

Archbishop Romero Trust

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Fifth Annual Report - Year Ending April 2009

The Archbishop Romero Trust - also known as the Romero Trust - is a registered charity (number 1110069). It is governed by a Trust Deed executed on 6th September 2004 amended by a deed of variation dated 9th June 2005. The purposes of the Trust are: a) to advance the education of the public in the life and works of Oscar Romero, the martyred Archbishop of San Salvador, and his principles of human rights, social justice and the relief of poverty; b) to advance religion by promoting liturgical celebrations including commemorations of the life of Oscar Romero and prayer for the cause of his beatification and canonisation; and c) the relief of poverty and the promotion of human rights and social justice (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations Conventions and Declarations and in "Gaudium et Spes", the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council) in Latin America in memory of Oscar Romero.

The trustees are Mr Julian Filochowski (Chair), Ms Clare Dixon (Secretary), Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, Rt. Rev. Michael Evans, Bishop of East Anglia, Rev. Frank Turner SJ and Rev. Tony Lester O.Carm. The Trust's Honorary Treasurer is Mr Stephen Lloyd. The trustees met on 14th July and 21st October 2008 and 20th January 2009.

The Trust's website at www.romerotrust.org.uk has continued to receive a large number of visitors throughout the year. Given the limited availability of Romero material for English speakers the trustees came to the view that an important role for the Archbishop Romero Trust would be to offer a reliable website with a comprehensive range of Romero resources in the English language. Its aim would be to provide straightforward access, free of charge, to English translations of all Archbishop Romero's homily texts and pastoral letters and also to bring together the most important literature about his life and martyrdom and updated links to materials available elsewhere. In that light it was

decided to redesign the Trust website using a content management system and to secure the assistance of a professional site designer for that purpose. In a separate initiative an Archbishop Romero Trust page was set up on Facebook.

In August 2008 the Trust's conservation project was taken forward through a second visit to San Salvador by Jan Graffius, Conservator at Stonyhurst College, together with the Chair of the Trust, taking advantage of finance made available from the Jesuit Social Justice Fund. Further technical assistance was provided to the Carmelite Sisters at the Hospitalito who are the guardians of the relics and belongings of Archbishop Romero. At the same time a major survey of the relics of the Jesuit martyrs was completed and the conditions under which they are kept in the Sala de Los Martires in the Centro Monseñor Romero at the UCA was carefully reviewed. A detailed proposal for major renovations was then drawn up which included the installation of air conditioning and dehumidifiers and a complete redesign and reassembly of the displays - all to ensure their long-term protection and conservation. The project proposal was accepted by the Jesuits with a completion date set for November 2009.

During the year the Trust made three small grants to projects in El Salvador totalling £7436.58. The largest was a grant to assist the Divine Providence cancer hospital where Archbishop Romero had lived (made possible through a generous donation from parishes in the diocese of East Anglia); a second to the Archdiocesan Legal Aid Office (Tutela Legal) to purchase video recording equipment for their investigations and the third to finance a major refurbishment of the website of the Canonisation Office in San Salvador.

In February 2009 the second Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture, sponsored and organised by the Trust, was given by Fr Dean Brackley, a Jesuit theologian from New York who has been working in El Salvador for almost 20 years. He took as his theme 'Crosses and Resurrections: Good News from Central America'. He spoke to large and appreciative audiences in Westminster Cathedral Hall with Bishop John Arnold in the Chair, at the Jesuits' Lauriston Centre in Edinburgh with Cardinal Keith O'Brien in attendance, and also at York St Johns University, the University of St Andrews and at Nottingham Cathedral.

On March 28th 2009, to mark the 29th anniversary of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom, the Trust organised a special ecumenical service hosted by St. Martin in the Fields Church in Trafalgar Square, London. A packed congregation took part in the Service, 'From Cross to Resurrection', at which the Rev Richard Carter officiated and Rev Frank Turner SJ gave the address. The service was co-sponsored by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Pax Christi, Progressio, Westminster Diocesan Justice and Peace and the Anglican diocese of London. There were also Liturgies and events held in Liverpool, Edinburgh, York, Shrewsbury and elsewhere to mark the anniversary.

The second and third issues of 'Romero News', edited by Sarah Smith-Pearse, were produced and distributed to the 'Friends of Romero' in June 2008 and January 2009. With colour photographs, news and stories on Archbishop Romero and his legacy the newsletter was sent out both electronically and by post. It has been received with great appreciation by the Trust's network of supporters.

The Trust has no salaried staff members and relied on the voluntary work of its Trustees and other benefactors. The bankers for the Trust are the Cooperative Bank plc. Whereas for the year ending April 2009 the income of the Trust totalled £12,391.04, the expenditures came to £14,654.69 leading to a deficit for the year of £2,263.65. £14,541.34 was carried forward to 2009/10 which included monies earmarked for the Divine Providence cancer hospital project. The relevant accounts were lodged with the Charity Commission.

Julian Filochowski
Chair
Archbishop Romero Trust

June 2009