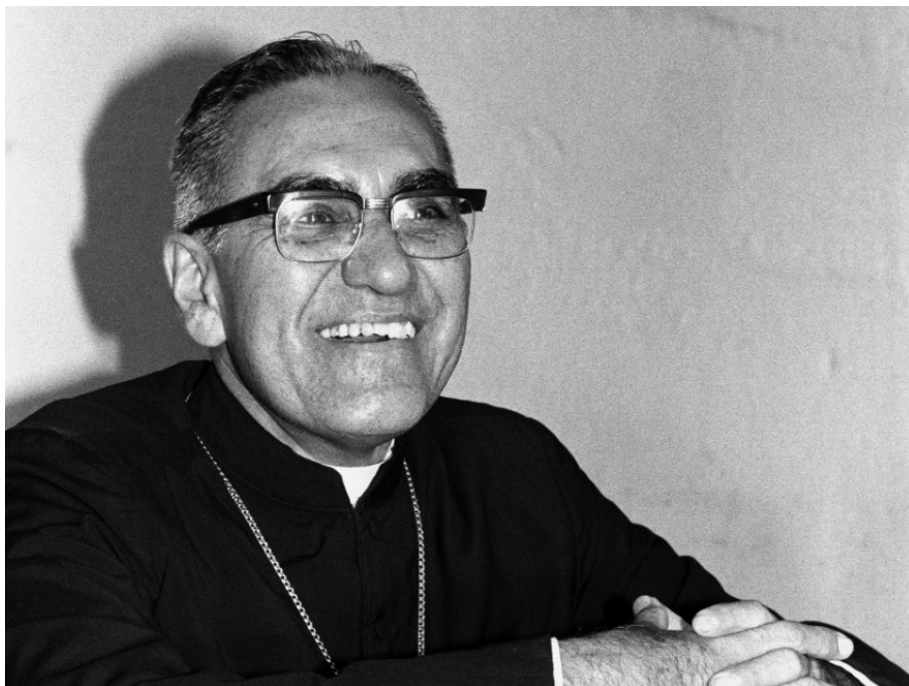




Saturday, 13 March 2022, 11.00

LET US DREAM



Unmasking a post-Covid future with St. Oscar Romero

***An Ecumenical Service to mark the 41st Anniversary of the Martyrdom
of
St. Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador
with an Address by***

Dr. Gemma Simmonds CJ

Director - Religious Life Centre, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge



The Archbishop
Romero Trust
romerortrust.org.uk

Welcome - The Revd. Richard Carter, Associate Vicar for Mission, St. Martin-in-the-Fields

Gathering Song: The Impossible Dream, *Mitch Leigh & Joe Darion*, Canon Pat Browne, accompanied by Jerome Camacho.

To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe,
to bear with unbearable sorrow, to run where the brave dare not go.

To right the un-rightable wrong, to love pure and chaste from afar,
to try, when your arms are too weary, to reach the unreachable star.

This is my quest, to follow that star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far,
to fight for the right, without question or pause, to be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause.

And I know, if I'll only be true to this glorious quest,
that my heart will lie peaceful and calm when I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this, that one man, sore and covered with scars,
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage, to fight the unbeatable foe, to reach the unreachable star.

Call to Worship - The Revd. Richard Carter

Nightmares, depressions, confusions, paralysis, yet also dreams, visions, transforming possibilities, liberating struggles - all part of believers' historic memory as well as present realities in this time of Covid-19. Let us gather to learn from, discern and celebrate the witness of St. Oscar Romero, bishop and martyr, voice of the voiceless and unmasker of all falsehoods.

Hymn: The kingdom of God is justice and joy, *Text - Bryn A Rees, © Alexander Scott*
Recorded virtually by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields

1. The kingdom of God is justice and joy; for Jesus restores what sin would destroy.
God's power and glory in Jesus we know, and here and hereafter the kingdom shall grow.
2. The kingdom of God is mercy and grace; the captives are freed, the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share, and hope is awakened in place of despair.
3. The kingdom of God is challenge and choice: believe the good news, repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners brought Christ to his cross, our crisis of judgement for gain or for loss.
4. God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal, in Jesus begun, in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call, and all things cry 'Glory!' to God all in all.

Collect Prayer

Loving God, you called your servant Saint Oscar Romero to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Hear the prayers of your people and grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of all the martyrs of El Salvador, we may without fear or favour witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and for ever. **Amen**

From an Address given by St. Oscar Romero - Leuven 1980, Pat Gaffney - Pax Christi

The world of the poor, with its very concrete social and political characteristics, teaches us where the church can incarnate itself in such a way that it will avoid the false universalism that inclines the church to associate itself with the powerful. The world of the poor teaches us what the nature of Christian love is, a love that certainly seeks peace but also unmasks false pacifism – the pacifism of resignation and inactivity. It is a love that should certainly be freely offered, but that seeks to be effective in history. The world of the poor teaches us that sublimity of Christian love ought to be mediated through the overriding necessity of justice for the majority. It ought not to turn away from honourable conflict. The world of the poor teaches us that liberation will arrive only when the poor are not simply on the receiving end of handouts from

governments or from the church, but when they themselves are the masters of, and protagonists in, their own struggle and liberation, thereby unmasking the root of false paternalism, including ecclesiastical paternalism.

Song: Romero, *Michael Glen Bell / Duane W.H. Arnold*

1. A martyr's death is a grace of God that I do not believe I deserve,
But if God accepts the sacrifice of my life, let my blood bring liberty

Chorus: *Let my blood be a seed of freedom, let my blood be a seed.
Let my blood be a seed of freedom, let my blood be a seed.*

2. Let my death if accepted by God be for my people's liberty
And a sign that hope will soon be, soon be reality. **Chorus ...**
3. You may say if they accomplish killing me, that I pardon and bless those who succeed.
Would indeed they might be convinced not to waste their time - A bishop will die.

Final Chorus: **Let my blood be a seed of freedom, let my blood be a seed.
Let my blood be a seed of freedom, let my blood be a seed.
A bishop will die, but the Church, God's people, will survive.**

From Pope Francis' Let Us Dream - the path to a better future, 2020, Julian Filochowski - Romero Trust

This crisis unmasks our vulnerability, exposes the false securities on which we had based our lives. It is time for honest reflection, for owning our roots Times of tribulation offer the possibility that what oppresses the people - both internally and externally - can be overthrown, and a new age of freedom begin.

Such calamities for a time throw us off balance, yet, paradoxically, they can allow a people to recover its memory, and therefore its capacity for action, its hope. Crisis has shown that the peoples are not subject to blind forces but in adversity are capable of acting. Calamities unmask our shared vulnerability and expose those false, superfluous securities around which we had organised our plans, routines, and priorities. They reveal our neglect of what nourishes and strengthens the life of the community, how we had shrivelled within our bubbles of indifference and well-being. We learn that in our restlessness and frustration, in our fascination with new things, in craving recognition in manic busy-ness, we had failed to pay attention to the suffering all around us. In their response to that suffering is measured the authentic character of our peoples.

Choral Interlude: Give me justice, an Introit for the 5th Sunday in Lent, *James MacMillan*
Recorded by St Martin's Voices

Give me justice O God, and defend my cause against the wicked;
rescue me from deceitful and unjust men. You, O God, are my refuge.

Emitte lucem tuam, et veritatem tuam; ipsa me deduxerunt,
et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et tabernacula tua.

*[Send forth your light and your truth; these have led me
and brought me to your holy mountain and to the place of your dwelling.]*

Give me justice O God, and defend my cause against the wicked;
rescue me from deceitful and unjust men. You, O God, are my refuge.

Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto; sicut erat in principio,
et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*[Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; As it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.]*

Give me justice O God, and defend my cause against the wicked;
rescue me from deceitful and unjust men. You, O God, are my refuge.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (8: 16-21), Clare Morgan - Christian Aid.

Jesus said: "No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, they put it on a lampstand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be known and brought to light. So, take care how you hear; for anyone who has will be given more; from anyone who has not, even what they think they have will be taken away." His mother and his brothers came looking for him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd. He was told, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you." But he said in answer, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice."

The Address - Dr. Gemma Simmonds CJ,
Director - Religious Life Centre, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge

... Silent reflection ...

Intercessions: The Revd. Richard Carter

As the Spirit of God brings communities to life, each and every day, unmasking us from unreality, so may that same Spirit renew in us the historic memory of Oscar Romero, Bishop and Martyr, strengthening us to work for justice and solidarity, reconciliation and peace. And so we pray in song:

Response: Misa popular Salvadoreña - *Guillermo Cuellar, Martin Pendergast*



Have mercy, O God; have mercy O God; on your people, have mercy; have mercy, O God.

Colette Joyce, Westminster Diocese Justice & Peace & Clare Dixon, CAFOD

In the unyielding hope in which Oscar Romero persevered throughout his life, trusting fully in your providence, O God, may we never lose heart before the adversities of life, but rather, animated by strong hope, live always confident and steadfast in your presence, as we pray in song: **response**

In the burning love that Oscar Romero showed to the poorest of the poor, may our hearts be inflamed, more and more every day, by the divine love that burns in you, O God, and in which you long to see all women, men and children liberated. We hold before God the homeless, the poor in our midst, and all who suffer from climates of austerity and the pandemic impact of Covid-19 as we pray in song: **response**

In the inextinguishable zeal that consumed Oscar Romero in favour of the needs of his beloved flock, to the point of sacrificing his life for them, O God, may we stand firm in solidarity with all people of good will to promote the common good of all. We hold before God all who are persecuted on grounds of faith, conscience and belief, as we pray in song: **response**

In the admirable faithfulness and strength with which Oscar Romero bore the contempt of many rich and powerful forces, first vicariously, through the suffering of the poor and then in his own body, may we always stand with the marginalised and ignored, to be a voice with those who have no voice. We hold before God our divided world and nations, seeking justice and reconciliation, as we pray in song: **response**

In the spirit of Oscar Romero's Eucharistic ministry, O God, may we become steadfast in times of conflict, be bread for those who hunger, wine for those who thirst, and tools of reconciling justice for the oppressed and rejected, as we pray in song: **response**

In some moments of silence let us pray for realism in our work for justice And we pray in song:
response

Almighty and merciful God, who were pleased to adorn the Bishop and Martyr, Saint Oscar with the grace of laying down his life and of confessing his love for you while celebrating the Eucharist, graciously grant, we pray, that, as he imitated the Lord's Passion through his death, so we may follow in his footsteps, and be worthy to attain eternal joys. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Blessing & Sending Forth :

God the creator has placed in the hearts of women and men the desire to ensure justice and equality for every human being. **Amen**

Christ the transfigured Saviour has shed his light on the precious dignity of each person, empowered with rights and responsibilities to reach fullness of life. **Amen**

The Spirit of unity draws us all together to secure the liberation of the poor and destitute, and the integrity of creation, here and across the world. **Amen**

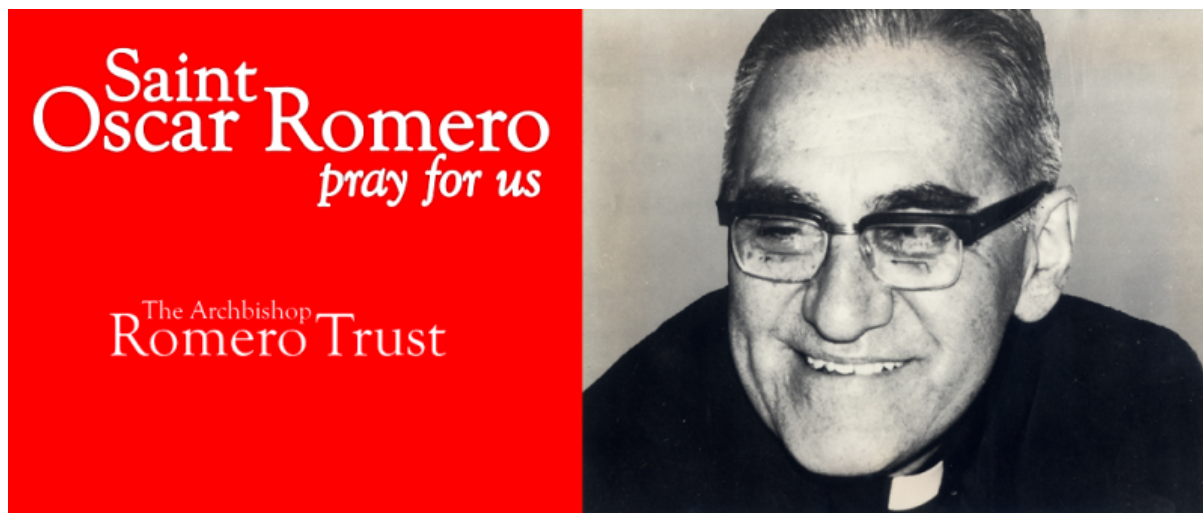
May the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer strengthen us in this purpose, and remain with us and all of creation, now and in the times to come. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace, glorifying God by our lives. **Thanks be to God.**

Recessional Hymn : God you raised up true disciples, *C J Olding*

1. God, you raise up true disciples, teachers, martyrs, deep in faith,
like Romero, holy people, giving witness to your grace.
Let us listen to their voices, speaking of new ways to live.
By their words and by their actions, we may know the love you give.
2. Yours the gospel that disturbs us, words that must demand a choice;
speaking to a broken people, hope for those who have no voice.
Stir in us your call to action, rouse us from our apathy.
In the places lost to darkness, we will shine for all to see.
3. Still our brothers, sisters suffer, helpless and afraid to speak,
victims of oppressors using power to dominate the weak.
When we see injustice near us, we will cry out: "This must cease!"
And by our example, turn this world from violence back to peace.
4. In the gift of your creation, you provide for every need.
Yet we squander earth's resources just to satisfy our greed.
Turn our eyes to see the anguish on the faces of the poor.
Open wide our hearts and hands to help the needy at our door.
5. On the ground a seed has fallen, crushed and buried in the earth.
There it lies 'till time appointed, then a harvest brings to birth.
In our struggling and our suffering, help us daily bear our pain,
as we give our lives for others, so they come to know your name.
6. Brought together by your Spirit, one in you, our risen Lord,
Now you send us as your chosen, hearts emboldened, hope restored.
Like Romero, we will serve you and whatever may befall,
we'll devote ourselves to justice and the common good of all.

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