

# Archbishop Romero Trust

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## Tenth Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending April 2014

The Archbishop Romero Trust - also known as the Romero Trust - is a registered charity (number 1110069). It is governed by a Trust Deed executed on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2004 amended by a deed of variation dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005. The purposes of the Trust are: a) to advance the education of the public in the life and works of Oscar Romero, the martyred Archbishop of San Salvador, and his principles of human rights, social justice and the relief of poverty; b) to advance religion by promoting liturgical celebrations including commemorations of the life of Oscar Romero and prayer for the cause of his beatification and canonisation; and c) the relief of poverty and the promotion of human rights and social justice (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations Conventions and Declarations and in "Gaudium et Spes", the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council) in Latin America in memory of Oscar Romero.

The trustees are Dr Julian Filochowski CMG, OBE (Chair), Ms Clare Dixon OBE (Secretary), Rev. Frank Turner SJ, Rev. Tony Lester O.Carm., Rev Richard Carter, Mrs Jan Graffius, Mr David Skidmore OBE and Rt. Rev. John Rawsthorne. Mr Stephen Lloyd is the Trust's Honorary Treasurer, Ms Madge Rondo is the Trust's Honorary Membership Secretary and Ms Sarah Smith-Pearse is the editor of 'Romero News', the Trust's twice-yearly newsletter. In September 2013 the three officers were re-elected for a further term of three years.

The Trust is honoured to have Sister Maria Julia Garcia, Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop John Sentamu, Mgr Ricardo Urioste and Lord Rowan Williams as its Patrons. The Trust has no offices of its own; but the registered address is PO Box 70227, London E9 9BR (*formerly* 8 Deans Mews W1G 9EE).

The trustees met on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 9<sup>th</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013 to approve budgets and project grants and to oversee the Trust's annual programme of activities. CAFOD generously provided hospitality for

these Trust meetings. In making decisions and exercising their powers the trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance.

In September 2013 the three-dimensional Romero Cross which the Trust had commissioned from Salvadoran artist, Fernando Llort, was installed in St George's Cathedral, Southwark. The painted panels of the Cross had earlier arrived in Britain by courier from the artist's workshops in El Salvador. Representatives of the trustees, together with the Cathedral architect, Jonathan Louth, accepted delivery at the premises of Trent shop fitters in Nottingham where the Cross was first erected. The glass plates of the reliquary were then fitted and the steel plates on which the Cross stands were completed and engraved. Inside the reliquary is a fragment of the blood-stained alb that Archbishop Romero was wearing at the time of his assassination. Alongside the relic is one of Archbishop Romero's episcopal skull caps. The 'Romero Space' in the Cathedral, where the Cross stands, celebrates the life and death of Archbishop Romero but the Cross also provides a very fitting memorial to the late Bishop Michael Evans, one of the founders of the Archbishop Romero Trust - and it is dedicated to him.

The Archbishop of Southwark, Most Rev Peter Smith, presided at an Ecumenical Service of Blessing to inaugurate the Romero Space on Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup> with the participation of the Dean of Westminster Abbey, The Very Revd Dr John Hall - together with other bishops and clergy and a huge congregation of lay activists from across the country, which filled St George's Cathedral. With the assistance of the Government of El Salvador, Fernando Llort was able to travel to London to be present at the Inauguration and Archbishop Romero's brother, Gaspar, also made the journey from Central America as the guest of the Trust. The Address at the Service was delivered by Msgr Ricardo Urioste, former Secretary to Archbishop Romero and a Patron of the Trust.

Seeking funds in excess of £30,000 to cover the design, execution, transportation and installation of the Cross together with the preparation of the Cathedral chapel area designated for the Cross, the Trust approached parishes, dioceses, charitable trusts and its own supporters. The trustees are happy to report that by April 2014 the required sum had been found - reflecting the very positive public response to the Romero Space. The Cross is already receiving visits by classes from local

schools, as part of religious education courses, whilst at the same time attracting individuals and families who come to view the Romero Cross and to pray there. This has been an extraordinary project in the Trust's portfolio of activities, which will continue to focus public attention on Archbishop Romero's martyrdom and the process underway for his canonisation. The trustees and their collaborators consider the establishment of the Romero Space in St George's Cathedral is a major contribution to the public good.

Mrs Jan Graffius, made two further visits during the course of the year, on behalf of the Trust, to assist the Carmelite Sisters who care for Romero's little house in the grounds of the cancer hospital. It is now a small museum containing the vestments which Archbishop Romero was wearing when he was murdered - vestments which are stained with the blood of a martyr. The museum attracts thousands of visitors every year and proper legal registration of all the relics and the contents of both the house and the nearby hospital chapel, where Archbishop Romero was shot dead, is an urgent priority. The Trust has supported and helped finance the registration process and has sought to find the necessary legal expertise to protect the relics in case of future dispute over their ownership. With the prospect that the chapel and house may be declared part of the national patrimony by the Ministry of Culture, if Archbishop Romero is beatified, this has become a matter of real concern and it is hoped the proposed registration will provide adequate protection for the Carmelite Sisters.

Following the success of the Trust's pilgrimage to El Salvador in 2010 which was organised in conjunction with Anthony Coles, a professional pilgrim-tour organiser, a second group of 34 pilgrims went out to Central America in November 2013 under the auspices of the Romero Trust. The eleven-day experience was made up of visits to the martyrdom sites, together with talks, lectures and prayer services focused on Archbishop Romero and the martyrs of El Salvador. As previously in 2010, on their return many of the participants became ambassadors for the Trust - giving talks and sermons on Romero and El Salvador and its people, preparing photographic exhibitions and raising funds to support the Trust's projects in Central America.

With the assistance of the Carmelite Friars in Britain and donations from 'Friends of Romero', the Trust once again made grants, totalling £5,098, to assist the Divine Providence cancer hospital where Archbishop Romero

had lived and to whose work he was utterly dedicated. Additionally the Trust made a small grant of £1255 to the Fe y Alegría School in La Chacra, one of the poorest sectors of San Salvador, and US\$1000 was sent once more to the Canonisation Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador to enable it to continue to operate and maintain the website with its important record of Archbishop Romero's life and martyrdom. All these contributed directly to the public good.

As the year progressed, the Trust's promotional activities and publicity once again emphasised 'Romero Week' (17-25 March 2014) as the focus for various local, national, diocesan and ecumenical events which could be seen as a single celebration of Archbishop Romero's life and martyrdom. The German theologian, Fr Martin Maier SJ, was the invited guest of the Trust. With the title 'The Last Shall be First: Oscar Romero and the Joy of the Gospel' he spoke at meetings in Sheffield, Glasgow, Cambridge and Liverpool and gave the address at the national ecumenical service at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. He also preached at the Spanish-language Mass in St George's Cathedral, Southwark. These events were directly in furtherance of the Trust's charitable objectives and happily received wide publicity.

The Trust has continued to work with Convivium Press in the preparation of the publication in English of the complete six volumes of the 193 homilies Archbishop Romero gave as archbishop. The six volume-set will be dedicated to the memory of the late Dean Brackley SJ who gave enormous encouragement to the Trust to pursue this challenging project. The US Jesuit Joe Owens has taken on the responsibility for producing a consistent and faithful translation and Tom and Doris Strieter have accepted the task of copy-editing the volumes. The publication requires financial subsidy and the Trust has undertaken to cover the costs associated with the translation, copy-editing, indexing and design of the six volumes. The Trust applied for grant assistance from the Porticus Trust and £10,000 was generously made available. Together with surplus funds from the Trust's book-selling operation this should ensure that the 'Homilies Project' is completed early in 2015. The Trust anticipates this will be an important resource for pastoral work and educational studies.

The 2013 Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture was given by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP, former Master General of the Dominicans. The lecture, entitled "A Disturbing Truth: the Church, the Poor, and Oscar Romero", was given to packed audiences in Westminster Abbey, Manchester University Chaplaincy and in Edinburgh - and received with great acclaim.

The Trust has no salaried staff members and relied on the voluntary work of its Trustees and other benefactors. The bankers for the Trust are the Cooperative Bank plc. For the year ending April 2014 total income came to £65,788.17. Leaving aside restricted income earmarked for the Homilies Project, the Romero Space and other specific programmes, the unrestricted income of the Trust totalled £14,961.96. This was matched by expenditure of £19,063.11 giving a deficit for the year in unrestricted funds of £4,101.15 to be carried forward to 2014/15. The balance sheet shows an apparently healthy figure for total funds held of £30, 837.74 but a good deal of this is restricted and designated for the Homilies Project and for the Divine Providence cancer hospital. At the present time the Trust has no written reserves policy and has established no specific reserve funds from general funds besides those comprised of restricted monies received. The relevant financial information was lodged with the Charity Commission.

Julian Filochowski  
Chair, Archbishop Romero Trust

July 2014