

# Romeronews

Issue 17: February 2016

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## Romero Week 2016

### The Violence of Peacemaking – Archbishop Romero and the Search for Peace

Francisco de Roux SJ, Colombian Advocate for Peace



### Evening Meetings

**Edinburgh**, Lauriston Jesuit Centre: **Tuesday March 15<sup>th</sup>** at 7.30pm  
Archbishop Romero Trust in conjunction with SCIAF, Lauriston Jesuit Centre and Pax Christi

**Leeds**, Cathedral Hall: **Wednesday March 16<sup>th</sup>** at 7.00pm  
Archbishop Romero Trust in conjunction with Leeds Justice & Peace Commission,  
Pax Christi, CAFOD and Missio

**Manchester**, Loreto College: **Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>** at 7.00pm  
Archbishop Romero Trust in conjunction with CAFOD, Pax Christi and Missio

### National Ecumenical Service

**London**, St Martin-in-the-Fields: **Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup>** at **11.00am**  
Archbishop Romero Trust together with St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, CAFOD, Pax Christi, Christian Aid, Missio, Progressio, Diocese of London, Justice and Peace Westminster and the Embassy of El Salvador

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

[www.romerotrust.org.uk](http://www.romerotrust.org.uk)

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### FOR YOUR DIARIES:

**Romero Week: 15 - 19 March**

See front cover for details. Birmingham and Liverpool also hold their annual Romero Memorial Masses on 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> March respectively.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the events.

**Pilgrimage 2016: 7-19 November**

Places are limited. Please register your interest as soon as possible with Anthony Coles at

[arctc@btinternet.com](mailto:arctc@btinternet.com)

**Francisco de Roux, SJ:**

**Peace Advocate and Romero Week Speaker  
2016**



Fr 'Pacho' de Roux is a member of the Jesuit province of Colombia. Since the 1980s he has been a leading voice in the efforts to seek a negotiated settlement to Colombia's decades-long armed conflict. Father de Roux has received numerous awards recognising his contribution to human rights and peace-building: among them the French *Légion d'Honneur*, Colombia's National Peace Prize and the Chirac Foundation's 2012 prize for Peace and Conflict Prevention. He studied for his Masters' degree in Economics at the London School of Economics and his doctorate at the Sorbonne. He is a member of the Advisory Board of Georgetown University's Center for Latin American Studies.

In his work with the Colombian Jesuits' Centre for Social Research and Education (CINEP), he helped broker the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the M-19 guerrilla movement. He was the founder of the Jesuit Province's Programme for Peace and for fifteen years he led the Programme for Development and Peace in Magdalena Medio (the EEC's first recognised "peace laboratory"). From 2008-2014 he was Provincial of the Colombian Jesuits and is

currently working in supporting the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas through accompaniment and support of victims and survivors of the conflict.

Fr de Roux is truly inspiring: a pastor who has walked side by side with communities that have experienced horrifying violence from all sides of the armed conflict. He is never afraid to uncover the truth and is an outspoken advocate for human rights even though this has often put him at great personal danger. At the heart of Fr de Roux's message, is the need for dialogue and a peaceful solution to the armed conflict. He is a true visionary who has tried to find and build alternative pathways to live peacefully and with justice.

"I have been in the struggle for social justice, but I have always rejected the armed struggle. First, because I believe in Jesus Christ and cannot accept any reason to kill anyone: second, because since I was a child I heard from my parents that war always turned into uncontrolled violence which made bad things worse, and third, because I learned from my brother Jesuits involved in the struggle for justice, and from many others, that the right way was through politics and human rights, making the best of all spaces available to take forward gradually those changes to build the society that we dream of." Fr. Pacho de Roux, SJ

### 2016 Romero Trust Pilgrimage

**Can you join us?** Departing Britain on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November this will be the third 12-day pilgrimage arranged by the Romero Trust to visit the places especially associated with Blessed Oscar Romero and the martyrs of El Salvador. Led by Clare Dixon, Julian Filochowski and Bishop John Rawsthorne and organised by Anthony Coles this pilgrimage

would be a very appropriate way to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis.



*Romero Trust Pilgrims, 2013*

The pilgrimage itinerary will include visits to Archbishop Romero's birthplace in Ciudad Barrios, to the Cathedral where he preached his legendary Sunday homilies and where he is buried in the crypt, and to the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital where he lived and where he was assassinated in the Chapel. We shall celebrate Mass there. The sites of the martyrdom of the US religious sisters and the Italian Franciscan missionary priest, the rose garden in the University where six Jesuits, their cook and her daughter were murdered, and the place where the El Mozote massacre took place will all be part of the programme. Liturgies and talks, and time for prayer and reflection are included, as well as visits to markets, museums and a social development project. We arrive back in Britain on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November.

The estimated total cost with flights, food, simple en-suite accommodation and local transportation will be £1695 per person. Please think about whether you might be able to take part. Fuller details are available from Anthony Coles at [arctc@btinternet.com](mailto:arctc@btinternet.com)

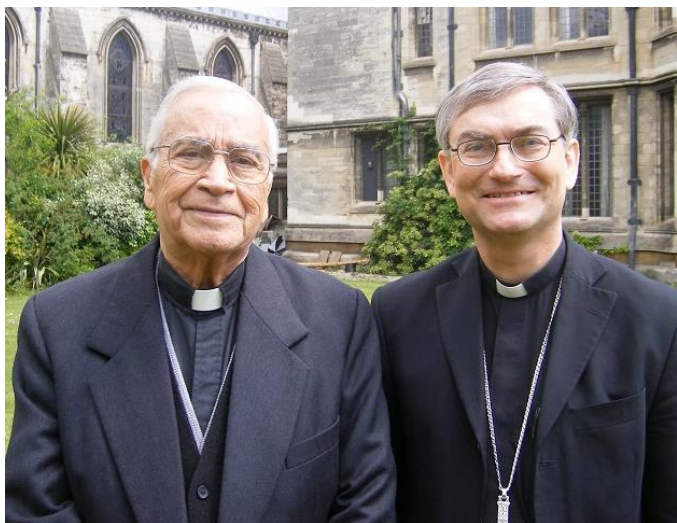


**A Pilgrim Reflects:** "Our two previous Romero pilgrimages have been life-affirming for all those taking part; a time of reflection, inspiration and joy. We have been blessed with the opportunity to hear the testimonies of people who lived and worked closely with Archbishop Romero, and the colleagues and relatives of so many other martyrs of El Salvador. The witness and the struggle for justice of poor *campesinos* speak eloquently of the deep faith and hope of these people for whom Archbishop Romero gave his life. No wonder that it is said: "With Monseñor Romero God walked through El Salvador""

Clare Dixon

### REST IN PEACE, MONS. URIOSTE

Mons. Ricardo Urioste, Vicar General of San Salvador when Blessed Oscar Romero was Archbishop, and founder of the Romero Foundation, died peacefully on 15 January. He was a great friend of the Romero Trust. In 2013, we welcomed Mons. Urioste to London for the installation of the cross and reliquary in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark.



*Mons. Urioste with Bishop Michael Evans, who is commemorated on the Southwark cross.*

Clare Dixon has known Monseñor Urioste for many years, and recalls an occasion when he visited the UK:

I had the privilege of accompanying Monseñor Urioste on a visit he made around England in 1987, in the midst of the civil war in El Salvador. One of the events we attended was a meeting with the priests of the Liverpool Archdiocese. There were several dozen clergy present as Monseñor Urioste spoke of his experience as a priest, ministering to a wounded, crucified people. As he spoke of how helpless and inadequate he often felt in the face of such suffering I struggled to hold back tears. His audience, themselves working in a city where there was much poverty and hardship, listened to him with rapt attention as he confessed how he had been ministered to by the poor, that far from evangelising them, he had been evangelised by them. He spoke of how he often felt overwhelmed when, every day at the Archdiocesan offices, he was unable to attend to his planned duties because of the constant stream of emergencies and interruptions: a massacre in one of the outlying parishes, the mother of a young student whose tortured body had been dumped in a shallow grave, the arrival of villagers seeking refuge and protection from the Church. "But then I thought", he said "in the Gospels we read about how, when Jesus was traveling from place to place, on his way to somewhere, he was often stopped on the road, by someone seeking his help, asking for a miracle, needing support. Often we never found out what happened when Jesus arrived at his planned destination because these interruptions were the most important thing for him. And I said to myself, if this is how Jesus lived his life, why should I ask for anything different? How could I wish for anything more than this?" As the meeting ended, I looked up and saw the audience, dabbing the tears away from their eyes at his testimony.

Rick Jones works for Catholic Relief Services CRS in El Salvador:

Over 25 years ago I came to El Salvador as a lay missionary. I ended up in Monseñor Urioste's parish at the time, and lived in a community of people displaced by the war. I still remember the first time I heard him say mass. I knew who he was - Monseñor Romero's right hand man, a stalwart for justice and leader in the Salvadoran Church. I thought to myself, this is going to be a homily to remember- he is going to link the gospel to the national reality, to justice and call us all to action. He read the gospel, took the microphone and stepped down from the pulpit, headed toward the pews, and said to the congregation of mostly poor men and women, "So, what do you think of today's gospel..."

As I learned in the years to come, with Mons. Urioste, inviting the poor to speak out, to reflect on the gospel, was more than a tactic for a homily. It came from a deep personal humility, a reverence for the poor and a daily practice of liberation.



*Mons. Urioste in the chapel at the Hospitalito*

To read these, and other tributes to Mons. Urioste, please visit and read the comments on this site:

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/blog/ricard-o-urioste-rip> and on the SuperMartyrio site: <http://polycarpi.blogspot.co.uk/2016/01/rip-Mons-urioste-friend-of-blessed.html>

## SUPER MARTYRIO WEBSITE



We would like to recommend this website for information on Blessed Oscar Romero.

<http://polycarpi.blogspot.co.uk/>

We were particularly taken with how the Year of Mercy iconography has been adapted to include Romero.

## FROM BLESSED OSCAR ROMERO TO ST ROMERO OF AMERICA?

*Julian Filochowski looks ahead to the next step, canonisation, and the cause for the beatification of Romero's friend, Fr. Rutilio Grande.*

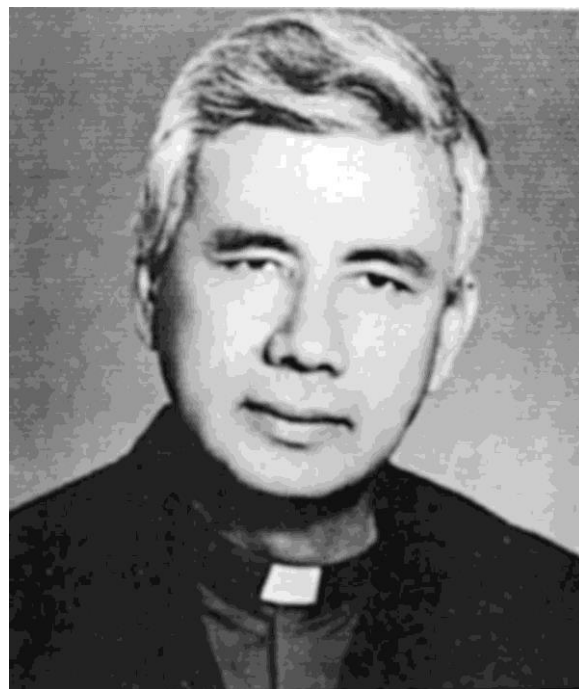
Archbishop Romero's beatification as a martyr, killed out of hatred of the faith, took place in San Salvador on May 23, 2015. Beatification is the penultimate step on the road to full sainthood. It seems clear that, having dramatically 'unblocked' Romero's paralysed canonisation process in 2013, Pope Francis would like to see the 'cause' brought to its conclusion without delay. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2017 will be the centenary of Oscar Romero's birth. It is the hope (and almost the expectation) in El Salvador and elsewhere that, barring any unforeseen impediment, his

canonisation will have taken place before that great celebration takes place.

When martyrdom is declared, as in Romero's case, then a miracle is not required for beatification. But for canonisation a miracle **is** necessary. The recognition of a miracle through Oscar Romero's intercession would seem therefore to be the final hurdle to be cleared before canonisation. Many reported cures and other unexpected happenings have been attributed to Archbishop Romero. Three cases – two women and one man who have recovered from incurable cancer or dramatically come out of a coma - have been presented to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. The one which most closely fits the current canonical criteria will be examined in depth by scientific and theological commissions. If there is affirmative agreement then Pope Francis will likely move quickly forward to canonisation. If there is no agreement it is nevertheless still possible for Pope Francis to dispense with the need for a miracle and to decree an 'equipollent' canonisation, as he did with John XXIII and the early Jesuit, Peter Faber. In either case, this process could be completed within the next 18 months since Pope Francis is manifestly supportive of Romero's canonisation - and that is arguably the most important consideration of all.

The final factor that comes into play is the beatification of Fr Rutilio Grande, the martyred Jesuit friend of Archbishop Romero. Pope Francis met Rutilio in the mid-1970s; he clearly admires him and has pushed his 'cause' too. The diocesan process for Rutilio's beatification has moved with extraordinary speed and is now virtually complete. The formalised paperwork is expected to be sent to Rome in the next three months for Vatican consideration. There should be nothing to prevent

the subsequent issue of a decree of martyrdom, and hence beatification, even before the end of 2016.



*Fr. Rutilio Grande, SJ*

Having exclaimed during a recent Papal Audience that Rutilio's real miracle was Romero, the speculation is that Pope Francis would like to combine the Romero canonisation and the Rutilio beatification in a single ceremony at which he would preside. Most likely that would be early in 2017 in Rome, as is the norm - or just conceivably in San Salvador, in a special gesture to the Latin American Church. Watch this space!



*Oscar Romero's ordination as Bishop in 1970  
From left: Archbishop Chavez (Romero's predecessor as Archbishop of San Salvador), Bishop Romero, Bishop Rivera (Romero's successor as Archbishop of San Salvador) and Fr. Rutilio Grande, S.J. who, as Romero's close friend, was Master of Ceremonies for the occasion. Fr Rutilio Grande was assassinated in 1977.*



## ROMERO STATUE DEDICATED

*David Skidmore reports on the Dedication of the Statues of the Martyrs in St Albans Cathedral*

About a thousand people filled the Nave of our Cathedral for a special service of Solemn Evensong on 18 October 2015. We had gathered to give thanks for the 900th anniversary of the consecration of the Norman Abbey and to dedicate the seven statues of martyrs on the Nave Screen (pictured in last July's *Romero News*). It was a wonderfully joyful occasion. Two choirs sang beautifully and the congregation joined enthusiastically in *For All the Saints, Jerusalem the Golden* and *King of Glory, King of Peace*.

In 1115 the proceedings took so long that the principal celebrant, the Archbishop of Rouen, became exhausted and had to hand over his ritual duties to his fellow bishops. Among them was the Bishop of London. His current successor told us 'He was the first Richard to be Bishop of London. I am Richard XV!' In his sermon he reminded us that 'Martyr in Greek means a witness and for Christians a martyr is a witness to what Christ is like, which of course to be convincing must speak in contemporary terms to successive generations'.

Of particular interest to readers of *Romero News* will be Bishop Richard's reference to Blessed Oscar Romero:

*The example of Oscar Romero has been especially significant in my own life since his murder took place in 1980 shortly before Robert Runcie, former Bishop of St Albans was enthroned at Canterbury. As his chaplain at the time, I remember what a sobering and inspiring impact the Archbishop's martyrdom had as Bishop Robert prepared for his ministry in the*

*place where Thomas Becket also fell a martyr to politically motivated violence.*

The sermon also brought out the significance, for many of us, of the martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

*It was exactly seventy years ago that he was hastily tried under the cover of night, before being hanged at dawn on the eighth day after the festival of the Resurrection.*

*Bonhoeffer wrote, "The thing that keeps coming back to me is, What is Christianity, and indeed who is Christ for us today?" This is the question which martyr-witnesses address.*



*The statue in St. Albans Cathedral. Photo courtesy of the Cathedral.*

As I read through the Homilies which the Romero Trust is publishing I am reminded again and again that Blessed Oscar Romero's exploration of that question is among the most powerful we have.

## THE PACT OF THE CATACOMBS

*In November 2015, Jon Sobrino SJ gave the homily at a mass celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pact of the Catacombs – the initiative and promise of an inspirational group of bishops at the Second Vatican Council to put into practice a poor church. In Jon Sobrino's words, it is "the secret legacy of Vatican II", and he urges us to re-commit ourselves to the construction of this church.*



*Jon Sobrino, SJ greets Romero Trust pilgrims in 2013.*

In this Eucharist today, before God and gathered together as his people, we wish to commit ourselves to building this Church, the only Church of Jesus. It is the best, and definitively the only, way to recall the pact of the catacombs, and to renew it with all urgency.

There is still great sin today, urging us to take responsibility for its eradication. Sin today is Lampedusa, the refugees seeking survival in the face of the efficient indifference of Europe. Sin is pederasty among priests and career-ism in ecclesial authorities. Pope Francis speaks rigorously of all this.

But it is more fruitful to focus on grace. It is more difficult because it demands so much of us; yet it is most pleasing, because what happened 50 years

ago, continues to be good news. It happened in many places, but you will understand if I focus on the continent of Latin America.

There have been bishops, Fathers of the Church, some of whom are martyrs, Dom Helder Camara, Enrique Angelelli, Don Samuel Ruiz, Leonidas Proaño, Juan Gerardi.

Others are less well known, Mothers of the Church, lay and religious, some of them also martyrs. In El Salvador: Maria Julia Hernández, Marianella Garcia Villas, Rufina Amaya, Silvia Arriola. There are the base communities, so called because they are the foundations of a society of a poor world, and indigenous communities fighting for their cultures. Seminaries and universities have been teaching and promoting the liberation of the oppressed. We have had liberation theology and the closeness of sister churches.



*El Mozote memorial*

There have been many martyrs, much love, and much sacrifice. And the Church has seemed a little more like Jesus.

Three years later in the Medellin Conference the bishops said, "a deafening clamour rises from the millions of people, asking their pastors – asking us – for a liberation that does not reach them".

Speaking in the first person, the bishops recognised that "In the context of poverty and misery in which



the large majority of people live in Latin America, as bishops, priests and religious we have what is necessary for life and a certain degree of security, whilst the poor do not even have the essentials and are caught between anxiety and uncertainty.” (n.3)

They note the distance and disinterest that the poor feel. “There is no lack of poor people who feel that their bishops or their parish priests and religious do not truly identify with them, with their problems and anxieties, who do not always support those working for them or advocate for their wellbeing.”

“There are many studies about the situation of people in Latin America. All of them describe the poverty that pushes large groups of people to the margins. This poverty, as a collective fact, is an injustice that cries out to heaven.” By opening the Medellin document with these words, the bishops confess what is in their minds and their hearts. They grab our attention because as a text written by bishops, believers in God, lovers of Jesus Christ and servants of the Church, these opening words are not religious, biblical or dogmatic but rather about the reality of this world; more specifically, its sin. They name those who suffer it, and by implication those who commit it. The greatest sin is “injustice”.

### **Romero’s proximity to the poor**

On 19 June 1977 Archbishop Romero returned to Aguilares, when the army left the village after occupying it for a month and assassinating about 100 campesinos. I remember perfectly how he began his homily: “It is my job to go around collecting the dead”. He was hard on the criminals and reminded them of the words of scripture, “He who kills by the sword will die by the sword”. During the offertory he presented to God the four nuns who had offered to replace the priests who had been expelled from Aguilares. And to the peasants who, full of fear, had not gone into the church, but could

hear his voice through loudspeakers, he said “You are the image of the Divine Lord, the pierced one... [this people] is the image of all the people who, like Aguilares, will be pierced and abused.”

Mons. Romero prepared his homilies with the suffering people in mind. He said as much in his last Sunday sermon, on the eve of his assassination: “I ask the Lord throughout the week, as I gather up the cry of the people and the pain of so much crime, the ignominy of so much violence, to give me the right words to offer consolation, to denounce, to call people to repentance, and although it is a voice crying out in the wilderness, I know that the Church is doing all it can to fulfil its mission.”

He committed himself to the people right to the end. “I want to reassure you, and I ask you to pray that I may stay faithful to this promise, that I will not abandon my people, rather I will take every risk my ministry demands of me.”

### **The Church of Jesus is a persecuted Church**

Mons. Romero took seriously the building up of the Church, and related it to the crucified people. The Church of Jesus is a persecuted Church. In an evangelical rapture he said, “It makes me happy, brothers, that our Church is persecuted, precisely for its preferential option for the poor and for manifesting itself in the interests of the poor.” In a greater moment of inspiration, he confessed, “It would be sad if, in a country where people are being horribly killed, we did not see some priests among the victims. They are the witness of a Church made flesh in the problems of its people.”

It wasn’t only Archbishop Romero who was assassinated after Medellin. I mentioned at the beginning the names of men and women martyrs. There were also children and elderly. I recall my companions, assassinated 26 years ago, who have

caused me to reflect on what is Christianity, the Church and a university. They were Jesuits, and so their memory can help other religious brothers and sisters; and they worked in a university so they can also help lay men and women.

### **The option of the UCA martyrs**

They illuminate Christianity because they reproduced the life of Jesus, not intentionally or devotionally, but truly. They turned their gaze on the actual poor, those who do not take life for granted and who live and die subjected to the oppression of hunger, injustice, disdain, and the repression of torture, disappearances, assassinations, often committed with great cruelty. They were moved to compassion and “worked miracles” putting learning, talent, time and rest at the service of truth and justice. They “expelled demons”. Without doubt they fought the demons from other parts, the oppressors, oligarchs, governments, armed forces and they defended the poor against them. They didn’t lack for role models with Rutilio Grande and Mons. Romero. And they were faithful to the end, showing mercy through bombs and threats. They died like Jesus, and they have been added to the cloud of witnesses, Christians, priests, religious brothers and sisters, and agnostics who have lost their lives in the interests of justice. These are the “Jesus-like martyrs”, a special reference for Christians and anyone else who seeks to live humanely and decently in our world.

They were faithful to their vocation and to Saint Ignatius. Their task was to bring the crucified people down from the cross, liberate them from oppression, particularly structural oppression, and to choose the way of a civilization of poverty, rather than a civilization of accumulative and dehumanising wealth.

The UCA martyrs never discerned if it was God’s will that they should stay in the country with the associated risks, threats and persecution, or if they should leave. I don’t believe it even occurred to them. They acted “without questioning or ability to question” (Ignatian exercises n. 175). If we ask “what is it that moved and attracted their will”, we could say “the Lord our God” conversing with their souls. But I think we know the historical reasons they could not leave the country: “the suffering of the people”, “the shame of abandoning the people”, “the cohesive force of the community”, “the enriching memory of Mons. Romero, the 9 priests and 5 religious sisters who were assassinated”, and even the fact that “they became accustomed to the persecution”. I think all these contributed to their option and shone light on their decisions and the path to follow.

Father Pedro Arrupe said, “This is the kind of Jesuits that the world and the Church need today. Men driven by love of Christ, to serve their brothers without distinction of race or class. Men who know how to identify with the suffering, and live with them to the point of giving their lives for them. Brave men who know how to defend human rights, to the point of sacrificing their own lives if necessary” (19 March 1977, a week after the assassination of Rutilio Grande).

### **The martyrs carry us to the God of Salvation**

Two women were assassinated with the Jesuits: Julia Elba Ramos, 42 years old, cook for a community of young Jesuits, poor, happy and intuitive and a worker all her life. And her daughter Celina, 15 years old, active, a student and catechist; she and her boyfriend were planning to get engaged in December 1989. They came to sleep at the house of the Jesuits because they felt safer there. But the order was “leave no witnesses”. In the photos we

can see Julia Elba's efforts to shield her daughter with her own body. They symbolise the crucified people, innocent and defenceless.

Some of the UCA martyrs were similar to Mons Romero – the Jesuits. Others were similar to the crucified people – the two women. Taking them all together, we could say that in them Jesus and God walked through this world carrying the cross. But we could also say, against all appearances, that in them the God of Salvation was present. I say that without the poor – and the victims – there is no salvation.



*This cross commemorates the six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter.*

The life and death of the martyrs were very hard. But it is also true that the Beatitudes are directed to them. And they are a blessing for us, for they inspire us to work for others and to have hope, an inspiration that cannot be found with such force anywhere else, not in the liturgy or any academic activity.

The six UCA Jesuits walk with us and carry us in their faith, Julia Elba and Celina carry us in theirs in a different way; they carry us to God.

So against all science and prudence, the martyrs generate hope. Thousands of poor peasants, whose relatives have died, come together on the eve of 16 November at the UCA to celebrate together, pray and sing. Jürgen Moltmann summed it up very well a few years ago: "not every life is an occasion for hope, but it is the life of Jesus who, through love, carried his cross."

To finish, I want to thank Pope Francis for moving once more in the catacombs. In his own way, with humour and humility, firmly and with love, he wants to reform the Church. Let us help him, not just applaud him.

May the martyrs rest in peace. May their peace give us hope and may their memory prevent us from resting in peace.



*Jon Sobrino greets Pope Francis in November 2015 after attending his mass in Santa Marta in Rome. Pope Francis' parting words were, "keep on writing!"*



## ANNUAL LECTURE

The annual Romero lecture was given by Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga in October. Thank you to all who attended. We are sure there are many more people who would have liked to be there.



The full text of the lecture can be found on the Romero Trust Website: <http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/documents/romero%20lectures/art%20lecture%202015.pdf>

During questions and answers, the Cardinal pointed to the Romero Cross, especially commissioned for St George's Cathedral, and which houses relics of Blessed Oscar Romero, saying, "That cross is the best honour for Romero, because he was a man of the cross".

## MUSIC OF THE ROMERO BEATIFICATION

The music of the beatification liturgy for Blessed Oscar Romero consisted of a large body of songs of traditional spirituality set in contemporary arrangements, tinged with three particular accents: (1) a modern suite tending toward jazz; (2) a folk set adapted to post-conciliar liturgy and (3) a pinch of music tailored for the occasion. The resulting blend made the event, which was televised by 14 international broadcasters, a real hemispheric culture happening.

The most cutting edge component consisted of a couple of songs with jazzy overtones, the most prominent of which, Psalm 71 ("*Tu Reino es Vida*" Your Kingdom is Life) resonated during the beatification rite. Given Archbishop Romero's embracing of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, he commissioned the "Salvadoran Popular Mass" whose notes echoed during the beatification ceremony. The use of native instruments like the marimba – Romero's favourite - served not only to add authenticity but also an intensely festive flavour to the occasion. The lively and upbeat arrangements of other songs reinforced that sense.



*Conductors Salvador Marroquín, José Santamaría and Alfredo Andino.*

The performance by the four-part choir consisting of 125 singers was high quality. "*They sang like angels descended from heaven,*" was one comment.

The organisation of the choir was a minor miracle: between the announcement of the date on March 11 and the beatification on May 23, there were only two and a half months of preparation. Within this time frame, the coordinators selected the songs; hundreds of volunteers showed up to audition to compete for a place in the choir; and rehearsed three days a week to learn twenty-eight numbers. Only one out of five knew how to read music; even fewer had ever sung in a national choir before.

Choir members faced practical challenges posed by the short time and the needs of staging an event of such dimensions: work-related conflicts, family issues, and countless personal sacrifices. Conductor Alfredo Andino had to miss his son's fifteenth birthday party when he was summoned to the first organising meeting with only a day's notice. One member had her husband hospitalised up through the day of the ceremony; another member was injured and had to attend rehearsals with a broken foot. Transportation problems were widespread.

On top of these daily inconveniences there were also collective challenges. During the rehearsals, there was an epidemic wave of flu that struck many of the choir members. Perhaps more dramatic still, the members of the orchestra had all their musical instruments stolen from the house where they practiced. *"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present, nor future, nor any other creature separated Romero from Christ and his Gospel of love, of justice, of fraternity, of mercy, of forgiveness,"* Cardinal Amato said in his [homily](#) at the beatification. Similarly, no challenge, big or small, could overcome the determination of this great little choir.



*Priest distributing Holy Communion to the choir members during the ceremony.*

The songs of the beatification of Archbishop Romero bear out the old adage that "to sing is to pray twice"

as they give glory to God not only through the music but also through the sacrifices made and challenges overcome that led the vision to become a reality.

*You can read the full article and listen to the music of the beatification ceremony on the excellent website "SuperMartyrio" collated by Carlos Colorado on the following link:*

<http://polycarpi.blogspot.co.uk/2015/09/la-musica-de-la-beatificacion-romero.html>

## BOOK OFFERS AND POSTCARDS

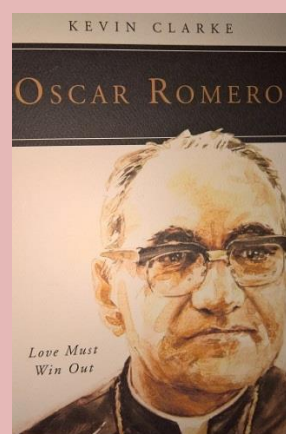
*All these resources may be ordered from [romerotrust@gmail.com](mailto:romerotrust@gmail.com)*

**Or by post:**

*Archbishop Romero Trust  
PO Box 70227  
London  
E9 9BR*

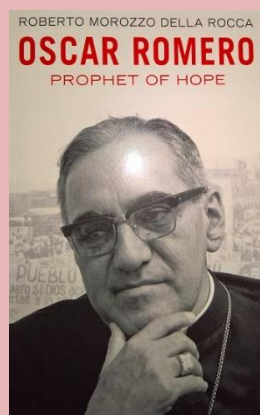
### NEW

**Oscar Romero - Love Must Win Out** by Kevin Clarke published by Liturgical Press on sale at £7.95. **Available from the Trust for £7 including p&p.**

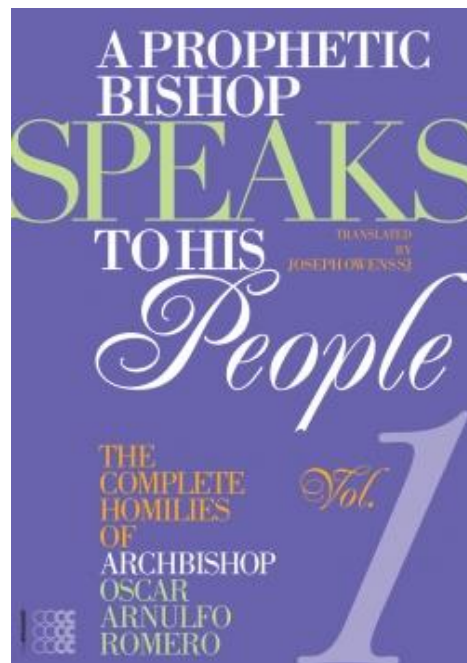


An excellent and very readable short introduction to the life of Archbishop Romero written by an experienced journalist on the US Jesuit magazine, *America*.

**Oscar Romero - Prophet of Hope** by Roberto Morozzo della Rocca published by DLT in Britain on sale at £9.99. **Available from the Trust for £8 including p&p.**



This is a comprehensive biography written by one of the authors of the documentation that secured Archbishop Romero's beatification. Morozzo is an Italian historian, part of the San Egidio Community, who learned Spanish in order to research Romero's life. It's a full treatment but in presenting Romero for sainthood he downplays his respect for Jon Sobrino and other liberation theologians. Well worth reading.



*A Prophetic Bishop Speaks to His People: The Complete Homilies of Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Volumes 1-4 now available, £18 each incl. p&p*

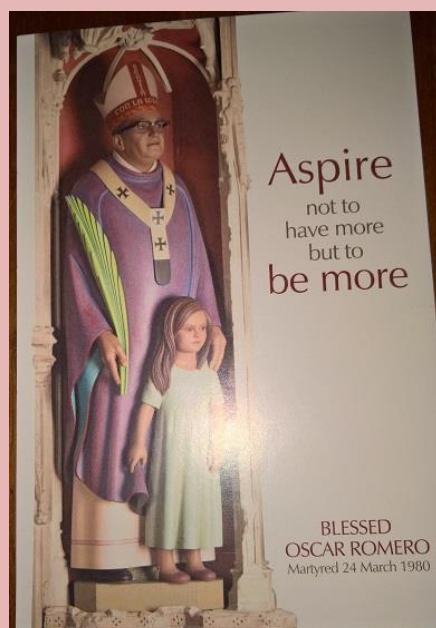
A beautiful English translation of Archbishop Romero's homilies. Paperback. Each volume £18 (incl. p&p) for Romero News readers.

Readers will be able to encounter Romero the way ordinary Salvadorans did—through his sermons, which are brought to a startling new level of clarity and precision. This new set of translations, elegant and mellifluous, is a reference set that no Romero student can do without.

Volumes 1 – 4 are available from the Trust now. Volumes 5 and 6 should be available later this year. All the same price.

#### NEW ITEM!

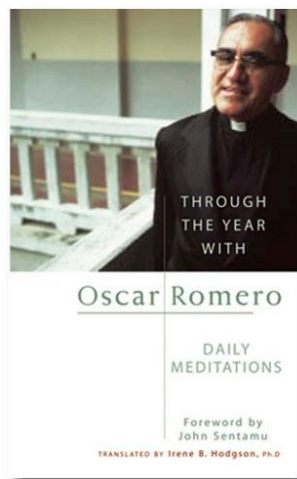
Postcards from St. Albans Cathedral for sale: 6 for £3 (including postage)





Back in print:

### Through the Year with Oscar Romero: Daily Meditations



In these powerful and moving selections from his broadcast homilies, Romero invites us each day to move into the 'intimate space' of our conscience and then to go out to create a more just world.

£10 (incl. p&p)

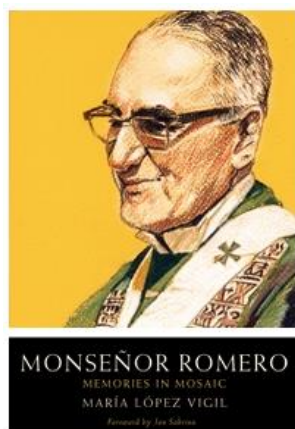
### Oscar Romero and the Communion of the Saints

OSCAR ROMERO  
and  
The Communion of Saints



(£12 incl. p&p)

One of the special joys of this biography is its inclusion of many rarely-seen photographs, taken by Octavio Durán, a Franciscan friar, who served as Romero's personal photographer.

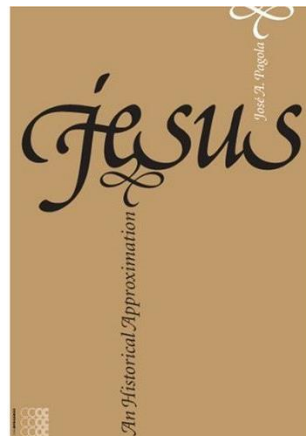


### Oscar Romero: Memories in Mosaic

£15 (incl. p&p)

Romero remembered by  
the people who knew him.

### Jesus, an Historical Approximation



£24 (incl. p&p)

A Spanish best-seller, now available in English. Author Mons José Antonio Pagola presents a lively and passionate narrative of Jesus, addressing basic questions about who he was, the originality

of his message and how the vision of the Kingdom of God centred his life. A profound theological reflection about Jesus.

*"At my age, I no longer read many books, but I read Pagola's from cover to cover. It has helped me grow in age, wisdom and grace. I recommend it to many people, Christians and non-believers. Monseñor Romero would have quoted from it in his Sunday homilies." Jon Sobrino SJ*

The Romero Trust has sold close to 800 copies of Pagola's book. It has brought great joy to many, because it confirms us in our faith in difficult times and gives us a real sense of hope that God is at work in the world. We cannot recommend it too highly. Copies are available at £24 including postage and packing from the Trust. It is also available in bookshops at £34 per copy.

## FRIENDS OF ROMERO

Thank you for your ongoing support as Friends of Romero. There are around 500 *Friends of Romero* who belong to our solidarity network.

The funds you donate are used to help produce the Romero News newsletter and to put on events such as Romero Week and the Romero lecture.

As the Carmelite Sisters celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding, we are currently trying to raise extra funds to assist the cancer hospital. It is the place where Archbishop Romero lived and died. If you would like to make a contribution please mark your donation 'For the cancer hospital'.

## THE FINAL WORD...

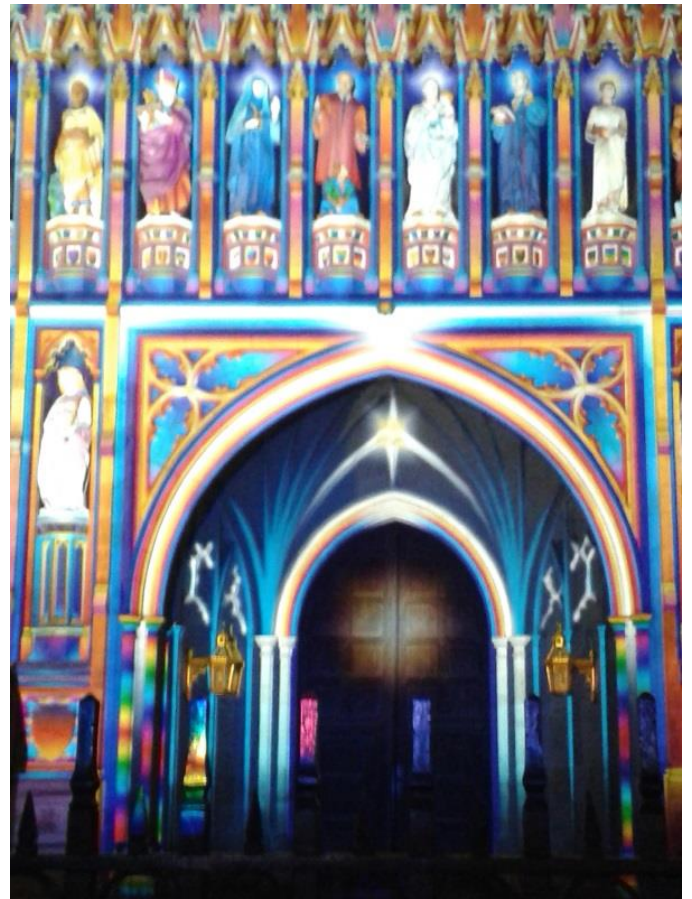
A thought from Romero, in this Year of Mercy:

"Today we talk a great deal about justice and perhaps we interpret it wrongly. Justice, according to the word of God for today, means action, the compassionate intervention of God, manifested in Christ, to erase sin in human beings and to give them the capacity to work as children of God."

4 June, 1978

(Source: *Through the Year with Oscar Romero: Daily Meditations*)

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*Westminster Abbey Martyrs as you have never seen them before! January 2016 – part of the London Lumiere festival weekend*

### Photo credits:

Johan Bergström-Allen: pg. 1 dove, pg. 3 Romero Trust Pilgrims, pg. 8 Jon Sobrino SJ greeting Romero Trust Pilgrims, El Mozote memorial, pg. 11 UCA martyrs cross

Colombian Jesuits Province: pg. 2 Fr. Francisco de Roux, SJ <http://www.jesuitas.org.co/20025.html>

Ben White / CAFOD: pg. 5 Monseñor Urioste in the chapel at the Hospitalito

Romero Trust: pg. 4 Mons. Urioste with Bishop Michael Evans, pg. 6 Rutilio Grande, Rutilio and Romero, pg. 12 Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga

David Skidmore / St. Albans Cathedral / Julian Filochowski: pg. 7 Romero statue

Martin Maier: pg. 11 Pope Francis with Jon Sobrino, SJ

Super Martyrio: pp. 12 – 13 Photos accompanying Music of the Romero Beatification

Clare Dixon: this page Westminster Abbey light show

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