

Sister Rebel
A MEMOIR BY
Theresa Bonpane

A riveting memoir of a lifelong activist, chronicling her journey from a Maryknoll sister to a peace and justice leader, fighting for human rights and a better world.

Theresa Bonpane's memoir *Sister Rebel* is an inspiring and powerful read for anyone interested in the world of activism and social justice. The book charts Bonpane's journey from a young Irish American woman, to a Maryknoll sister working in Chile, to a dedicated peace activist and director of the Office of the Americas. Along the way, she shares her experiences working alongside notable figures such as Howard Zinn and Martin Sheen and how they helped shape her beliefs and actions in the fight for peace and justice. Through her personal anecdotes and reflections, Bonpane offers an insightful and thought-provoking look at the inner workings of the peace movement and the challenges faced by activists on the frontlines. This memoir is not only a testament to the power of one person's commitment to change, but also a call to action for readers to join the fight for a better world.

PRAISE FOR *SISTER REBEL*

"From a Catholic convent to national prominence and controversy, Theresa Bonpane shares her deeply personal and inspiring journey of a lifelong, uncompromising peace and social justice icon, wife, and mother who never separated one from the other and greatly celebrated both in the balance."

—Martin Sheen

"A gripping account of dedicated service, struggle, and personal turmoil, and inspiring accomplishment. It's a truly marvelous story. Once I opened the book, I couldn't put it down."

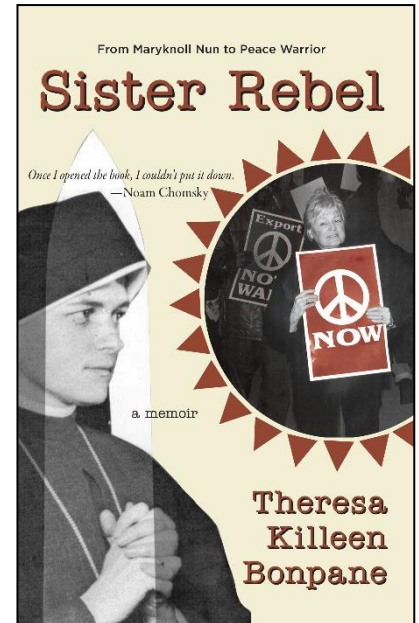
—Noam Chomsky, author of *Manufacturing Consent*

"*Sister Rebel* is exhilarating and honest, and is a pure invitation to stand at the margins with integrity. Her defiant and tender love invites us all to be where our feet are."

—Gregory J. Boyle, SJ, founder of Homeboy Industries

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Theresa Bonpane is a lifelong activist and peace advocate fighting for human rights and addressing the root causes of war and oppression. She served as a Maryknoll sister in Chile and became politically active while working with marginalized communities, realizing that the poor needed systemic change, not just charity. Alongside her husband, Blase Bonpane, her two children, and six grandchildren, she has been a leading voice in the peace movement and has spent decades working to promote peace, nonviolence, and diplomacy.



PUB DATE: August 29, 2023

ISBN: CB: 978-1-93909-614-2

TP: 978-1-93909-608-1

SIZE: 5.5 x 8.5 in

FORMAT: Casebound and
Trade paperback

EXTENT: 208pp

PRICE: CB: \$28.95 / TP: \$18.95

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ADDITIONAL PRAISE FOR *SISTER REBEL*

“*Sister Rebel* is a brutally honest view of life inside a convent and life inside a justice movement. Through her triumphs, struggles, and pain in these very different places, Theresa Bonpane never loses her agency or courage. She stays honest and focused on the cause despite the dramatic changes in her living conditions, her finances, her relationships, her roles, and her perceptions of the world. Ms. Bonpane shares the common and unfortunate phenomenon of an organization working for systemic change in the community while failing to create that equity within their own organization. She understands firsthand that there are times to stay and times to move on. *Sister Rebel* is a riveting book about a courageous, honest organizer who is not afraid of the unknown. Power struggles and personal attacks don’t slow her down. She models how to tell the truth even to beloved leaders and how to persist with what is right.”

—**Rev. Janet McKeithen**, co-founder of the Committee for Racial Justice

“*Sister Rebel* is a rare account of how the inner life drives the outer one. Theresa Bonpane’s story proves justice is love in action. Young Theresa Killeen worried that God’s will for her meant surrendering ordinary life to vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, following the submissive example Mother Mary offered to Catholic girls: ‘Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.’ But as a nun, Theresa slowly realized religious life wasn’t authentic for her, so she took ‘the leap’ that required tremendous courage from one taught it would only land in hellfire. In fact, she created communities of peace and justice with every new step, starting a halfway house for the ex-religious, teaching in LA schools, working among immigrants and the unhoused. When she married Blase Bonpane, a priest who’d left religious vows to commit more freely to organizing for peace and justice, they raised their children while working with the United Farm Workers, and, when they returned to LA, they endured death threats and official opprobrium to ignite a peace movement that has global reach. This book gives me hope for the future of the planet.”

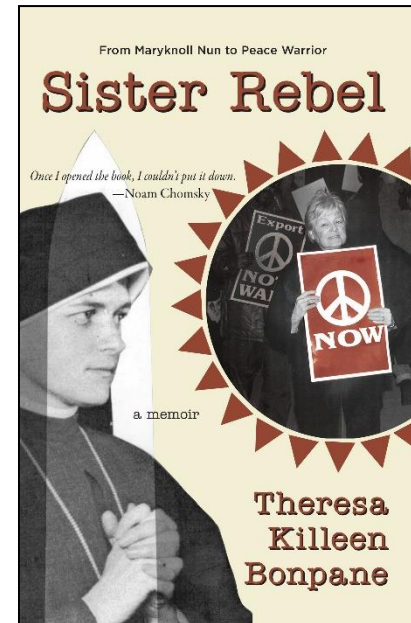
—**Mimi Kennedy**, actress, author, and activist

“Many people witness history, few people make history. Theresa Bonpane, together with her late husband and lifelong comrades, were leaders in some of the most important issues of our times. Her willingness to share her inner life as a nun, activist, mother, and friend through honesty, vulnerability, and humor pull you into her life as it unfolds page by page. It is rare that we get to experience the inner story of someone as brave, persistent, and tenacious as Teresa. Perhaps the title of the book should be *Brave and Even More Brave!* The leadership of the Bonpanes was an inspiration to me as a child growing up around their family and the movement to support the people of Central America, and it continued to shape my life as I drew on it in my own journey to become a faith leader grounded in the values of justice they embodied. *Sister Rebel*—Amen! Amen!”

—**Rabbi Susan Goldberg**, activist and founder of Nefesh

“*Sister Rebel* is an American classic, a powerful and beautifully written memoir of the extraordinary life and times of former Maryknoll sister Theresa Killeen Bonpane. From her humble beginnings as a young woman from Troy, New York, to a Catholic Maryknoll sister dedicated to the poor and destitute of Central America, to a powerful and inspiring leader in America’s peace and justice movement. This is an important book that should be read by every American.”

—**Ron Kovic**, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*



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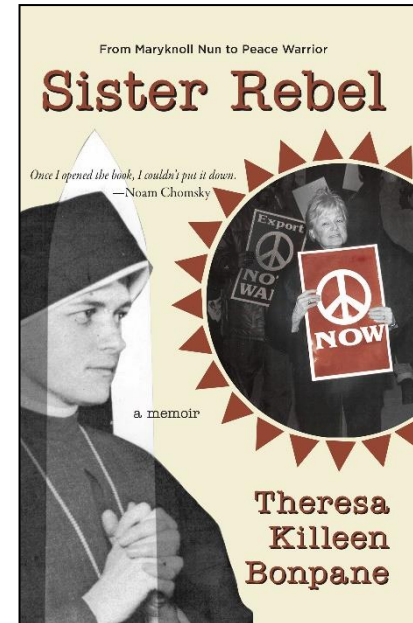


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DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR *SISTER REBEL*

- Theresa Bonpane is a lifelong activist and peace advocate. She served as a Maryknoll sister in Chile and became politically active while working with marginalized communities
- Alongside her husband, Blase Bonpane, she has been a leading voice in the peace movement for decades
- She was working to promote peace, nonviolence, and diplomacy
- A powerful and inspiring account of a lifelong activist's journey in the peace and justice movement, from Maryknoll sister to co-founder of the Office of the Americas



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