

Sunday, June 24, 2001

Sibling nuns go to prison for protest

In all their years as Franciscan nuns, the Hennessey sisters have led lives of intentional simplicity: simple food, simple dress, and simple homes.

Now they are about to leave the simple life in a convent for the hard life in a prison. Sister Dorothy Marie Hennessey, 88, and Sister Gwen L. Hennessey, 68, have been sentenced to six months each in a federal prison—the maximum penalty—for trespassing at a U.S. military school that trains Latin American soldiers.

Tiny as Mother Teresa, Sister Dorothy Marie wears a button saying, "Stand Up for Peace in Central America."

Around 1990, a priest started leading small groups of protestors to the gates of the School of the Americas at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

The protests grew until last November 19, when more than 8,000 people massed outside Fort Benning. The Hennessey sisters were among about 3,500 people who trespassed onto the base.

The sisters have not been told where or when to report, but they expect it to be soon, in Pekin, Illinois, the closest federal prison to their convent.

Adapted from a newspaper article
From the *Marin Independent Journal*