

TESTIMONY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL DELEGATES AT THE BURIAL OF BISHOP OSCAR
ARNULFO ROMERO IN RELATION TO THE EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE FUNERAL

1. We bishops, pastors of different Christian churches, Superiors of Religious Orders, priests and laity, feel obliged to rectify the communiqué which the Salvadoran Government issued at 4:30 p.m. today, March 30, on the events which happened at the funeral of Bishop Romero. Not only are there grave falsehoods in the narration of the facts but also in their interpretation, which can lead to serious errors and confusion. In the same official communiqué the Government invites us to tell what we saw. And so that is what we are doing.

2. Our appreciation of the facts, of which we are for the most part direct eye-witnesses and hence able to prove them, leads us to state confidently the following:

- a) at no stage did anyone attempt to snatch the corpse of Bishop Romero; on the contrary, all the people and groups without exception behaved with great respect and devotion toward his remains.
- b) The Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses entered the Plaza Barrios, where the Cathedral is situated, peacefully, respectfully and in an orderly fashion, and their leaders placed a wreath on the coffin.
- c) It is quite untrue that there was any pressure whatsoever on us from the Coordinating Committee to force us to stay inside the Cathedral. Insofar as we stayed inside, even after the aggression ceased, it was because of our Christian ~~conviction~~ desire to stay alongside so many terrorized people, squeezed painfully together inside the sacred precincts.

3. What we could be sure of from the steps of the Cathedral and from its towers, as well as from the testimonies gathered from our trips through the city is the following:

- a) Suddenly we heard and saw the explosion of a big bomb which several witnesses saw thrown from the National Palace.
- b) Then shots and volleys of fire were heard, which several priests present are certain came from the second floor of the National Palace.

- c) We saw or can prove the presence from the earliest hours of the morning of the security forces in the streets of San Salvador and on the access roads to the city.
- d) We can also be sure that some members of the Coordinating Committee were responsible for certain actions, consisting basically in burning cars, supposedly to cover the flight of the people from the Square.

4. We who came to honor the life and death of Bishop Romero, have been able to experience for ourselves the truth of his words when he denounced unceasingly the repression of the Salvadoran people. We feel today more than ever in solidarity with and continuers of his prophetic mission by echoing his last words in which he begged and ordered in the name of God that the repression should cease.

We have been witnesses of the suffering and anguish of the Salvadoran people, but also of their courage and maturity. And, on this occasion, we are witnesses of the serious distortion of the facts and of their false interpretation which the Government of El Salvador has given out.

San Salvador, March 30, 1980

(Signed by over 23 delegates to the funeral from outside El Salvador)