

Archbishop Romero Trust

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Twelfth Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending April 2016

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 6th September 2004 amended by a deed of variation dated 9th 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. Anthony Lester O.Carm. (until June 2015), Rev. Richard Carter, Mr Stephen Davies, Mrs Jan Graffius, Sister Eileen McLoughlin (from September 2015), Rt. Rev. John Rawsthorne, Mr David Skidmore OBE, and Rev. Frank Turner SJ. Mr Stephen Lloyd is the Trust's Honorary Treasurer, Ms Madge Rondo is the Trust's Honorary Membership Secretary and Ms Tania Dalton is the editor of 'Romero News', the Trust's twice-yearly newsletter. The mandates of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer run until September 2016.

The Trust is honoured to have Sister Maria Julia Garcia, Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop John Sentamu and Lord Rowan Williams as its Patrons. Additionally, Mgr. Ricardo Urioste served as a Patron of the Trust until his death in January 2016. RIP.

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 23rd June & 17th September 2015 and 12th January 2016 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.

The activities of the year were focused on the preparations, the celebrations, and the thanksgiving events linked to Oscar Romero's beatification which took place in San Salvador on Pentecost Saturday, 23rd May 2015. Four trustees were present at the ceremonies - representing the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, CAFOD and the Trust. In order to facilitate an ecumenical presence from Britain, the Trust made arrangements with the Office of Canonisation in San Salvador for the Archbishop of York, the Dean of Westminster and Lord Rowan Williams, archbishop-emeritus of Canterbury, to be invited to the beatification. Unfortunately given the timetable of the ceremonies none of them was in a position to accept. Nevertheless, a set of the red vestments, designed and made for the celebration of Romero's beatification, was sent from San Salvador, via the Trust, to Westminster Abbey - as well as a set for St George's Cathedral, Southwark.

A key beatification project in San Salvador for the Trust was arranging the safe transfer of Archbishop Romero's blood-encrusted shirt from the display case in his little house at the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital into a huge specially-designed reliquary, which was to be a central focus at the beatification event. Mrs Jan Graffius spent two days, in the week prior to the ceremonies, preparing the extremely delicate shirt and seeking to ensure its safety and stability in the reliquary - which was to be carried on high on the shoulders of four seminarians.

She returned to San Salvador once more in November 2015 to modify the shirt's display and to make recommendations to the archdiocesan authorities regarding its long-term security. Soon afterwards the Trust learnt that the shirt had been returned to its original display at the Hospital. During that November visit, taking advantage of Jan Graffius' technical expertise on the care of relics, it became possible for Don Gaspar Romero, the brother of Archbishop Romero, to hand over into the care of the Carmelite Missionary Sisters of St Teresa at the Hospital, with all the necessary legal protections, a small crystal glass reliquary containing fragments of one of Archbishop Romero's rib bones which had

been in Don Gaspar's keeping since the assassination in 1980. The reliquary is at present in a display under the floor beside Archbishop Romero's bed at the Hospital. The Sisters' plan is eventually to place it under the floor of the chapel at the spot where Archbishop Romero fell when he was shot.

In England, the Trust organised a National Mass of Thanksgiving for Blessed Oscar Romero on Saturday 15th August in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, at which Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor presided and Bishop John Rawsthorne preached. It was planned to coincide with a celebration of Romero's 98th birthday - and with a view to an annual celebration being held on or near to 15th August each year in St George's Cathedral. Other religious services were organised in different dioceses; some coincided with the ceremony in San Salvador on 23rd May.

To mark the beatification, the Dean of Westminster, in conjunction with the Embassy of El Salvador in London, arranged a special wreath-laying liturgy in front of the Abbey on the afternoon of Tuesday 7th July 2015. This was followed by a Reception at Speaker's House in the Palace of Westminster which the Trust was able to organise, in partnership with the Embassy, to honour those parliamentarians who played key roles in the Nobel Peace Prize nomination of Oscar Romero in 1978. Lord Eric Avebury (since deceased), Sir Peter Bottomley MP and the former MP, Kevin McNamara, were each presented with special diplomatic awards. We are indebted to Mr Speaker, John Bercow, for generously making his rooms available to the Trust for this very special occasion.

For Romero Week 2016, 13th-20th March, the Trust invited Fr Francisco De Roux SJ from Colombia to speak at public events in Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester and London. In each place he made a poignant presentation on the violence in Colombia and the current peace process. He also gave a lecture at Bradford University's School of Peace Studies. The theme chosen for the National Ecumenical Service at which he preached in St Martin-in-the-Fields in London on Saturday 19th March was 'The Violence of Peace-making - Archbishop Romero and the Search for Peace'.

As in previous years, local, diocesan and ecumenical events took place in Scotland, Wales and England. The Trust provided speakers, liturgy outlines, and literature for many of these occasions. All these Romero Week activities were directly in furtherance of the Trust's charitable objectives and generated substantial media coverage.

Work on upgrading the Trust's website (www.romerotrusted.org.uk) was completed early in 2016 and it went live in time for the anniversary of Romero's martyrdom on March 24th. The refreshed and upgraded site contains a wider selection of resources than before in an easily navigable format. The Trust has frequent postings on Facebook and Twitter and these offer links to the website whenever appropriate. The Trust was also able to launch on the site a cartoon animation of Romero in time for the anniversary events. It is a simple and pithy telling of the Romero story, in four minutes, using the special characteristic drawings of Salvadoran artist, Fernando Llort. It is proving to be a popular education tool for schools and young people and had over 5000 on-line viewings in the first three months. A dubbed version of the animation was quickly produced in Spanish by collaborators of the Trust in El Salvador.

The Trust has continued to work with Convivium Press in finalising the publication in English of the complete six volumes of the 193 homilies Archbishop Romero gave as archbishop. Happily, Volume 1 was available in time for the beatification in May 2015. Volumes 2, 3 & 4 have followed at regular intervals and were available from the Trust and on sale at booksellers by April 2016. But there have been unavoidable delays in the publishing plans, largely because of the unstable political and social situation in Venezuela where the design work is being undertaken. The printing is being done in Colombia and Volumes 5 & 6 are now expected to be on sale in Britain by September 2016. The Trust anticipates this will be an important resource for pastoral work and educational studies. With the assistance of grants from CAFOD, Missio and Jesuit Missions, the full six-volume set is being provided to every diocese and all the seminaries in England and Wales and to selected seminaries and pastoral centres in Africa and Asia.

The 2015 Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture was given by Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga SDB. The lecture, entitled 'From Romero to Francis: The Joy and the Tensions of Becoming a Poor Church with the Poor', was delivered in St George's Cathedral, Southwark on Thursday evening October 1st. It was warmly received.

The sixteenth and seventeenth issues of Romero News, edited by Tania Dalton, were produced and distributed to some eight hundred 'Friends of Romero' in July 2015 and February 2016.

With the assistance of the Carmelite Friars in Britain and donations from 'Friends of Romero', the Trust once again made a grant, totalling £3,998 (US\$6000), to assist the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital where Archbishop Romero had lived and to whose work he was utterly dedicated. With earmarked donations received from supporters, the Trust also made a small grant of £1000 (US\$1500) to the Fe y Alegría School in La Chacra, one of the poorest sectors of San Salvador. In the light of the heavy expenditures incurred in relation to the beatification ceremony and associated activities in San Salvador in May 2015, the Trust made an increased grant of £3411 (US\$5000) to the Canonisation Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador to enable it to continue to operate effectively and maintain the website (www.romeroes.com) with its record of Archbishop Romero's life and martyrdom. All these grants contributed directly to the public good.

In planning for the year ahead the principal focus of the Trust's activities will be preparing for and celebrating 2017 as the Romero Centenary Year - and incorporating his canonisation within that, in the event of any Vatican decision that this should go ahead.

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 2016 total income came to £57,117.32. Leaving aside restricted income earmarked for the Homilies Project and other specific programmes, the unrestricted income of the Trust totalled £20,007.98. This was matched by expenditure of £20,547.68 giving a deficit for the year in unrestricted funds of £539.70 to be carried forward to 2015/16. The balance sheet shows an apparently healthy figure for total funds held of £30,589.54 but a good deal of this is restricted and designated for the Homilies Project, for the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital and the La Chacra project. 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 2016