Many years ago when Father Raymond Tetrault left the Diocese of Providence and went to study in Berkeley, I visited a friend in California who took me to visit him. Father recommended we visit the Catholic Cathedral in San Francisco. There he led us down into the basement where on the floor were refugees from San Salvador on a hunger strike protesting the War Against the Poor in Central America. Leave it to Father Ray to come from Rhode Island and minister to them.

Later when he returned to the Rectory at St. Michael’s Parish, he and others organized the RI Third World Solidarity Committee to protest actions in Guatemala, San Salvador and Nicaragua against the US-funded Contra War. Several of us, including Father Ray, went to San Salvador or Nicaragua with Witness for Peace and lived with campesinos in the War Zone.

For ten years every Friday evening around 6pm, many of us demonstrated in front of the US Federal Building here because our Senator Pell was head of the US Foreign Relations Committee. He would say in Congress that some may not be interested in this issue, but he had 100 people with candles outside his home office expressing their concerns against the Contra war against the poor. He even spent a Thanksgiving in Nicaragua in support of our calls for peace.

Several years later, Father Ray helped parishioners at St. Michael’s on October evenings hear visiting guests, such as Mario Bueno of Progreso Latino, Linda Katz of Economic Progress Institute, and Katy Nee representing criminal defense attorneys, teach us how to advocate in order to change local laws to bring greater equity and justice for all.

Many of us had the opportunity to visit Father Ray in his small apartment over the years in Olneyville where we read many books and documents, including Pope Francis’s papal “Laudauto Si” about the environment. Father Ray continued his demonstrations to support the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons with Pax Christi RI both outside, at a retreat, and at monthly zoom meetings. He often visited friends; bringing bread or items he’d grown in his garden at the priests’ retirement home.

When anyone had a visit with Father Ray, you had experienced the presence of the Incarnation Divine.

Presente, Father Raymond Tetrault

from Nondas Hurst Voll