

# Archbishop Romero Trust

PO Box 70227, London E9 9BR

[romerotrust@gmail.com](mailto:romerotrust@gmail.com)

## 13th Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending April 2017.

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), Mr Stephen Davies (Moderator/Vice-Chair), Ms Clare Dixon OBE (Secretary), Rev. Richard Carter, Mrs Jan Graffius, Sister Eileen McLoughlin, 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, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer run until September 2019.

The Trust is honoured to have Archbishop Leo Cushley, Sister Maria Julia Garcia, Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop John Sentamu, Mgr Rafael Urrutia 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 7<sup>th</sup> April, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017 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 Trust organised a National Mass to honour Blessed Oscar Romero on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, at which Bishop Patrick Lynch presided and preached. It was arranged as a celebration of Romero's 99<sup>th</sup> birthday - part of a celebration held each year in St George's Cathedral around the date of his birth, 15<sup>th</sup> August.

For Romero Week 2017, 18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March, the Trust invited Sister Martha Zechmeister C.J. from the Centro Monseñor Romero at the Jesuit University in San Salvador to speak at public events in Wrexham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sheffield, Canterbury, Horsham and London. In each place she made an insightful presentation about the challenge that Romero's ministry puts before Christians today. The theme chosen for the National Ecumenical Service at which she preached in St Martin-in-the-Fields in London on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March was 'The Secret of Romero: Passion for God and Compassion for the Poor'.

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March, during a Special Romero Mass in the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, a bust of Oscar Romero by the renowned sculptor, Rory Young, was blessed by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and installed prominently in the Cathedral. In part, this recognises that the Liverpool archdiocese, through its Justice and Peace Commission, has celebrated the martyrdom of Oscar Romero liturgically every year without fail since 1980.

To mark the forthcoming Romero Centenary, the Trust commissioned a new hymn from the composer, Chris Olding. This was delivered in the first months of March 2017 and was incorporated into the Romero Week celebrations in March, including the Liverpool Mass. The words and music were made available on the Trust website.

As in previous years, local, diocesan and ecumenical events took place in Scotland, Wales and England during March. 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.

Much of the Trust's energies during the year were, however, focused on the planning of events and programmes in preparation for, and celebration of, the forthcoming Centenary of the birth of Blessed Oscar Romero, which will run through 2017 into 2018. Romero was born in Ciudad Barrios, a small town in rural El Salvador, on the Feast of the Assumption, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1917. There will be special events to commemorate the anniversary across the world.

Two major liturgical celebrations are planned in Britain. Close to the birthday itself, on Saturday August 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, the Trust has arranged a Special Mass in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, at which it is expected that Archbishop Peter Smith will preside - and for which Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the Postulator of Romero's Cause, will travel from Rome to preach. The Dean of Westminster, Very Rev John Hall, graciously agreed to the Trust's proposal that there might be a Special Evensong in Westminster Abbey on the afternoon, of Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017, to celebrate the Romero Centenary. This would constitute a National Ecumenical Celebration.

The planning and arrangements for this event began and have proceeded right through the year. A Special Anthem has been commissioned by the Abbey from the acclaimed composer, James MacMillan. This will include Archbishop Romero's own words interspersed with verses from Psalm 31. It will be performed for the first time during the Service by the Abbey choir. The Evensong will be co-sponsored by the Trust together with Churches Together in England, CAFOD and Christian Aid. Our Patron, Lord Rowan Williams, has agreed to give the address and it is hoped that Cardinal Vincent Nichols will lead the intercessions. The BBC have given verbal agreement to recording the occasion for subsequent transmission.

Over the past year, the Trust has collaborated with Rise Theatre, a professional, not-for-profit, Christian theatre company, as they have conceived, written and performed a play, *Romero - Heartbeat of El Salvador*, aimed at schools, parishes and Church groups. The Trust briefed the writer and actors, advised on the script, facilitated access to ecclesiastical dress and props, and promoted and publicised the work to the Trust's friends and contacts.

During the year, Jan Graffius, expert in the conservation of relics, paid a further visit to the Carmelite Missionary Sisters of St Teresa at the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital to undertake additional work to protect the fragments of one of Archbishop Romero's rib bones which had been handed over into the care of the Sisters in 2015. The relic is in a glass reliquary which was originally placed in a display case under the floor of the bedroom in Archbishop Romero's little bungalow in the hospital grounds. However, the humidity in this location was excessive and, as a result, the relic has been placed in a reliquary fixed and locked to the wall of the hospital chapel where Archbishop Romero was killed.

The Trust has frequent postings on Facebook and Twitter. These postings offer links to the Trust's website whenever appropriate. There are approximately 800 members of the Romero Trust Facebook Group and we had 700 followers on Twitter at the end of the year.

The Trust's work with Convivium Press came to a close with the publication in English of the complete six volumes of the 193 homilies Archbishop Romero gave as archbishop. The Volumes are all now on sale and have already become an important resource for pastoral work and scholarly research in English-speaking countries across the world. With the assistance of grants from CAFOD, Missio and Jesuit Missions, the full six-volume set has been delivered to every diocese and all the seminaries in England and Wales and to selected seminaries and pastoral centres in Africa and Asia.

The 2016 Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture was given by Rodolfo Cardenal SJ. The lecture, entitled 'Rutilio, Romero and Pope Francis' was well received as an important contribution to understanding the changes that Oscar Romero underwent with the assassination of Rutilio Grande just as he took up his position as Archbishop of San Salvador. The lecture was delivered in St George's Cathedral, Southwark on Tuesday November 1<sup>st</sup> and also in Plymouth Cathedral, at the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University, at St Aloysius College in Glasgow, and at St Wilfrid's Church in Preston.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> issues of Romero News, edited by Tania Dalton, were distributed to some eight hundred 'Friends of Romero' in July 2016 and January 2017; the new A5 format was widely welcomed.

With the assistance of the Carmelite Friars in Britain and donations from 'Friends of Romero', the Trust once again made a grant, totalling £4843

(US\$6000), to assist the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital where Archbishop Romero had lived and to whose work he was utterly dedicated. With the assistance of Jesuit Missions, £3782 (US\$4620) was paid towards the design and installation of the mural mosaic on the wall at the Hospitalito. With earmarked donations received from supporters, the Trust also made a small grant of £1323 (US\$1600) to the Fe y Alegría School in La Chacra, one of the poorest sectors of San Salvador. All these grants contributed directly to the public good.

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 2017 total income came to £48,343. Leaving aside restricted income earmarked for the Homilies Project and other specific programmes, the unrestricted income of the Trust totalled £22,109. This was matched by expenditure of £14,080 giving a surplus for the year in unrestricted funds of £8,029 to be carried forward to 2015/16. The balance sheet shows the figure for total funds held of £27,164, slightly lower than last year. 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

June 2017