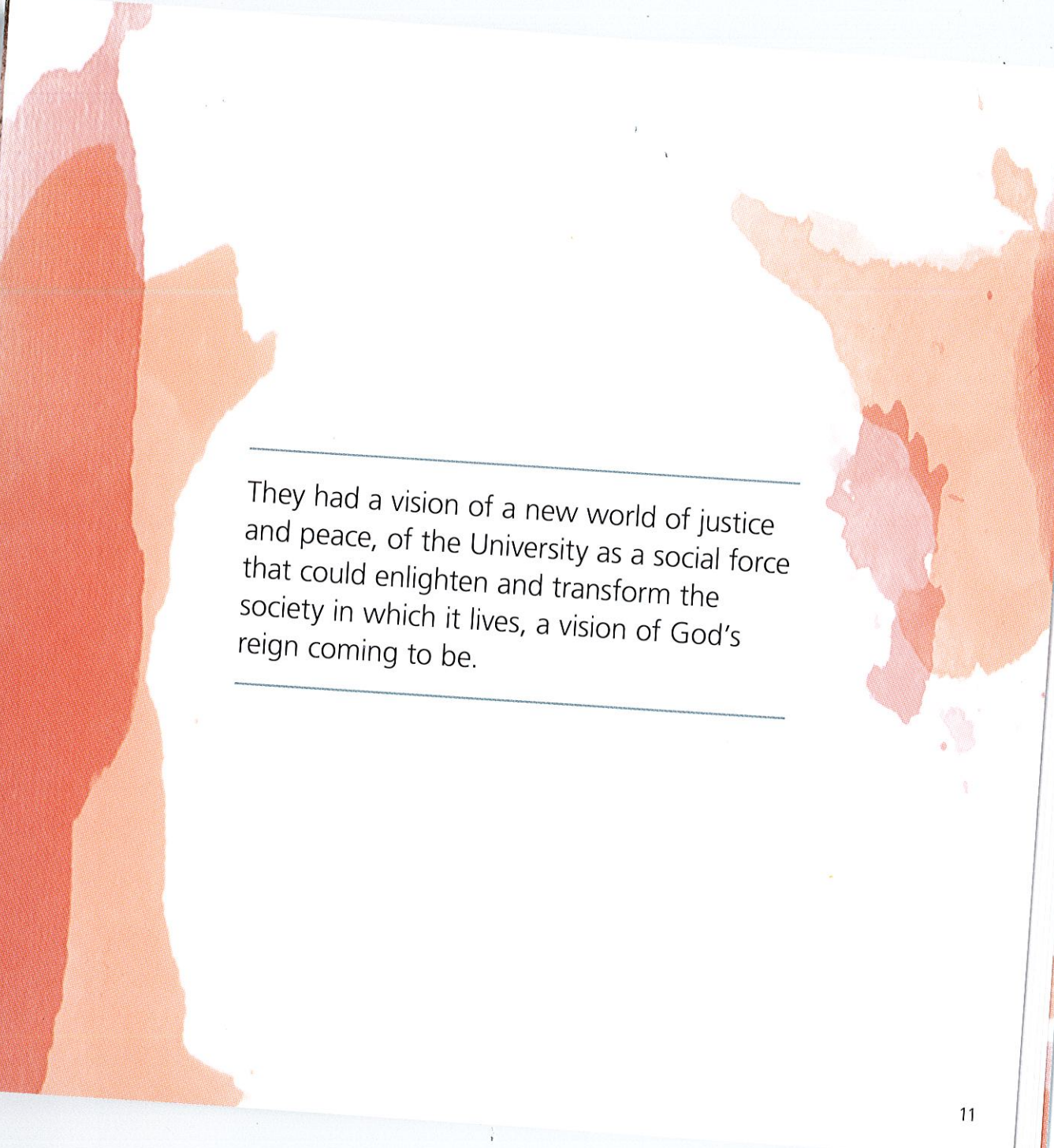


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They defended the oppressed who had no voice. They raised peoples' consciousness of their own inherent dignity. They fed on the faith of the poor with whom they mixed their blood.

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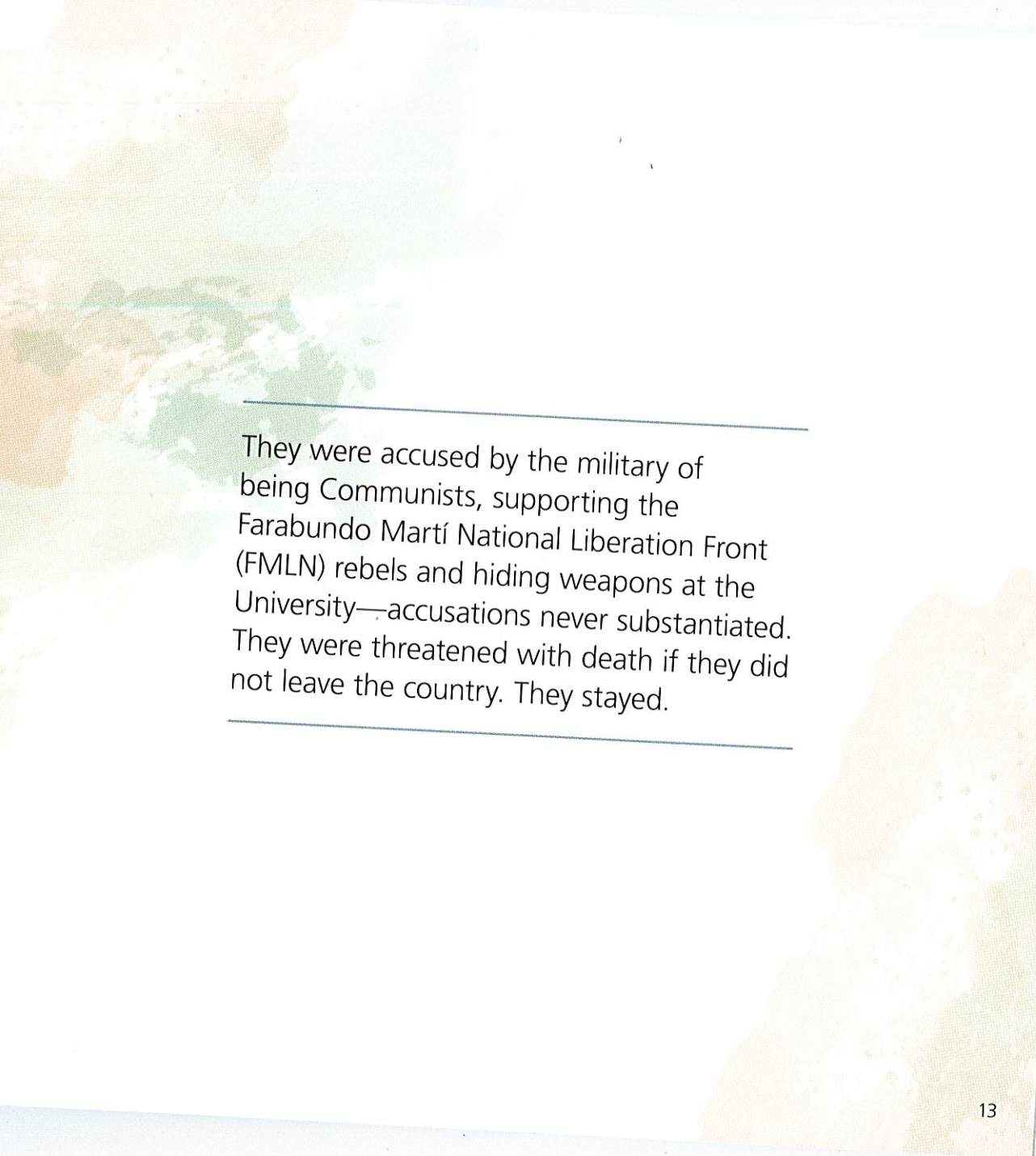


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They had a vision of a new world of justice and peace, of the University as a social force that could enlighten and transform the society in which it lives, a vision of God's reign coming to be.

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They were accused by the military of being Communists, supporting the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) rebels and hiding weapons at the University—accusations never substantiated. They were threatened with death if they did not leave the country. They stayed.

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On Nov. 16, 1989, in the middle of the night, U.S.-trained forces shot them in the back of the head at close range, killing them all, including the mother and daughter who had sought refuge with them. The powerful, who feared the martyrs and their university work and who ordered their deaths, were not brought to justice.

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