

# Romeronews

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\*\* BARGAIN OFFERS \*\*

of Tutela Legal, the legal aid office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Tutela Legal has struggled for many years to shine the light of truth on El Mozote, and accompanied the process of exhumation and personal identification of 819 bodies.



Local people in El Mozote for the book launch

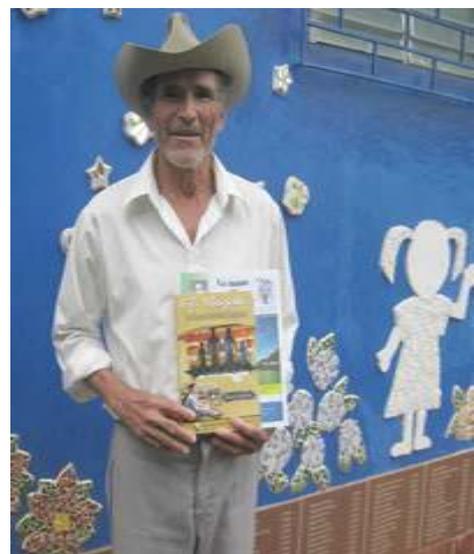
Amongst the participants at the June gathering were Ovidio Mauricio González, the Director of Tutela Legal, Mons. Miguel Ángel Morán, the Bishop of San Miguel, and Mons. Gregorio Rosa Chavez, the Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador.

## El Mozote – Closing the Circle

“They have not died. They are with us, with you and all of humanity.” These were some of the words spoken as people gathered in the small hamlet of El Mozote, in a remote corner of eastern El Salvador on 26 June 2008.

The occasion - the publication of a book of testimonies, narrated by local people, about their friends, neighbours and relatives who were massacred in El Mozote by the Salvadorean army 27 years ago.

The book is called “*El Mozote fights for Truth and Justice - the Massacre of Innocence*”. It is the initiative



Juan Bautista, one of the survivors of the massacre

“The victims were good, noble people, like the majority of our country folk”, said Ovidio. “The truth that left this village has now returned. Today, truth is our special guest.”

Today, truth is our special guest

And so the circle of memory of El Mozote begins to close. Truth has come home and the victims of the massacre have found their voice through hundreds of courageous country folk who have gifted their testimonies as pages of history for the future generations of El Salvador.

### Stonyhurst Curator returns to San Salvador

Jan Graffius, Conservator at Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, returned to San Salvador for a second visit in August 2008 under the auspices of the Romero Trust to carry out further necessary conservation work at the small hospital (*Hospitalito*), where Archbishop Romero had lived and was assassinated, and at the UCA, where the six Jesuits and their two co-workers were slain in 1989. Thousands of pilgrims and visitors, from El Salvador and from overseas, adults and school children come each year to these ‘holy places’ to learn about the Central American martyrs and to pay their respects to them.



Jan Graffius with Mons. Urioste and Fr Jon Sobrino SJ

Jan brought with her from England all of the necessary conservation materials and equipment, plus some extras to leave behind for future need. At the *Hospitalito* she carried out an in depth clean of all the cases and the artefacts they contained, including Monseñor’s books, personal effects, clothing, medicines, clerical clothing etc. Most of these items were simply dusty, as were the interiors of the cases themselves, and looked considerably better afterwards. She replaced the artefacts in the cases, mounting them on Perspex museum display supports which will protect them from the stress and strains caused by being displayed.



Jan Graffius working in Romero’s rooms at the *Hospitalito*

She spent the majority of her week at the *Hospitalito* conserving the Romero vestments and supervising the installation of new hooks on which to support them. She made padded supports using inert polyester wadding and soft cotton fabric for each of the items - alb, chasuble, trousers and shirt. The chasuble and alb were separated to allow circulation of air and inhibit the growth of mould. Sister Maria Julia, the Carmelite Superior at the *Hospitalito*, went along to the sacristy to search for a replacement alb to display under the chasuble and, to everyone’s delight, she found Monseñor Romero’s missing white cassock hidden amongst the stock of albs there. This was placed under the purple chasuble. The alb, which at the time of his death had been cut from neck to hem, was carefully

sewn onto a similar white alb for support. This delicate process took considerable time. Both albs were then hung on a custom-made padded support. The trousers and shirt were similarly supported and re-hung.

Some time was spent carefully conserving Monseñor Romero's black woollen trousers- these have prominent white salt stains around the knees, which on close examination turned out to be sweat stains from a sudden and profuse outpouring. It is most likely that in the few seconds before his death, having seen his assassin, Monseñor Romero sweated as a natural reaction to the shock and in anticipation of what was about to happen. It is a profoundly moving testament to the humanity of this brave man, and great care was taken both to record this manifestation and to preserve its appearance.

The new display looked considerably better than the previous arrangement as the individual items are now more easily seen and the support they have been given will help to preserve their existence considerably. The Sisters became aware of the importance of keeping the air conditioning on at all times. The humidity and temperature levels were checked regularly and found to be perfectly satisfactory when the air conditioning was on.



Conserving items at the Jesuit University (UCA)

The following week was spent at the Jesuit University (UCA) on a similar programme of work. Jan systematically made her way round the cases cleaning the objects and the interiors of the cases and redisplaying the different articles - books, clothes, spectacles, ephemera etc - on new Perspex mounts. The main challenge was to find a way of supporting the clothes of Fr Rutilio Grande and the UCA martyrs - this

was a bigger problem than that faced at the *Hospitalito* as there were considerably more items in a smaller space. Fr Rutilio's shirt was placed on a new padded support and hung from a new hook, allowing air to circulate around it. The clothes of the Jesuits were more difficult as many of them are fragile and most of them are caked in blood and garden soil making them both heavy and brittle. Jan spent a few days making new supports for them and devised a hanging system in conjunction with the UCA technicians. It is functional and, conservationally, a vast improvement on the previous system. It will be superseded in due course by new cases and display supports which will be custom-built and designed. The Martyrs' Room, (Sala de Los Martires), looked considerably better for the clean and the new display materials, and again this work will help to preserve these items for the future. A tiny batch of mysterious eggs were discovered in Monseñor Romero's cassock sleeve and in Ignacio Ellacuria's dressing gown pocket. After much speculation they were declared to be gecko (lizard) eggs!



Gecko eggs found amongst relics

In the wake of discussions with the Jesuits and the UCA staff it was decided to go ahead with the installation of a dehumidification system and air conditioning, and to build new display cases. This will involve the complete reorganisation of the contents of the Martyrs' Room with new interpretative material for pilgrims and visitors. It is hoped that this might be completed in time for the celebrations and events to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jesuit martyrs in November 2009 which will be a major occasion both for the Salvadorean Church and the Society of Jesus worldwide.

## Looking back on Christmas

“We must not seek the child Jesus in the pretty figures of our Christmas cribs. We must seek him among the undernourished children who have gone to bed tonight with nothing to eat, among the poor newsboys who will sleep covered with newspapers in doorways.”

Archbishop Romero, December 24, 1979

## Projects supported by the Archbishop Romero Trust in 2008

From the money which the Archbishop Romero Trust has raised from the ‘Friends of Romero’, three grants have recently been made to organisations in El Salvador which are associated with Oscar Romero and continue his work for human rights and social justice.

£2,500 for the Carmelite Sisters at the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital (*Hospitalito*) where Archbishop Romero lived.

£2,500 was sent to the Carmelite Sisters at the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital where Archbishop Romero lived. They continue to run the hospital today, where people of modest means are treated and cared for. Besides the hospital itself, the Sisters also look after the hospital chapel where Monseñor was assassinated and maintain the tiny house where he lived in the hospital grounds, which is open to visitors. Archbishop Romero loved their work and he spent a good deal of whatever free time he had with the patients and sisters. He passed on to them the peace prize money that he received and wanted them to reap any benefits that might come from his staying in their care. They have a great love and real devotion to Monseñor and are proud to keep his memory alive today. They have become close partners and special friends of the Archbishop Romero Trust.

£2,300 for the Office of Canonisation for Oscar Romero, in the San Salvador Archdiocese.

£2,300 was sent to the Office of Canonisation for Oscar Romero, in the San Salvador Archdiocese. The Office prepared the Cause of Beatification before it was sent to Rome and keeps Romero in the prayers and life of the Church across the world. It has newsletters, prayer cards and an excellent website, [www.romeroes.com](http://www.romeroes.com). The website carries all Monseñor’s homilies, pastoral letters and many photographs and recordings, but for lack of funds has been closed down for some months. The Trust has provided funds to enable it to get back up and running and to update the materials there - many of which we hope will soon become available in English.

£750 for the Legal Aid Office of the Archdiocese (Tutela Legal)

The Legal Aid Office of the Archdiocese (Tutela Legal) continues Romero’s pioneering mission for social justice and human rights in El Salvador. The photo below shows some of the people Tutela Legal is helping, in a collective case against the company Record Batteries for lead poisoning. This high profile case is now with the Inter American Human Rights Commission. Tutela Legal requested our assistance for the purchase of a video recorder to strengthen its communications work and the Trust has gladly made a grant of £750.



Tutela Legal providing legal aid to low income families

## In Search of Romero

*Raymond Perrier, Head of Communities at CAFOD, writes of his visit to El Salvador in June 2008.*

Like many Catholics in Britain, I feel as if I have always known about Romero and had a sense of his importance in the recent history of the Church. But if I had been asked to articulate what that was, or why – beyond martyrdom – his name continues to be so resonant for so many people, I would have had difficulty defining it.

However, a recent trip to El Salvador in my role of Head of Communities at CAFOD gave me a chance to reflect on this more fully. We were travelling with a small group of Diocesan Religious Education Advisors from England, people who are key to understanding and communicating the nature of Catholic Education in this country.

But what we found was that the visit to El Salvador gave us a much deeper sense of the 'why'. Why do we care about the poor? Why are people willing to make such sacrifices to help their brothers and sisters? Why are people in this country willing to take an interest in a faraway people of whom they know nothing?



Romero forms the backdrop of Salvadorean life today

Undoubtedly the inputs from Jon Sobrino and Dean Brackley and visits to various community projects gave us much material for reflection. But for me the overwhelming input was from the way the Christian faith

was lived. A way of the cross painted on the walls of a poor church in the hills told the story: when Christ's passion is depicted alongside the suffering of the people of El Salvador we can be more certain that Christ's resurrection means resurrection for us all.



Stations of the Cross in the town of Arcatao

Romero's prediction that if he should be killed he would rise again in the people was evident everywhere. We literally saw his face in countless posters, murals and tea towels. But we also felt his presence very clearly in the work of people for whom he is their daily inspiration. Strangely the only place where I felt he was least present was at his tomb – no longer the simple democratic monument that was originally in place but now a grand marble sarcophagus where he is enthroned as a 'prince of the Church' complete with mitre! I am sure he would have laughed.



Romero in the kitchen

Sometimes that image can go too far. There was one crucifix I was given where the main figure was not Christ but Romero. I smiled sweetly and hid it. Of course, there has always been a risk in hagiography of using Saints as a substitute for our Saviour – and our Reformed brothers and sisters should rightly continue to warn Catholics against this. But let us not forget that this is the mission to which all Christians are called: to be ‘alter Christus’, another Christ, an imitation of Christ. That is a mission to which Romero responded. But it is no less the mission to which we are all called to respond. And I am sure that Romero (as his name suggests) is the fellow-traveller who accompanies us and strengthens us on that journey.

### Under the Amate Tree

*Anecdote from Antonio Fernández Ibáñez SJ –  
An afternoon spent with Romero, Polín and friends.*

I was making some visits in one of the cantons of Aguilares with four *campesinos*. One of them was the famous Polín.

“We’re going to meet for a while to study the Bible”, one said. Will the honourable priest join us? asked Polín.

“All right, I’ve got the afternoon free. Let’s go!” I told them. And we started walking until we got to the shade of an *amate* tree. The houses were off in the distance now, and we were surrounded only by the scenery of the countryside.

“Shall we get it out?” “Yeah, get it out!” They had the Bible hidden, buried under the ground in a plastic container.

In those times, the Bible was one of the most subversive books you could have, and it wasn’t infrequent that the army would kill some-one for carrying a Bible. They unpacked it. They’d been meeting for some time now to read and reflect on the Gospel of John.



The Salvadorean countryside

“You just sit right there,” they told me, “and if you hear us saying something that’s totally wrong... well you just straighten us out!”

They read. They made their comments. They had some quiet, prayer-like time. They chatted. I was all eyes and ears listening to them.



The ‘famous Polín’

They’d been at it for more than an hour, when way, way off in the distance we saw a little dot of something moving towards us.

“Don’t worry. It’s an animal.” They kept reading, but they also kept looking out of the corner of their eyes. “It is not! It’s a person!” They got alarmed and hid the Bible under some leaves.

“It’s a woman. She’s wearing a skirt.” “That’s not a skirt! It’s a cassock!” “It’s a priest!” Then when he was closer... “Hey, it’s Monseñor Romero!”

He was walking by himself way out there. “Monseñor, what are you doing here?” “That’s what I say. What are you all doing?” “We’re reading the Bible - the Gospel of John.”

“Would you allow a pastor to sit down with you?” he asked them.

“Pull up a chair, Monseñor!” Polín said. He sat down on a patch of grass. And the men went on for another hour with their reflections reading calmly and speaking calmly, like the *campesinos* do, thinking things out so that words aren’t wasted.

Monseñor Romero didn’t open his mouth. When they were through, I turned around and saw that his eyes were brimming with tears. “What’s the matter, Monseñor?”

“I thought I knew the Gospel, but I’m learning to read it in another way.”

And there was Polín, with his mischievous smile.

Extract from *Memories in Mosaic*, by María López Vigil, a collection of stories about Archbishop Romero – available from the Archbishop Romero Trust. See [Bargain Offers](#) below.

### Archbishop Romero – A Martyr for Our Time

*Last October St Martin in the Fields Church in London invited Julian Filochowski to tell the story of Archbishop Romero’s martyrdom and to reflect on his legacy. This is the talk he gave.*

Archbishop Romero was gunned down at the altar almost thirty years ago - a martyr to the social doctrine of the Church and the preferential option for the poor

which he embodied in his ministry in San Salvador. He is on the road to beatification and widely recognised as a model of a Christian, a pastor and a bishop - in fact a saint for the 21st century Church. At a time when some seek to downplay *Gaudium et Spes*, Oscar Romero can be a real inspiration for us. Above all he stands tall today as a truly credible witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ for the people of this post-modernist age.

It was Monday March 24<sup>th</sup> 1980. El Salvador was on the brink of civil war. Archbishop Romero was celebrating a memorial Mass in the hospital chapel where he lived. His homily was a reflection on John’s gospel: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest.” He concluded and moved to pick up the chalice and the paten with the words “this body broken and this blood shed for human beings encourage us to give our body and blood up to suffering and pain as Christ did – not for self but to bring justice and peace to our people...”



It is certain that Romero then watched the assassin take aim through the open chapel door. He had known he was going to die and had prepared himself for the moment. He did not shout out fearing those around him might be killed too. A single bullet entered his body just above the heart. Romero slumped to the floor at the foot of a huge crucifix with blood pouring from his mouth, nostrils and ears. He was dead on arrival at the emergency clinic.

It was the end of three dramatic years as Archbishop of San Salvador.

Regarded as a highly conservative bishop, intolerant of the social commitment of the clergy, Oscar Romero's appointment was a shock to the diocese which had genuinely sought to implement the social teaching agreed at Medellín in a country marked by injustice and enveloped in repression. In fact Romero was a zealous pastor, trained in Rome, whose ministry had taken place within an orthodox pastoral tradition. He was named Archbishop at the behest of the traditional Catholic landowners and the government - with the support of the Papal Nuncio. They believed he was the ideal candidate to get the clergy and the Church to back away from their 'dangerous' social engagement. They could not have been more mistaken.

His installation in February 1977 coincided with a massive election fraud, followed by massacres and unprecedented national tension. Romero had scarcely moved in when the Jesuit priest, Rutilio Grande was murdered by a death squad as he drove to celebrate mass in the countryside. His body was riddled with bullets – police bullets.

Rutilio was the first priest to be killed and he was a close friend of Romero. This murder was not, as we first thought, a Damascus experience, a blinding flash which turned Romero round. Rather, as he prayed over Rutilio's body, it was Romero's Gethsemane. The killing was the divine catalyst that jiggled him, and his pastoral and theological thinking, into place amongst those suffering repression and persecution. He no longer saw the situation as a neutral ecclesiastical observer but from the perspective of the victims. In this Gethsemane he recognised where it would inevitably lead him and he assented. It was his option for the poor, his fundamental commitment, the locus from which he would pray and judge the suffering reality of El Salvador, the place where he would live a spirituality which recognised Christ, the suffering servant, the pierced one, there amongst the poor *campesinos*.

Romero's initial disbelief at Rutilio's killing became prophetic determination. He suspended all participation in official government ceremonies until the assassins were brought to justice. He opened a diocesan legal aid office to document all the killings and disappearances, and to give pastoral support to the families and communities affected. He closed the Catholic high schools for three days and the children were sent home with a question sheet for their parents to discuss what was happening in a country dedicated to 'Our Saviour' when priests were being killed. But, crucially, he decreed that the following Sunday all the churches of the diocese be closed and the masses cancelled. He summoned the priests and people to a single Mass which he would celebrate in front of the Cathedral. He preached passionately about Rutilio's work to a crowd of over 100,000.

The anger of the land-owning and commercial class and the military was palpable and they began to plot against him. Over the months Romero visited dozens of different communities and parishes and heard their stories, their joys and their sorrows. People queued to see him in his office and he listened till late into the night. Repression intensified and was documented as too were the kidnappings, church occupations and strikes organised on the left.



Romero at the funeral of Fr Rutilio Grande

Romero's very own space was his cathedral; and from his pulpit he spoke the truth insistently and unambiguously. He became simply 'the voice of the voiceless poor'.

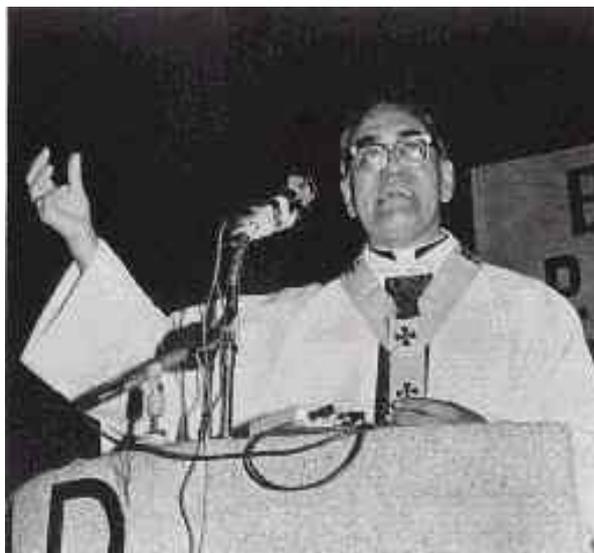
His Sunday homilies were major occasions to interweave catechesis and communication of the social reality. He carefully unpacked the readings and interpreted them in the context of El Salvador.

Then came the good news of the week – the meetings and celebrations in the communities, the visitors and letters of solidarity. Then the bad news. Incident by incident, atrocity by atrocity, he named the victims, all the victims; he said what had happened, where and when and who was responsible. He sought justice, supported recompense and offered pastoral care. This methodology was the forerunner of Truth Commissions that would emerge in future years around the world. I've been present in a hot sweaty cathedral as people listened to him for over an hour with rapt attention – the only interruption being their applause.

Romero's sermons were essential listening for friend and foe alike. Broadcast over the diocesan radio station everybody tuned in. You could walk down some streets in San Salvador without a radio and still not miss a word. Three times they bombed the radio station to take it off the air and CAFOD paid for its rebuilding.

Romero constantly referred to the three idolatries of the time - idolatry of wealth and land; idolatry of power and national security and on the left the idolatry of the party organisation. They were false gods that demanded human victims. But Romero always used the moment for a call to repent, an invitation to a change of heart.

With no justice over Rutilio's case, with the appearance of bumper stickers saying 'Be a Patriot: Kill a Priest', Romero did not attend the inauguration of the new President. It was unheard of, unprecedented. Letters flooded to Rome every week with malign interpretations of everything Romero said and did. They claimed he was naïve, duped and a Marxist-manipulated prelate. Over his three years as archbishop six priests in all were killed and dozens of catechists. "My job is to go round picking up dead bodies" he said. And "I'm gratified that when the people are suffering so much killing that the blood of priests is with them."



Romero's Sunday homilies

Romero had great intelligent discernment and phenomenal courage. He spoke out whenever human rights were threatened. He took on the Law of Public Order, a draconian measure that suspended almost all constitutional guarantees including habeas corpus - the 1979 equivalent of Guantanamo Bay. He challenged the judiciary for the corrupt system of justice and the impunity on which the perpetrators of atrocities could count. He took on the landowners when they refused to give work to desperate hungry peasants. He challenged the left with their kidnappings and killings - insisting there must be no confusion between the evangelical project of the diocese and any other ideologies. Finally Romero took on President Jimmy Carter over US military aid to El Salvador that was being used to kill innocent *campesinos*. His Open Letter sent to Washington outraged the Salvadorean military but sent a surge of mobilising electricity through the US Churches.



The Salvadorean military

As the country edged towards war the threats and insults intensified; a fever existed. Fake newspapers appeared with outrageous headlines attempting to link Romero with left wing terrorists. A suitcase of dynamite

placed behind the altar for his Sunday mass failed to go off. Romero knew he was going to die; he accepted it and in a newspaper interview he said:-

*"I have frequently been threatened with death. I ought to say that, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me I will rise again in the people of El Salvador. I am not boasting, I say it with the greatest humility..."*

*Martyrdom is a grace from God which I do not believe I deserve... But if they succeed in killing me, can you tell them that I pardon and bless those who do it.*

*But I wish that they could realise they are wasting their time. A bishop may die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never die."*

The day before he died his homily tackled the critical question - how should ordinary soldiers respond when under orders to kill and massacre? His powerful response concluded "I beg you, I beseech you, I order you, in the name of God, Stop the Repression". It was his death sentence. The plan already prepared for his assassination was activated. The turbulent priest fell. Champagne and fireworks greeted the news in the wealthy suburbs of San Salvador.

For the Church 'remembering' means something different from a panegyric or a nostalgic speech. The fundamental Christian model of remembering is 'Do this in memory of me'. For us to remember Archbishop Romero must first mean to continue his work and to imitate that option for the poor which he embraced; and like him to struggle with the paradoxes and conflicts that such a commitment throws up for us.

His identification with the poor demonstrates that the 'option for the poor' is not just meaningless rhetoric from the late 20th century. The gospel is addressed to all but its privileged recipients are the poor. It is good news for the poor. It can be good news for us the rich – provided

that we in our lives are good news to the poor. Romero was a deeply spiritual man with a rich prayer life; his example to us is the beautiful and seamless synthesis he made in living and witnessing to faith and promoting social justice. He was neither a political activist disguised in bishop's robes nor an opportunistic priest with a populist project.

He was an evangeliser for all seasons. He became a generator of communion and solidarity. He was utterly orthodox and utterly radical. He truly loved God and he truly loved his Neighbour. He truly loved God in the poor. His crime as a pastor was to tell his fellow Salvadoreans, the loyal churchgoers from wealthy families and the military, that charity for the poor without justice for the poor had little merit. Put very simply they could not have 'God' without 'Neighbour'.

With his statue over the West Door of Westminster Abbey the Anglican Communion has given unprecedented recognition to Romero's martyrdom. Let us pray that the Cause for Romero's beatification goes forward in Rome and we might soon proclaim 'Romero of the Americas' as patron, guide and inspiration to the movements for justice and reconciliation in our globalised world - a world with more sophisticated structures of sin and institutionalised violence than El Salvador in 1980 but the same old exploitation and the same old rampant greed.

*The full version of this article will be published in 'Mission Today' in January 2009*

### **Annual Subscriptions Warmly Welcome**

Contributions for 2009 are warmly welcome. Suggested minimum £10; cheques payable to 'Romero Trust'.

Please consider signing the Gift Aid form attached

Please consider signing the Gift Aid form attached to this newsletter so that we can reclaim the tax paid on your gift.

## Dean Brackley visiting Britain in February 2009



Fr Dean Brackley, an inspiring speaker, is a New York Jesuit who has worked and taught theology in the Jesuit University in San Salvador since the murder there of six Jesuits and their companions almost 20 years ago.

### Diary Dates for Dean Brackley's Speaker Tour

London - Tuesday 17 February  
Edinburgh - Thursday 12 February  
York - Friday 13 February  
Nottingham - Saturday 14 February

Dean will deliver the Second Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture at Westminster Cathedral Hall in the evening of Tuesday 17 February. He will speak about how Romero and Central American martyrs challenge Christians in the North today. He will speak on the same theme in Edinburgh on Thursday 12 February, in York on Friday 13 February and in Nottingham diocese on Saturday 14 February. Put the dates in your diary and please check the Romero Trust website for further details of venues and timings.

## Romero Anniversary Events in March 2009

In the morning of Saturday 28 March 2009, there will be an ecumenical prayer service at St Martin in the Fields Church in Trafalgar Square, London, to mark the 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Archbishop Romero's assassination.

The preacher will be Fr Frank Turner SJ from the Archbishop Romero Trust. Frank is based in Brussels at OCIPE, working on justice and peace advocacy. All

are welcome and we hope that some Friends of Romero may be able to travel into London for the day to participate.

Memorial masses will also be held on or around 24 March, the anniversary date, in Liverpool, Edinburgh and elsewhere and we will try to let Friends of Romero know precise details of where and when nearer the time.

## Pilgrimage to El Salvador in 2010?

There have been suggestions that the Romero Trust, in partnership with other Church bodies, might organise a pilgrimage to El Salvador to take part in the celebrations around the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom and to visit the holy places associated with his life and death. Nothing at all is planned yet.

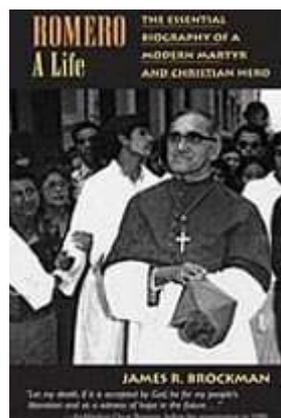
However we would be keen to know if there are those who might be interested in a visit of 7-10 days to Central America in mid March 2010 as a Romero pilgrimage. Naturally such a journey would be substantially more expensive than chartered flights to Lourdes or Rome, but if there is real interest we will investigate the feasibility for such a justice and peace pilgrimage.

Please let us know on [romerotrust@btinternet.com](mailto:romerotrust@btinternet.com) if you and/or your friends might be interested.

## Book Review

Julian Filochowski reviews

'Romero: A Life' by James R Brockman



£10 (incl. p & p)

James Brockman wrote this definitive biography of Archbishop Romero back in 1989, nine years after his assassination. But it was updated and republished in 2005. It has only a single chapter covering Romero's hidden years (1917-1970), together with the controversial period of his service as the capital's Auxiliary Bishop and then as head of the rural diocese of Santiago de Maria.

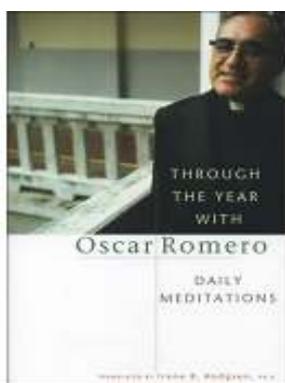
For the rest it is a detailed, accurate, chronological and highly-readable account of Romero's heroic ministry as Archbishop of San Salvador and the road to martyrdom that he travelled from his appointment in February 1977 to his assassination on March 24<sup>th</sup> 1980.

Brockman spent months ploughing through the diocesan archives and the minutes of the bishops' conference, from which he quotes extensively and which enable the reader to begin to appreciate the otherwise unbelievable hostility of four of his five Episcopal colleagues.

A useful appendix looks at the authors of the crime and those who carried out the execution although the identity of the man who pulled the trigger is unresolved to this day. Sadly this crime against humanity has never been brought to a court of law in El Salvador.

## BARGAIN OFFERS

*Through the Year with Oscar Romero: Daily Meditations*

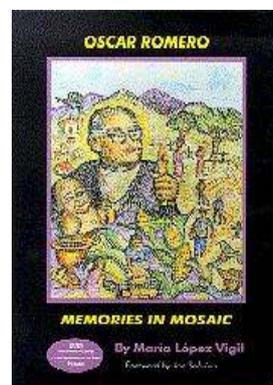


(£9 incl p & p)

Archbishop Romero was assassinated on 24 March 1980 while celebrating the Eucharist. In these powerful

and moving selections from his broadcasts, Romero invites us each day to move into the 'intimate space' of our conscience, to encounter ourselves there, and then to go out to create a more just world. Beautiful and inspiring extracts.

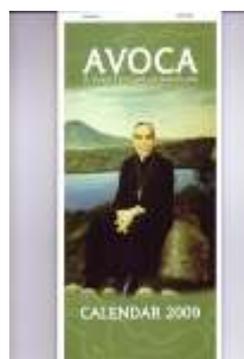
*Oscar Romero: Memories in Mosaic*



£9 (incl. p & p)

The story of an archbishop whose courage cost him his life, told through the words of those who worked with him, lived with him and prayed with him. One of the best books on Romero. Un-put-downable. Specially imported from the USA. Highly recommended.

*The AVOCA Engagement Calendar*



£2.50 (incl. p & p)

The AVOCA Engagement Calendar is produced by AVOCA, A Voice for Central Americans, to support projects sponsored by the Franciscans in El Salvador and across the region.

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