

Saint Oscar Romero

What you need: paper, card or stones, colour pens or paint. Find more information about Saint Oscar Romero at cafod.org.uk/romero. You might want to play some reflective music in the background as you do this activity. For example: *The Servant King* by Graham Kendrick.



Watch this [short animation](#) on the life of Saint Oscar Romero (cafod.org.uk/primary/romero).

If you prefer, you can read the story of his life on the next page.

Read the quotes from Saint Oscar Romero below and decide which one appeals to you the most.

Once you have made your choice, design a postcard with one of the quotes, or paint images on a stone that reflect the quote. You may want to copy the colourful style of the El Salvador cross.

Take a photo of your creation and share it online (with your school or on social media) tagging @CAFOD #CAFOD. If you have made a postcard, to whom will you send it?



“The ones who have a voice must speak for those who are voiceless.”

“There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried.”

“It is not God’s will for some to have everything and others to have nothing.”

“Each time we look upon the poor, on the farmworkers who harvest the coffee, the sugar cane, or the cotton... remember, there is the face of Christ.”

“Each one of you must be God’s microphone, each one of you must be a messenger, a prophet.”

“Every priest, religious, or lay person who wants to announce Christ’s gospel in truth must suffer.”

“Aspire not to have more, but to be more.”

“We must not seek the child Jesus in the pretty figures of our Christmas cribs. We must seek him among the undernourished children who have gone to bed at night with nothing to eat.”

“Without poverty of spirit there can be no abundance of God.”

“God is not satisfied with appearance. God wants the garment of justice. God wants his Christians dressed in love.”

“The great need today is for Christians who are active and critical, who don’t accept situations without analysing them.”

Saint Oscar Romero

Saint Oscar Romero, when he was made Archbishop of San Salvador in El Salvador in 1977, was seen as a safe pair of hands, someone who would not rock the boat. As the political climate began to change around him, when his own people were being threatened with violence, tortured, disappeared and killed, he decided that he needed to speak up. He chose to be on the side of the poor and oppressed in his country.

During his three years as archbishop, Romero repeatedly spoke out against the violence and used his voice to support the victims of the civil war. In a time of heavy press censorship, he used his radio station to broadcast news updates and his sermons to the poor farmers, which was often the only way people could find out the truth about the atrocities that were happening in their country. He defended the right of the poor to demand political change, a stance which made him a troublesome adversary for the country's rulers.

Saint Oscar Romero, by standing with the poor, made many enemies who saw him as a very troublesome figure. It was extremely dangerous to stand up and be a voice for the poor. Although Saint Oscar Romero knew the risks he knew that he had to be faithful to the teachings of the Gospel. As he said:

"A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed— what gospel is that?"

Romero's sermons were a lifeline of hope for so many of the Salvadoran poor. And as the violence started to increase, when families began to 'disappear' and murders were commonplace, Romero preached ever more forcefully on the theme of love and justice.

"Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world. Let us not tire of preaching love. Though we see that waves of violence succeed in drowning the fire of Christian love, love must win out; it is the only thing that can."

Romero is an inspirational figure to millions of Catholics around the world. He didn't simply talk about the need to love your neighbour, but courageously named the injustices that plagued his country. He reminded us that Christ is found in people living in poverty, and that we cannot ignore the suffering of our brothers and sisters in need.

Saint Oscar Romero was one of the most remarkable figures of the 20th century, who deserves to be commemorated alongside the likes of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi as a peacemaker who sacrificed his life standing up to injustice. He was a true leader to the poor — a servant to his people. His witness continues to inspire, and his message of finding Christ in the poor is an important message for Catholics and the world today.

Final reflection

- Which quote did you choose and why?
- What could you do that shows you care about people living in poverty or with injustice?
- If Saint Oscar Romero was alive today, what do you think he would be saying?

