

Archbishop Romero Trust

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15th Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending April 2019

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), Mr Stephen Davies (Moderator/Vice-Chair), Ms Clare Dixon OBE (Secretary), Rev. Richard Carter, Dr Jan Graffius, Sister Eileen McLoughlin SSHJM, Rt. Rev. John Rawsthorne, Mr David Skidmore OBE, and Rev. Dr 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, Very Rev. Dr John Hall, 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 and 57 Lyme Grove, London E9 6PX.

The trustees met on April 11th 2018, June 27th 2018, September 25th 2018, December 5th 2018 and March 15th 2019 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 central focus of the year, and arguably the culmination of the Trust's work over more than a decade, was the canonisation by Pope Francis of Oscar Arnulfo Romero on October 14th 2018 in St Peter's Square in Vatican City, together with Pope Paul VI and five others. The Trust arranged a weekend pilgrimage to Rome for the canonisation ceremonies for over 160 people, including bishops and clergy, together with the Trust's long-standing partner, pilgrimage organiser Anthony Coles. In conjunction with Gianni Beretta of Swiss-Italian TV, the Trust provided finance to make possible the journey and the presence in Rome of Angelita Morales, the former Secretarial Assistant to Archbishop Romero, for the canonisation ceremonies. Following the Thanksgiving Mass for Romero's sanctification, Pope Francis gave a Special Audience for the huge contingent of Salvadoran pilgrims who had travelled to Rome. Amidst scarcely concealed disbelief and provoking tears of joy, Pope Francis called Angelita up onto the stage platform alongside himself. There he embraced her as 'the iconic representation of the People of God in El Salvador' - that People which had loved and stood by Monseñor Romero.

In Britain Archbishop Peter Smith issued a decree on the day of the canonisation designating the Romero Chapel in Southwark's Catholic Cathedral, housing the Romero Cross and relics, as an official Diocesan Shrine.

The Trust organised two major liturgical celebrations of the canonisation. On Saturday November 3rd, at a special 'National Mass of Thanksgiving' in St George's Cathedral, which was arranged in conjunction with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Archbishop Peter Smith was principal concelebrant and Archbishop Bernard Longley delivered the homily. Two weeks later, in a great ecumenical occasion, Westminster Abbey arranged 'Solemn Evensong to Celebrate the Canonisation of St Oscar Romero' at which the Dean, Very Rev. John Hall, a Patron of the Trust, presided and preached. The Embassy of El Salvador, and, in particular, Ambassador Elisabeth Hayek Weinmann, collaborated with the Trust in the various celebratory events which included a film-showing at the Embassy for the Salvadoran community resident in Britain.

The BBC Radio 4 Sunday Service on the morning of the canonisation came from St Anne's Cathedral in Leeds, arranged in conjunction with the Trust. It took the form of a Mass at which Bishop Marcus Stock presided and Fr Pat Smythe delivered a Romero-focused homily.

Immediately prior to the events in Rome, the Trust produced large parchment-style icon pictures of St Oscar Romero, suitable for framing and display - together with prayer cards in English, Spanish and Polish. In conjunction with the dioceses of Southwark, Cardiff, Liverpool, and Nottingham, the icon pictures were dispatched to every Catholic parish and school in those ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

Following the canonisation, Swiss-Italian TV updated their highly acclaimed Romero film, 'El Desagravio', originally translated into English infelicitously as 'The Claim'. The Trust assisted in its re-titling as 'Righting the Wrong', and with the re-translation of segments of the film's dialogue. The Trust subsequently arranged Romero presentations and screenings of the film across Britain as a celebration of the canonisation - from Portsmouth and Worthing in the south of England to Oban and the Outer Hebrides in Scotland.

The Trust reached agreement with Swiss-Italian TV for the Trust to make the English-language subtitled version of the film available to view from the Trust's website. Although it is not downloadable, it can be watched on a mobile phone or computer and projected onto a screen in a classroom or hall for group showings. On the same page of the website there is similar access to the film version of the Rise Theatre's production, 'Romero - Heartbeat of El Salvador', which can now be purchased on DVD directly from Rise Theatre. The Trust made a grant of £1000 towards the cost of the filming which took place at Worth Abbey in April 2018. Permission was also secured to make available two other important Romero documentaries, 'The Last Journey of Oscar Romero' produced in 2010 in conjunction with Notre Dame University in the United States, and 'El Cielo Abierto', distributed from Mexico. Alongside the Romero productions, 'Roses in December', the film which recounts the story of the four US women missionaries who were assassinated in El Salvador in December 1980 is also available to view.

Invited to Poland in November 2018, the Trust's Chair gave three Romero presentations at Jesuit institutions in Warsaw where the newly acclaimed saint is little known - and is still occasionally viewed with suspicion due to

misinformation circulated by those who had been opposed to Romero's beatification and canonisation.

Earlier, on August 11th 2018, in a foretaste of the celebrations to come, the Trust organised a special Mass and reception to mark the 101st anniversary of Oscar Romero's birth. The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Edward Adams, presided and preached on the occasion in St George's Cathedral, Southwark.

For Romero Week in March 2019, the Trust arranged for David McLoughlin, Emeritus Fellow of Newman University, to give the Address at the national ecumenical service held in London at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church to mark the 39th anniversary of Oscar Romero's martyrdom. His presentation, entitled 'The Prophetic Imagination: St Oscar Romero's Challenge to Church and State' was well-received and is available for study from the Trust's website.

A week later on Saturday March 23rd, at a special Mass in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, at which Mgr. Patrick Kilgariff preached, Archbishop Peter Smith blessed the newly installed gates linking the St Patrick Chapel and the Romero Shrine. During the ceremony he formally read out the decree which designated the Romero Chapel as a Diocesan Shrine. Thanks to the generosity of the Religious of the Assumption and the British Carmelite Friars, the Trust was able to make a grant of £10,000 to pay for the design, manufacture and installation of the gates as the completion of the shrine.

On the following day, Sunday March 24th, St Romero's Feast Day, a Scottish shrine was inaugurated in Edinburgh at the Sacred Heart Church in Lauriston Street. With relics there of both Archbishop Romero and Fr Rutilio Grande SJ, the shrine was blessed by Archbishop Leo Cushley.

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

The texts of the different sermons and addresses delivered during the year were placed on the Trust website to enable a wider audience in Britain and across the world to have the opportunity to study the various insightful and inspiring presentations.

The Trust has frequent postings on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These postings often make use of quotations from St Oscar Romero's homilies for the particular Sundays, helping people access the richness of the saint's reflections. The social media posts offer links to the Trust's website whenever appropriate. There are approximately 1100 members of the Romero Trust Facebook Group, around 1500 followers on Twitter and over 250 on Instagram - representing a substantial increase on the previous year. As was to be expected, engagement with the Trust's social media was particularly active during this canonisation year.

The project for a Romero Solar Park in Arcatao, in the Salvadoran department of Chalatenango, has made steady progress. It could be the most significant legacy of the Romero canonisation if it proves feasible and if the necessary financial capital can be accessed. The Trust has worked closely with Mark Dowd, whose personal financial contributions to community projects in Arcatao, together with external encouragement to the Jesuit parish and the community in Arcatao, have been crucial in taking the Solar Park concept forward. Jesuit Missions agreed to make available £2000 via the Trust to cover the costs of preliminary feasibility investigations for the solar park.

The Cause for the Beatification of Rutilio Grande and his two lay companions, Manuel Solorzano and Nelson Lemus, assassinated by a death squad within days of Archbishop Romero's installation in San Salvador, is moving rapidly forward. A declaration from Pope Francis that they were martyrs, killed 'out of hatred of the faith', is expected at the end of 2019. It is anticipated that beatification will follow early in 2020. The Trust has vigorously pursued the translation into English of the authoritative biography of Rutilio Grande, written by Rodolfo Cardenal. It is now agreed that the edited text will be published in the United States.

The Trust has continued to work closely throughout 2018 with the Office of Canonisation of the archdiocese of San Salvador and made a grant of US\$8000 (£6250) to assist them with the costly preparations for the canonisation ceremonies in Rome. The Trust also made £1500 available, and acted as intermediary on their behalf, to make possible the digitalisation of their precious Romero archive which was being held on an outdated microfilm system.

Generous grants from charitable foundations in Africa {£7783.89 (€9,000)} and Asia {£11070.84 (€12,500)} made it possible for the Trust to send further sets of the six volumes of Archbishop Romero's homilies

to carefully selected pastoral centres, theological study programmes and church leaders in Africa and Asia.

The 22nd and 23rd issues of Romero News, edited by Tania Dalton and Clare Dixon, were distributed to some nine hundred 'Friends of Romero' in July 2018 and January 2019 - both the printed version and electronically.

At its final graduation ceremony in December 2018 Heythrop College conferred on Jan Graffius, Curator at Stonyhurst College and Romero Trustee, an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity of London University. The citation read that this was in recognition of her "lengthy and very distinguished conservation and educational work on the relics of Archbishop Oscar Romero and other martyrs of Latin America.....this is an outstanding contribution to the life of the Church in Latin America, the UK and worldwide." The Trust received the news of this Award to a key figure in its work in El Salvador with pride and great joy.

With the assistance of the Carmelite Friars in Britain, the Trust once again made a grant of US\$5000 (£4058) towards the running costs of the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital. Thanks to £3200 raised at Oaklands Catholic School and a contribution of £750 from Old St Paul's Church in Edinburgh plus several gifts from individual donors, further grants totalling US\$5655 (£4485) were made towards the palliative care programmes. All these grants contributed directly to the public good.

The Trust has no salaried staff members and relies 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 2019 total income came to £71,134. Leaving aside restricted income earmarked for specific programmes, the unrestricted income of the Trust totalled £43,149. This was matched by expenditure of £46,494, giving a deficit for the year in unrestricted funds of £3,345. As a result, £12,690 will be carried forward to 2019/20. The balance sheet shows the figure for total funds held of £19,239, substantially less than last year. The Trust needs to hold reserves in order to be able to continue to meet its obligations and deliver its programme of activities even in the event of a delay or shortfall in funding. The trustees estimate that reserves of not less than £5,000 are required to provide adequate mitigation against such risks; this estimate is reviewed as the programme of activities develops. Reserves at 5th April 2019 are comfortably in excess of the policy requirement. The relevant financial information is to be lodged with the Charity Commission.

Julian Filochowski, Chair, Archbishop Romero Trust.

July 2019.