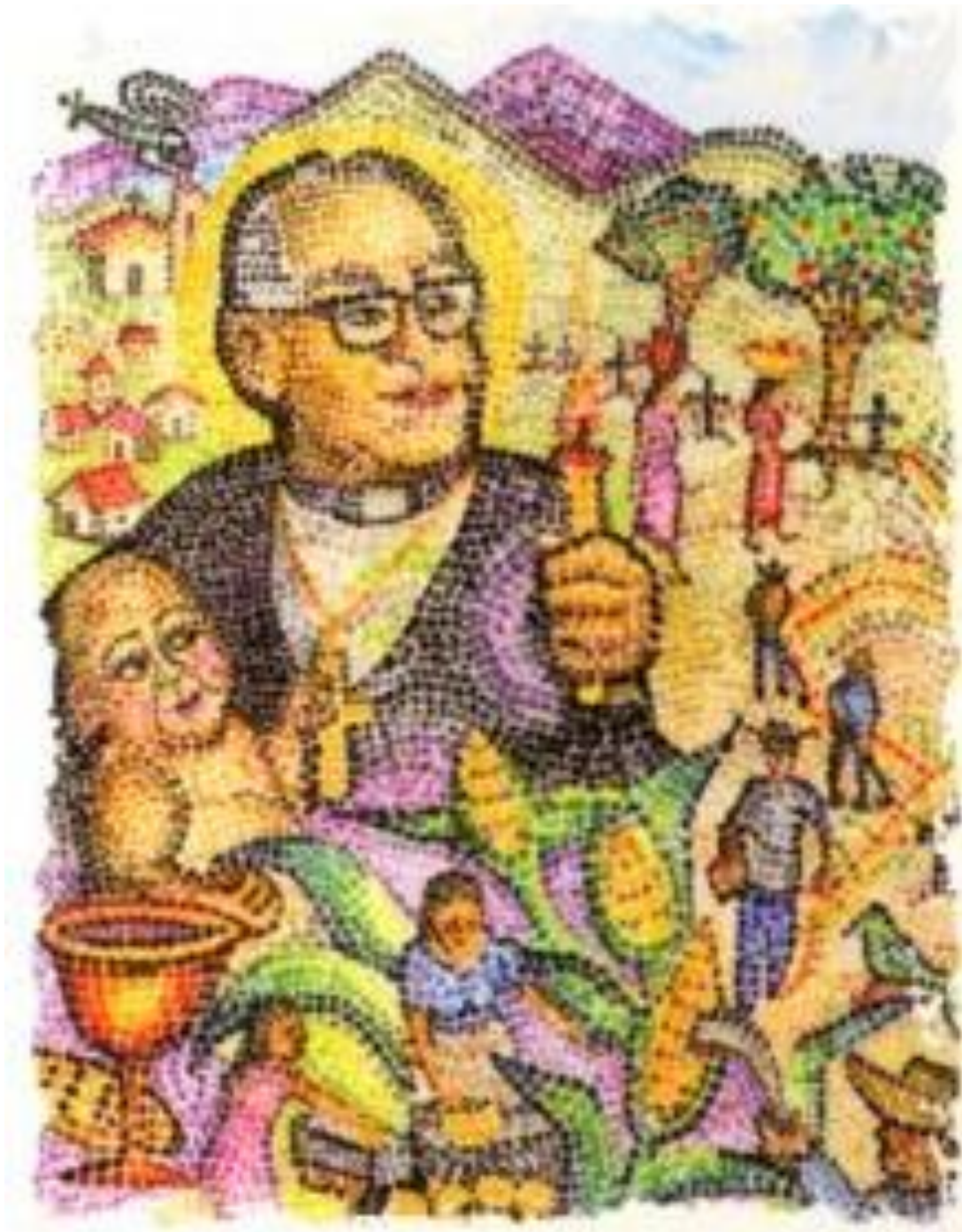


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Romero Week 2024

**Guest Speaker
Dr Raymond Perrier
Director Denis Hurley Centre Durban**

Friday 8th March Exeter

Wednesday 13th March Glasgow

Thursday 14th March Leeds

**Saturday 16th March - 11.00am
National Ecumenical Service
St Martin in the Fields, London**

**Wednesday 20th March - 12.30pm
Mass and Romero School Awards
St George's Cathedral Southwark**

**Guest Speaker
Dr Jan Graffius
Wed 20th March Glasgow
Thursday 21st March Liverpool**

**Further details on back cover
and on www.romerotrusted.org.uk**

**Saturday 13th July
CAFOD & Romero Trust
Pilgrimage to Lindisfarne
Further details on website
www.romerotrusted.org.uk**

Feast of Saint Óscar 2024

This year we are delighted to welcome Dr Raymond Perrier as our guest speaker at the annual



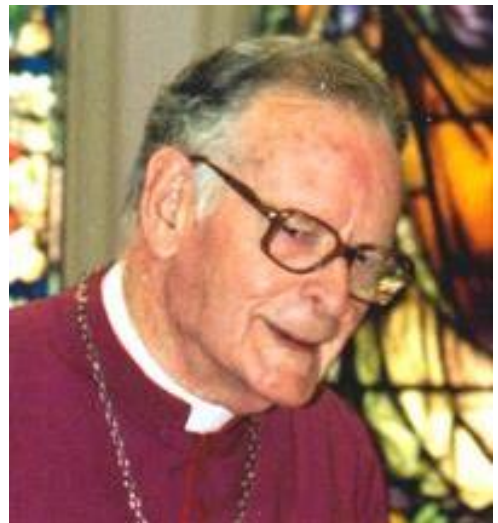
Romero ecumenical service at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, commemorating the 44th anniversary of Saint Oscar's martyrdom. The title of this year's address is **"Prayerful and Prophetic Resilience in the Face of Injustice – Archbishops Oscar Romero and Denis Hurley"**.

Raymond Perrier is the Director of the Denis Hurley Centre in Durban, South Africa, named in honour of Archbishop Denis Hurley. Like Saint Oscar Romero, Archbishop Hurley was a fearless defender of human rights and social justice in his home country.

He was undoubtedly the most significant Catholic leader in South Africa during the 20th century. He was a courageous and outspoken opponent of South Africa's

apartheid regime for 50 years, dubbed an "ecclesiastical Che Guevara" by a South African politician and "guardian of the light" by Alan Paton. He was a participant in the Second Vatican Council which he regarded as the highlight of his life and throughout his ministry he was a champion of the reforms and spirit of the Council.

Born in Cape Town in 1915 of Irish parents Denis Hurley became the youngest Catholic Bishop in the world in 1947 at just 31 years of age and Archbishop of Durban in 1951. He retired as Archbishop in 1992 becoming chancellor of the University of Natal until 1998. He continued to work as parish priest of Durban's Emmanuel Cathedral until well into his 80s and died 20 years ago in February 2004.



Archbishop Denis Hurley

In the ten years of its existence the Centre has established a reputation as a place of care, education and community responding to the issues of refugees, drug addiction and homelessness.

Prior to becoming its director five years ago Raymond Perrier was head of the Jesuit Institute South Africa, working to bring a faith perspective to debates on social issues. For six years he was a trainee Jesuit priest and spent two years living and working in a refugee camp in Uganda with the Jesuit Refugee Service. After leaving the Jesuits Raymond became the head of communities for CAFOD working with Catholic parishes and schools across England and Wales. Of Indian parents Raymond was born and educated in the UK. He has extensive professional experience in the private sector, with degrees from Oxford, London and a doctorate from the University of KwaZulu Natal.



For the full listing of the events planned for the Romero 44th Anniversary please see page ## or the Trust's website: www.romerotrust.org.uk

Relics of the Martyrs

On 21st March the Liverpool Archdiocese anniversary Mass for St Oscar Romero will be celebrated at St. Oswald's Church, Ashton in Makerfield. There will be an opportunity to venerate the relics of St Oscar Romero which were gifted to the Liverpool Archdiocese by the Romero Trust. Following the Mass, Dr. Jan Graffius, will give a talk **“Drawing us closer to Christ and the saints: Relics and their meaning for us today”**.



Jan Graffius is the Curator of Collections and Historic Libraries at Stonyhurst College and a

trustee of the Archbishop Romero Trust. She is a world recognised expert in conservation and has worked for nearly 40 years in a variety of national and municipal museums in Scotland and England and curated exhibitions in London, Rome, France, Washington, Boston and Durham.

Since 2007 Jan has been involved in a major conservation project in El Salvador working on the Martyr Vestments of Saint Óscar Romero and items belonging to the Jesuit Martyrs of the University of Central America, as well as of Blessed Rutilio Grande, the friend of Romero and the first priest to be killed in El Salvador. Jan will also speak in Glasgow on the 20th March, delivering the annual Gonzaga lecture at St Aloysius church entitled, **“Resilience in the Face of Injustice: Romero and the Jesuit Martyrs”**.

Jan’s talks offer an opportunity to gain an insight into her fascinating and painstaking work and learn what she has discovered about Saint Oscar and the Jesuit martyrs as a result. We can also hear of some of the trials and challenges of preserving and protecting these delicate and precious relics.

Jan was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of London in 2018 for her work in El Salvador and she graduated with a PhD from the University of Aberdeen in 2020 focused on the history and significance of Stonyhurst College Collections in 17th century St Omers.

ROMERO TRUST PILGRIMAGE TO EL SALVADOR NOVEMBER 2024



The view of the San Salvador volcano from the Loyola Centre pilgrimage accommodation.

SIGN UP NOW FOR THE PILGRIMAGE TO EL SALVADOR

Since 2010 the Romero Trust has organised four pilgrimage tours to El Salvador, each with some thirty participants: admirers of Romero from UK, Ireland, USA, Australia, Kenya, DRC and New Zealand. Each visit has been a unique and unforgettable experience for all the pilgrims. We travel in the steps of Saint Oscar Romero, learning about the hopes, the sufferings and the joys of the people of El Salvador who inspired Saint Oscar to say, **“With these people it is easy to be a good pastor”**.

One of the 2019 group of pilgrims, Fr. Dale Korogi, parish priest in Minneapolis, USA, where George Floyd was killed in 2020, wrote to us:

The anniversary of our visit rolls around and I am thinking of all of you. I think of El Salvador every day. Every day I see the image of San Óscar Romero on my office desk and kitchen counter. In my parish community of many races, cultures, ethnicities, and life experiences, we have doubled down on engaging in the ministry of justice and equity. All in a neighborhood of ever-increasing gun violence and general chaos. How could we not be sustained, inspired, motivated and blessed in this mission by San Óscar? And soon-to-be-saint Rutilio and his companions? And the Jesuit martyrs, and the American martyrs? And their beloved, all their survivors we met on our pilgrimage?

All to say, thank you all for being inspiration and support to me on the way.



The Chapel of Divine Providence, site of the martyrdom of Saint Oscar Romero

In November 2024, to coincide with the 35th anniversary of the UCA martyrs, we hope to organise a further 10-day visit to this beautiful and inspiring land and to meet the people for whom St Oscar Romero and so many martyrs offered their lives. This will be a unique and life-changing opportunity to get close to the lives of the Salvadorean people and their martyrs, accompanied by the Romero Trust's co-chairs, Julian Filochowski, a friend of Saint Romero, and Clare Dixon, who worked closely with the Jesuits of the UCA. The tour will be arranged by expert pilgrimage organiser Anthony Coles.

**TO RESERVE ACCOMMODATION WE
NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON IF
THE PILGRIMAGE IS TO GO AHEAD**

The cost, covering accommodation, local travel and all meals will be around £1,150 excluding flights (approx. £800).

For more information if you are interested in the pilgrimage please contact:

romerotrust@gmail.com or

Anthony Coles: 020 7431 3414

Email: arctc@btinternet.com

In Memoriam
Michael Campbell Johnston SJ

Clare Dixon remembers the British Jesuit who set up the Jesuit Refugee Service and dedicated his life to the poor and oppressed.



Fr Michael Campbell-Johnson, known to many as simply “C-J”, died on the evening of Thursday 12th October at the Jesuit retirement home in Boscombe, Bournemouth, at the age of 92.

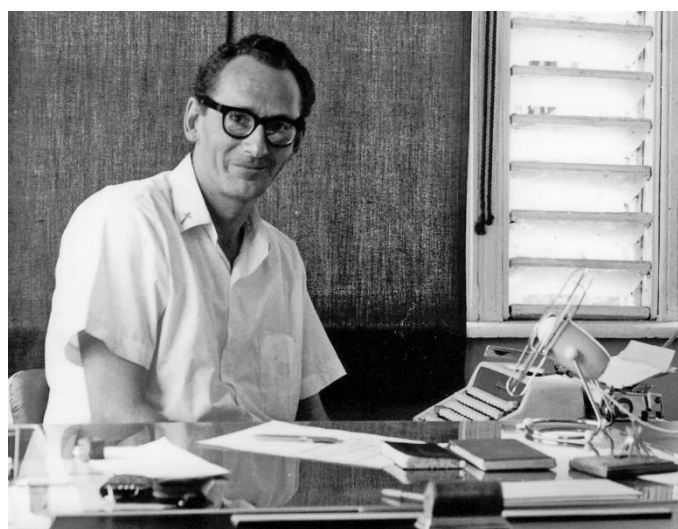
Born in London into a comfortable upper-class family, as a young boy his earliest ambition was to be a priest, a commitment which never wavered. His brother Christopher recalled an early event in their childhood when his older sibling Michael decided to conduct the funeral service of the family’s pet dog, where he officiated with due pomp and

ritual. After an education at Jesuit prep school and Beaumont College he began his studies for the priesthood with the Society of Jesus in 1949, just before his eighteenth birthday.

Michael’s Jesuit studies took him from the LSE to Paris and then to Mexico to study theology where he was a contemporary of the Jesuit, Fernando Cardenal who went on to become Minister of Education in Nicaragua. From there he went on to further studies in Brazil and travelled widely across Latin America where he became involved in pastoral work and learned about the Jesuits’ social justice outreach throughout the region. On completing his studies his first appointment took him to Guyana, part of the British Jesuit Province, where he became a Guyanese citizen and set up the Jesuit Social Institute there before being called to work for the Jesuits in Rome.

I first met Michael in the late 1970s, when he was already something of a legend. He was the highest-ranking English-born Jesuit - or as he would always insist of Scots heritage - based at that time in Rome at the Jesuit world HQ. Appointed in 1975 as Director of the Social

Secretariat in the General Curia, he was at the right-hand of the great Jesuit Superior General, Pedro Arrupe, the man who inspired and led the Jesuits onto a new course: setting the promotion of social justice as the key priority of their work: an early commitment to the preferential option for the poor.



Michael C-J in the early years in Guyana

During the years in Rome C-J was Fr Arrupe's envoy to support and encourage the development of Jesuit social justice institutes in Latin America, which included various encounters with the then Argentine Jesuit Provincial, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, during the challenging years of the military regime in that country. In 1980, at the height of the tragic exodus of the "boat people" of Vietnam, Fr Arrupe charged Michael with

taking forward a new Jesuit venture, setting up and leading the Jesuit Refugee Service as an adjunct to the Social Secretariat. The JRS became a key player in fighting for the rights and protection of refugees and the internally displaced and continues its life-saving mission in many situations of conflict across the world today.

In 1984, with his duties in Rome accomplished, Michael was appointed to El Salvador to set up the JRS in Central America where countless thousands of refugees were fleeing from war and military repression across the region.

I recall being in awe of Michael from the very start: he struck an impressive figure, well over six feet tall: in his clerical suit he appeared the very essence of the well-born gentleman that he was. But that first impression was deceptive as Michael was rarely seen in his clericals, but rather sporting an old and worn-out shirt, baggy trousers and open-toed sandals. Never was he happier than when accompanying the poorest and most deprived communities, tending to their physical needs, providing protection and safety, as well as the spiritual dimension so fundamental to the lives of

people in a country named after Christ the Saviour. Michael set up the JRS HQ in a parish centre which had been abandoned since January 1979 after the army had murdered the parish priest, Octavio Ortiz, and four young catechists. Michael and his JRS team transformed a place of fear into one of sanctuary. He spent much of the 1980s running the JRS in El Salvador and encouraging outposts of the service in Colombia, Haiti and across Latin America.

He was aghast when, after just four years, the call came for him to become Provincial of the British Jesuits. He was never a bureaucrat and his transition to the Jesuit HQ on Farm Street, in the heart of Mayfair, felt to him like a cruel exile from his preferred setting, living among and ministering to the dispossessed, where he felt he could make a difference. Nevertheless, he used his time productively, dealing with the complex management and processes of change within the Jesuit Province, keeping up with family and friends and participating, somewhat controversially, at a Conservative Party conference debate on the theme of "Can a Christian be a Conservative". He also

joined the Board of CAFOD which had been a constant supporter of his JRS work since its creation.

It was during his time as Provincial that six of his fellow Jesuits were murdered along with two women employees at the UCA – the Jesuit Central American University - on 16th November 1989. That night, in the midst of grief, Michael led a prayer vigil outside the El Salvador Embassy, just a short walk away from the Jesuit Provincial HQ in Mayfair. Fr Arrupe's vision for the Jesuits was never more relevant: *"What does it mean to be a Jesuit today? To engage under the banner of the Cross in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and the struggle for justice that faith itself demands. We will not work for the promotion of justice without paying the price"*.

It was with some relief, not only to Michael but perhaps also to some members of the British Province, when his 6-year term of office came to a close and he returned to El Salvador in 1993. After a decade of civil war, the country needed to rebuild and Michael set to work transforming JRS into a new Jesuit Development Service adapting it to the

need to reunify communities displaced by the conflict. He was a model of multi-tasking, teaching at the UCA, and taking over as pastor in the gang-plagued parish of San Antonio Abad. For a decade his parish house was my home on multiple visits to San Salvador.



C-J's last visit to his old parish in 2013

Michael's parish house was an ancient, ramshackle, rat and feral pigeon-infested former farmhouse on an unpaved lane in an insalubrious part of town. His street address, as a happy coincidence, was Calle La Granjita, Little Farm Street, as far a cry away from its Mayfair namesake as can be imagined. Michael, alongside his appropriately named parish council, with vice-chair, Rafael and secretary, Gabriel, sought to build a community of solidarity within a country where the legacy of civil war, military repression and gang violence held sway. The parish

centre was always alive with the laughter of children, alongside a parish clinic, training workshops and a playground used equally as a means of rehabilitating members of the local gang, the Mau Mau, and recreation for the children of the local primary school.

Michael reluctantly left El Salvador in the noughties when the British Province posted him to Barbados, to run the retirement home for the elderly Jesuits of Guyana and the Caribbean. His parish church of St Francis of Assisi, on the beach, was set among the five-star hotels and private mansions of the mega-rich. On occasion he had to craft his sermons very carefully for a mixed congregation which sometimes included Tony Blair and family. His time in Barbados completed Michael returned to London for several years and, in failing health, to the Jesuit care home in Boscombe.

Michael was a great admirer of Archbishop Romero and a close friend of the UCA Jesuit community who were murdered by the Salvadorean military in 1989 and his love of El Salvador and its people was passionate and enduring. He was a towering figure amongst his

fellow-Jesuits in Latin America and further afield. I admired him enormously and am glad that he lived to see how his fellow Jesuit, Pope Francis, placed social justice and the plight of refugees and migrants at the heart of his papacy.



Romero's "Shrine" in El Salvador



*US- based
Salvadorean writer
and journalist, Rhina
Guidos, visits the
Carmelite missionary
sisters who preserve
the relics of Romero*

In the small house where St. Óscar Romero lived when he was the archbishop of San Salvador, the white habit of a religious sister can be seen to the left of the bloodied relics of the Salvadoran martyr. The habit goes almost unnoticed, as it is next to what Romero was wearing on the day of his

martyrdom: a shirt covered in blood, a remnant caused by the bullet that passed through his body while he was celebrating Mass. A closer look at the simple garment of the nun reveals a series of stains on the skirt, adding to the story of what transpired that day. The stains mark the martyrdom of March 24, 1980, and the fidelity of the Missionary Carmelites of St. Teresa with St. Romero, the community of which Mother Tránsito Valdez is now superior. While many hid in the pews when they heard the bullet, two sisters made their way to the altar, recalled the mother superior. They knelt on the floor of the chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital, where Romero had collapsed.

Today, as then, the community runs the hospital alongside the chapel and offers help to low-income patients suffering from cancer. Romero had known the community for a long time before he decided to live among the sisters and the patients when he was named archbishop in 1977. At Romero's side at the time of his martyrdom — when he was shedding blood from his nose and mouth — two Carmelite sisters tried in vain to save the life of the saint. That's how the nun's

habit absorbed the blood of the martyr. Mother Tránsito recalls the sisters who were in the chapel that night: they were at Mass. Then, before the consecration, they saw a flash of light, probably caused by the bullet, and there was a loud sound. Then, Romero fell to the floor.

The sisters keep the memory of the martyr alive in the hospital grounds in what they consider the saint's "shrine": a small residence they built for him at the entrance to the property. It was a gift to celebrate Romero's 60th birthday in 1977, close to the chapel where he died. Although many refer to the house as the "museum" of the saint, "We, the Carmelite Missionaries, insist on calling it a shrine," said Sr. Ruby Lemus, who guides visiting pilgrims.



Sister Ruby with Romero's bloodstained vestments displayed in his house

Officially, the designation "shrine" is given to a church or other sacred place to which the faithful make pilgrimage for a special reason of piety and must be approved by the local bishop. But the sisters refer to it as such because of the popularity of the site to devotees of St. Romero. Sister Ruby said that people from all over the world visit it, from places like Germany, England and all the countries in Latin America. "St. Romero is known for his testimony of commitment, of faith . . . where there is poverty, the voice of Romero continues to illuminate, inviting us to maintain hope," Sister Ruby said.

Mother Tránsito also believes that the example of Romero, his message of peace and defence of human rights transcends religious beliefs. "People from different religious denominations visit: Hindus, Buddhists," she said. However, caring for the memory of the saint has not been an easy task for the community. The sisters, who live next door to the chapel near the house where Romero lived, suffered both humiliation and slander. On some occasions they also risked their safety for wanting to protect his belongings.

Some upper-class benefactors who had economically helped the sisters with the hospital, believed the slander about Romero, that he was a dangerous subversive and a guerrilla, and turned their backs on them. Some cut off their financial support, the mother superior recalled.

"The sisters did not care because we knew that [divine] providence was going to move the hearts of people". She said the house also was a target of police raids on many occasions. During the civil war in El Salvador Mother Tránsito lived in the hospital compound as a novice and later as a junior. She remembers how soldiers walked in, splitting the sisters into groups, and demanded access to everything. She has memories of that horrific time, receiving phone calls accusing the sisters of being part of the guerillas, saying, "We are going to kill you. A bomb will destroy you," accusing them of using their sick patients to hide their real motives.

Soldiers regularly came to remove objects from Romero's house and sometimes prevented the sisters from entering the property. "We couldn't even enter, or see what they took, what they

didn't take. What is currently there is what has survived," Valdez said.



Mother Tránsito with St Romero

But it is enough to tell the story.

The small house has a simple room where Romero lived with a small, single bed, a desk, his typewriter and a tape recorder he used to record his journal entries; there is also a photo of his friend, Pope Paul VI, who was canonised alongside Romero in 2018, and a rocking chair. His handkerchiefs with initials embroidered by the sisters are still in the room, as well as a small collection of books near the entrance of the house.

Among the most moving relics, the saint's cincture — the cord priests use to gird their alb — stained by the blood that flowed from his body. The sisters let Pope Francis borrow it, and he wore it for

the saint's canonisation ceremony in St. Peter's Square in 2018.

But the place also has mundane things: passports, Romero's driver's licence, his diary, notes, business cards, a shaving kit, things that give the space a feeling of a home. The stories of the sisters who lived with him also help fuel the imagination of what it was like to live with a contemporary saint. Tránsito said that these days everyone thinks of a Romero "with a halo" but the sisters remember a Romero with a strong personality and one who would not accept gifts easily, unless they came from the poor.

Knowing that he would not accept from the sisters a house they built for him — so that he would stop living in a tiny room next to the sacristy in the chapel — they looked for another way to make him accept. "He took time to visit the patients; he always did that," Valdez said. The sisters told the patients to give him the key to the house "because he is not going to say no to you," they told the patients. And that is how the archbishop ended up living on the property where his car still stands and where you can imagine the saint lying in a hammock that the sisters say he used to use.



The room where Saint Oscar lived

"He is a person who is still so alive, so present, so current," Tránsito said, adding: "And the sisters who lived around him have also played a very important role in this by retelling their anecdotes to us." Taking care of the saint's house and serving pilgrims is so important to the sisters that it is part of the community's daily activities, Valdez said.

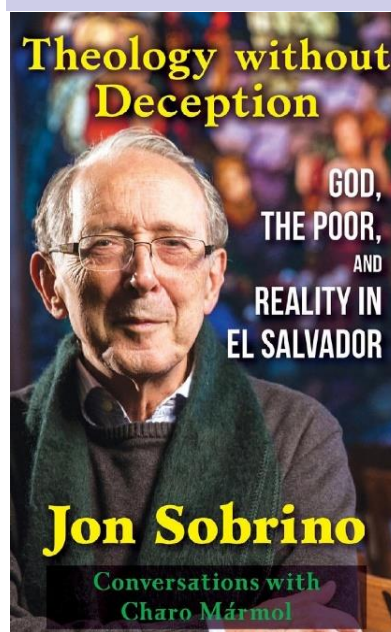
Last year, Sister Ruby wrote to Pope Francis, telling him about the work of the congregation to care for the saint's house. "Around this time last year, the pope responded with a beautiful letter in which he encouraged us to continue protecting the memory of St. Romero. For us, that is invaluable". She said that what she wants most from the people who visit the place is for them to get to know Romero better. "We [must] not be

spectators. Romero taught us to be more than spectators. He could have limited himself to listening, caring for people, and stop there," she said. "But Romero got into the depths of the injustices and abuses of a suffering population. That's where he had the experience of encounter that transformed him into a saint," the mother superior added. "This encounter transforms us," she said. "Let it be an experience of encounter here: Let's call it faith, let's call it a life change, but in such a way that it transforms our behaviour." She would also like more people to collaborate with the sisters to keep the martyr's house in good condition.

Some people, when they visit Romero's house, also become aware of the poor who go to the hospital, and in his honour, some leave a donation, Valdez said, "proof that the saint is still working for the poor from the heaven, Saint Romero continues to support this work."

Adapted from the original article in the National Catholic Reporter. The Romero Trust provides financial and technical support to the Sisters for their care of Saint Romero's relics, maintenance of his house as well as for their work with the patients at the Divine Providence Hospital. Text and photographs courtesy of Rhina Guidos

Book Review – Jon Sobrino



Orbis books have recently published this engaging and highly readable memoir of Jon Sobrino, based on a series of conversations with Spanish

theologian, Charo Marmol. Regarded by many as the greatest living theologian, Jon Sobrino narrowly escaped death when six friends from his Jesuit community at the UCA Central America University in San Salvador were massacred by the army in November 1989. Fortunately, he was out of the country at the time. Robert D. Cornwall an ordained minister in the Disciples of Christ Church speaks of the book's impact on him:

Reading Sobrino's reflections and thoughts about matters of theology and social realities, especially those realities faced by the poor and the oppressed, opens windows for further reflection about what it means to be a follower of

Jesus committed to the welfare of humanity. The conversations found in *Theology without Deception* help us better understand the work done by members of the church who were committed to justice, reminding us that church leaders such as Oscar Romero acted despite facing significant opposition from his fellow Salvadorean bishops.



Jon Sobrino greets pilgrims from the Romero Trust in the UCA martyrs' museum

Therefore, Sobrino helps us better understand the foundations and impact of liberation theology. Sobrino confesses that he didn't spend much time working among the poor since he had been called by the Jesuit order to serve as a teacher and theologian, which means that some of his reflections are more theoretical in nature, however, they emerged from

living within a community that produced figures such as St. Oscar Romero.

Having read and reflected on Sobrino's memoir of his life and ministry, including his relationships with important figures in the life of the church who were in life committed to the good of humanity, I can say that this is a book worth spending time with. Those who live in the First World and take up Sobrino's *Theology without Deception*, will, hopefully, come to better understand the realities faced by our neighbours in the Third World. That is especially true of those living in Central America. Liberation theology, of which Sobrino has been a leading figure, has lifted up the premise that God has a preferential option for the poor. To read this book is to gain better insight into what that might mean.

Read the whole review on:

<https://www.bobcornwall.com/2023/08/theology-without-deception-jon-sobrino.html>

Buy from the Tablet bookshop, tel: 020 7799 4064, £22.50



Bishops of Latin America

In January a new radio production centre for the Bogotá based HQ of CELAM – the Council of Latin American Bishops was inaugurated, dedicated to the memory of Saint Oscar Romero, in recognition of Romero's commitment to communication and the importance of his Sunday radio broadcasts and his exhortation for all Christians to be "microphones of God".



CELAM's leadership at the inauguration ceremony of the studio

Oscar Elizalde, director of CELAM's Communications Centre, explained that they named it after "Saint Óscar Arnulfo Romero" to respond to "our commitment to amplify the prophetic voice of Celam". He recalled the lessons of the homilies of the Salvadorean saint and bishop, who insisted that radio, press and television

should be "true schools for the formation of our youth" and as long as "we do not have guarantees of media at the free and courageous service of truth and good, it is up to you, to us broadcasters, those who listen to the radio, and watch television: to be critical".



He added "We fervently hope that it will be the compass that will guide us to cast our nets out to sea and to sail towards new ports, always remembering that, like St. Romero, our ministry must be distinguished by particular attention to the poorest and most marginalised".



El Salvador Update

National elections

2024 is the year of presidential elections in El Salvador with the first round of polling set for 4th February and a potential second round in March. At midnight on 30th November 2023 Nayib Bukele stepped back from the presidency of El Salvador in order to run again. The constitution bars presidents from serving a second consecutive term, and so Bukele formally withdrew temporarily from his post so as to evade this ban. The 42-year-old has arranged an impressive show to suggest that his bid for re-election is legal. He is the first person to run for re-election in El Salvador since Maximiliano Hernández, a military dictator, did so in 1939.



Human rights organisations lament that independent democratic institutions have been subverted by one party rule and any checks on Bukele's power have been eliminated. The military is now larger than ever, patrolling the streets of the country as a parallel police force. As in the years before and during the civil war, innocent persons can be swept up off the street and held for months in prison without trial. There are credible reports of torture and killing within the prisons in a country which now incarcerates more of its people than any other country in the world, with over 2% of the population behind bars.

Bukele's support is driven by perceptions of substantial improvement in the security situation in the country, along with a polished publicity machine which portrays the president as author of a glimmering new El Salvador. It does not seem to matter that the images in the slick videos do not match the reality of the people in most communities around the country. Despite this it appears that Bukele is heading for a landslide victory according to the predictions of recent opinion polls from the UCA.

Cardinal Rosa Chavez

Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez commented on the results of a recent opinion poll which warned that the country is heading down the road towards dictatorship.



The Cardinal, who recently retired as auxiliary bishop of San Salvador diocese, compared the election the battle between David and Goliath. Goliath - the ruling *Nuevas Ideas* party of Bukele - totally dominates the media and information channels, against David - the tiny parties of the fragmented opposition whose presidential candidates are almost unknown. It is inconceivable that David can win this time.

The Cardinal lamented the polling prediction that the population will again vote overwhelmingly for Nayib Bukele as president of the Republic. "How can we

think that there are people who are happy with what is happening, when they are living through such inhuman suffering."

Elimination of Dissent I

Rubén Zamora is one of the latest victims of the government crackdown on its critics. Zamora is an eminent lawyer, former presidential candidate and the former ambassador of El Salvador to the United States and the United Nations. He has been one of the most visible and respected voices in Salvadorean politics since the 1980s. In recent years, he was one of the first to warn of President Nayib Bukele's authoritarian inclinations.



On 22 December last year, a judge in the east of the country issued an arrest warrant for Zamora on false charges accusing him of covering up

for the perpetrators of the infamous El Mozote massacre committed during the war in the 1980s. In fact, Zamora resigned from the then government in 1980 in protest at the escalating violation

of human rights. Zamora is a deeply religious man and was a friend of Archbishop Romero. In March 2018 he was the Romero Trust's guest speaker, on the theme of "Peace: The Product of Justice and Love".



*Ambassador Ruben Zamora and
President Barak Obama*

II

The village of Guarjila in Chalatenango is a community that noted for its peaceful coexistence, where gangs have not managed to penetrate the fabric of the community. It has longstanding links with the local Jesuit community who worked pastorally in the area.

Nevertheless, as of mid-August 2022, at least 25 people have been arrested by the police and military under the emergency regime on charges of gang membership. The latest to be arrested is José Santos Alfaro Ayala, a well-known

community leader and president of the Tamarindo Foundation, which carries out social work in and around Guarjila.



Santos, who was captured on 30 January, has lived all his life in Guarjila; he is a leader respected by all in the community for his humility, integrity, service, and responsibility.

The Tamarindo Foundation organises workshops to teach handicrafts, organises English courses, public speaking courses, provides scholarships to some young people and works to maintain social unity among the inhabitants of Guarjila,

III

In 2017, El Salvador became the first country in the world to ban metal mining. Despite the nation's history of economic hardship and inequality, its people passed up the potential riches of gold mining to protect their water resources

and save the nation's rivers. Now, nearly seven years later, local activists are concerned that President Nayib Bukele may be preparing to reverse that historic ban. A year ago, the police arrested five environmental defenders. The detained men are well known community organisers and water protectors, who helped lead the campaign that convinced the previous Salvadorean government to pass unanimously a ban on metal mining.

Amid worsening drought caused by the climate crisis, El Salvador could run out of drinking water by the end of the century unless radical action is taken to rehabilitate its contaminated waterways. Environmental organisations fear that the arrests were a calculated attempt to destabilise community opposition as the economically stressed government seeks to overturn the mining ban.



El Salvador's freshwater supplies are so endangered the Catholic bishops have adopted it as a key pastoral issue.

Holy Island Pilgrimage 13th July 2024



Statue of St Aidan on Holy Island

Come and join us for the second CAFOD and Romero Trust pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. Walk across the sands of the dramatic causeway to reach the island of Lindisfarne on a journey that will long stay in your memory. Follow in the footsteps of the ancient monks and saints who built their priory here nearly 1,400 years ago and explore the beauty of Holy Island. Be inspired by readings and reflections followed by Mass at the ancient church of St Mary's. This is a wonderful way to celebrate our faith, make and meet old and new friends.

All are welcome!! Watch out for further information on the websites of CAFOD www.cafod.org.uk and the Romero Trust www.romerotrusted.org.uk

The Southwark Romero Cross

The beautiful Romero Cross in St. George's Cathedral is the work of the celebrated Salvadorean artist, Fernando Llort, who was present in Southwark at the inauguration of the Romero shrine in 2013.



Tribute to Fernando Llort who died in 2018

Llort's work is inspired by his deep faith and is celebrated both in El Salvador and internationally. The Llort family workshop has produced copies of the double-sided cross and the Romero Trust has them available for purchase. The small cross measures 4 inches and costs **£5 or 3 for £12 (+ p&p)**. The large cross with a stand measures 12 inches and costs **£ 12 (+ p&p)**.



Front of Cross represents Christ and Romero



Reverse of cross represents the People of God



In October Ana Grande, the niece of Blessed Rutilio Grande, visited Stamford Hill parish to see the Peter Bridgman painting of her uncle. Ana, her mother and the artist

MARTYRS OF EL SALVADOR PRAYER CARDS

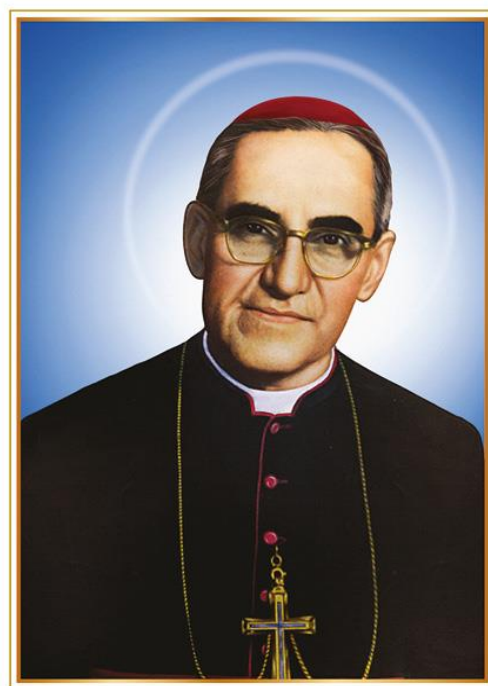


The Romero Trust has produced prayer cards of this beautiful portrait of Rutilio Grande and his companions, Manuel Solórzano and Nelson Lemus, by Salvadorean artist Cristián Lopez.

We also have available prayer cards of the “Great Amen” by Peter Bridgman.



And the official portrait of Saint Oscar Romero is still available from the Trust.



ST OSCAR ROMERO
— BISHOP AND MARTYR —

Individual prayer cards are free of charge, just send us a self-addressed envelope. For bulk orders the charge is £10 for 250 cards.

RESOURCES

A range of inspiring documentaries and feature films are available, free to view, on the Romero Trust website.

We particularly recommend:

Roses in December: *A moving account of the life and the death of Jean Donovan, as remembered by her friends and family.*

Righting the Wrong: *An excellent overview of Romero's life and martyrdom. and the long process after his death leading to his canonisation by Pope Francis in 2018. The Romero Trust shares the view that this is the best Romero film currently available.*

Find all the videos on:

<http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/videos>

CARDS, BOOKS AND RESOURCES

All available from

romerotrust@gmail.com

or by post

Archbishop Romero Trust

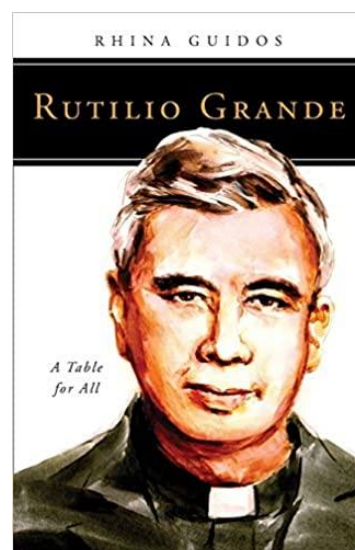
PO Box 70227

London E9 9BR

BOOK OFFERS

'Rutilio Grande - A Table for All'

by Rhina Guidos.



A short and well-written biography which beautifully captures the life and ministry of the Blessed Rutilio Grande".

£10 (incl. p&p)

The Life, Passion and Death of the Jesuit Rutilio Grande 482 pages

This is **THE definitive** biography of

Rutilio by his

colleague,

historian and

theologian

Rodolfo

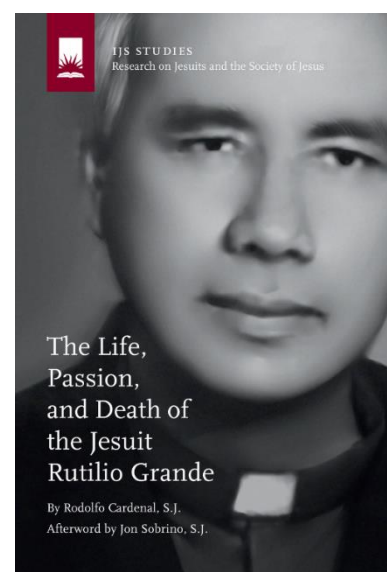
Cardenal SJ.

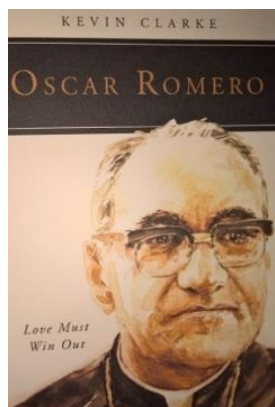
With an after -

word essay by

Jon Sobrino SJ.

£18 (incl. p&p)

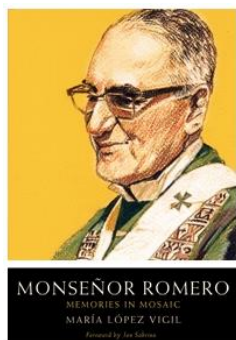




Oscar Romero – Love Must Win Out by Kevin Clarke. An excellent and very readable short introduction to the life and times of

Archbishop Romero.

£10 (incl. p&p).



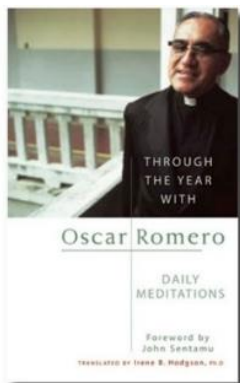
Oscar Romero: Memories in Mosaic
Romero remembered by the people who worked with him, lived with him and prayed with him

compiled by María López Vigil.

Arguably the best book on Romero.

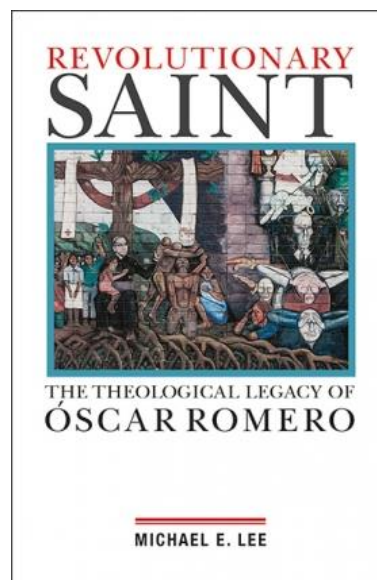
Unput-downable. Highly recommended.

£16 (incl. p&p)



Through the Year with Oscar Romero: Daily Meditations

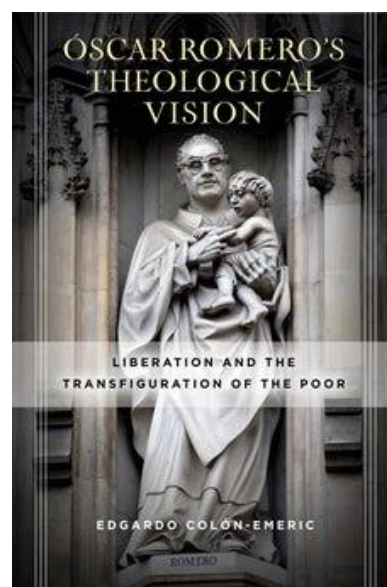
Powerful and moving selections from Saint Oscar Romero's homilies. **£10 (incl p&p)**



Revolutionary Saint – The theological Legacy of Oscar Romero
Michael E. Lee.
Orbis Books.
Highly recommended!

Available in bookshops at £20: from the Romero Trust at the special price: **£15 (incl. p&p)**

Oscar Romero's Theological Vision
by Edgardo Colón-Emeric:

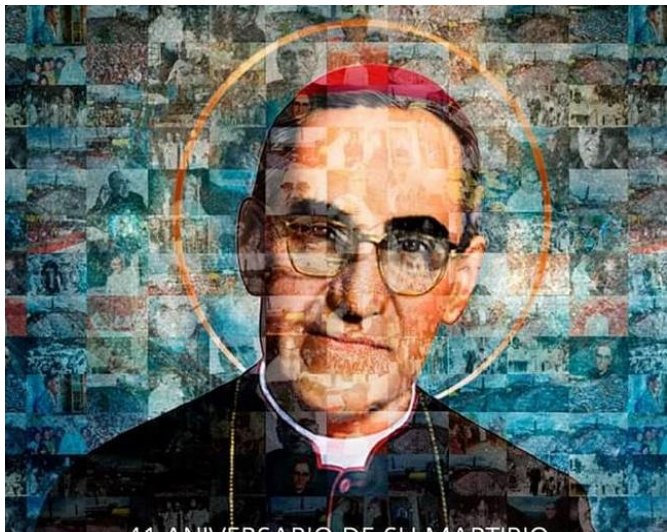


Throughout this remarkable book the author takes us ever deeper into the theological development of the martyr bishop Saint

Oscar Romero.

Special price of **£25 (incl p& p)**

Scenes from the Romero



Trust Pilgrimage



Saint Romero's tomb in the Cathedral



Centro Loyola – Our home from home



Ciudad Barrios - Romero's birthplace



Divine Providence Chapel



El Mozote – Martyrs' Monument

FRIENDS OF ROMERO

Join us as a 'Friend of Romero'. Your support will help the Archbishop Romero Trust's work to raise awareness and celebrate the life and example of St Oscar Romero and the many martyrs of El Salvador, as well as supporting social justice initiatives in Latin America that carry forward the tradition of St Romero's work.

Your donations help us to produce this newsletter and put on events like Romero Week and the Romero Lecture.

The Trust's reserves are modest, and we rely entirely on volunteers to carry out our work. If you can make a gift towards our work, we would be hugely grateful. Please send cheques payable to the Romero Trust to:

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

or visit our website:

www.romerotrusted.org.uk/support

Please remember that if you Gift Aid your donation we can claim an extra 25% from HMRC

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Please let us know if you prefer to receive the Romero News by post, by email or by both channels.

Please do inform us of any changes of your address and please send any feedback

Remember, you can also view the newsletter on the Trust's website, and can contact us by email on:

romerotrusted@gmail.com

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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Universidad Centroamericana-UCA
The Tablet, CNS, NCR, ICN
El Salvador Perspectives

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO TRUST

ROMERO WEEK 2024

Resilience in the Face of Injustice



Dr Raymond Perrier

Director of the Denis Hurley Centre, South Africa

**Prayerful & Prophetic
Resilience in the
Face of Injustice**
Archbishops Oscar Romero
& Denis Hurley

Friday, 8 March, EXETER

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Heavitree, EX1 2QJ
6.30pm Mass followed by talk

Wednesday, 13 March, GLASGOW

Gonzaga Lecture Series, St Aloysius College, 7pm

Thursday, 14 March, LEEDS

7pm - venue to be confirmed

Saturday, 16 March, LONDON

Annual ecumenical service,
St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, 11am



Dr Jan Graffius

*Curator of Collections,
Stonyhurst College*



**Resilience in the
Face of Injustice**
Romero & the Jesuit Martyrs

Wednesday, 20 March, GLASGOW

Gonzaga Lecture Series, St Aloysius College, 7pm

Thursday, 21 March, LIVERPOOL

Annual Memorial Mass, St Oswald & St Edmund
Arrowsmith Parish, Ashton-in-Makerfield
WN4 9NP, 7pm, followed by talk at 8pm:
*Drawing us closer to Christ and the saints:
Relics and their meaning for us*

Full information at romerotrust.org.uk

Email romerotrust@gmail.com

Registered charity number 1110069

