

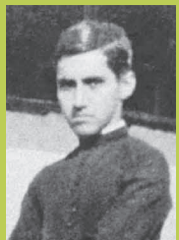
1917

Oscar Arnulfo Romero was born into a family of ten on 15 August in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador. His father was in charge of the local telegraph office. Sometimes the young Romero helped his father to deliver telegrams. Oscar learned to be a carpenter, making tables, chairs and doors.



1937

Oscar went to Rome to study and stayed there during World War II. His father and brother died while he was in Rome.



1974

Violence increased in El Salvador by mid 1970s, as the government and army began killing poor people who stood up for their rights. When the army killed three people in the village of Tres Calles in Romero's diocese, he comforted the families and wrote to the President to protest about the murders.



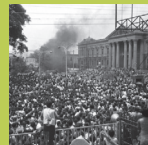
1977-80

As the violence in El Salvador continued, Romero continued to speak out. Every Sunday his sermon was broadcast by radio. The whole country listened. Romero's life was often threatened. Romero was a CAFOD partner and when his radio station was bombed, CAFOD rebuilt it.



1980

The next day, a shot killed Romero as he said Mass. A UN report later found that Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, had ordered Romero's death. Thousands came to the funeral. The army fired into the crowd. 30 people died and hundreds were injured. There was civil war in El Salvador until 1992.



1930

When he was 14 years old, Oscar wanted to be a priest so he went to study at junior seminary. When his mother was ill and they needed money for medicine, Oscar left the seminary for three months and worked in the gold mine in Potosí. He earned about 4p a day.



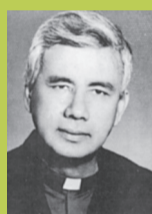
1942

Romero was ordained a priest and returned to El Salvador. He became famous for his sermons. He also did a lot of parish work like visiting prisons, organising catechism classes and working with others in the Church to provide help and food for the poor.



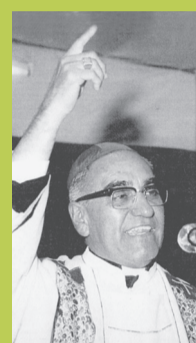
1977

Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador. Some rich people were happy because they thought he would stop priests from helping the poor to stand up for their basic rights. But a few weeks later, his friend Fr Rutilio Grande was shot and killed, along with two companions. The following Sunday, Romero allowed only one Mass in the whole diocese - at the Cathedral - where he spoke out against the murders.



1980

In his sermon on 23 March, Romero ordered the army to stop killing people: "In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I beg you, I implore you, I order you, in the name of God, stop the repression!"



2009

On 15 March, the new president of El Salvador announced that his government would be inspired by Romero and the "option for the poor" (choosing to put the most vulnerable people first).



2015

Pope Francis confirmed Oscar Romero was a martyr, killed out of hatred of the faith. He was beatified on 23 May.



2018

Pope Francis approved a miracle which has been attributed to Oscar Romero. This means he can now be canonised. The canonisation date is 14 October. **Saint Oscar Romero, pray for us.**

Oscar Romero, a CAFOD partner

A CAFOD partner is an organisation in a developing country that works with the local community, supported by donations from CAFOD supporters in England and Wales.

Just as Romero did, CAFOD partners know the needs of their communities because they live and work alongside them.

CAFOD has partners in many countries around the world. Together we bring hope and compassion to poor communities, standing side by side with them to end poverty and injustice.

CAFOD's work in El Salvador stretches back to the early 1970s; the Legal Aid Office of Romero was one of CAFOD's principal partners there. At the time, the country was ruled by a military-dominated government that used violence to crush demands for social reform. Romero's Legal Aid Office helped the families of people who were arrested, tortured and killed by the army and police.

Romero stood alongside his people facing terrible oppression and violence, as they spoke out against injustice. He is remembered for his courage, his faith and, above all, his great love for the poor. Romero still inspires people today, and CAFOD continues to support partners in El Salvador, working to overcome poverty and injustice.

The Jesuit Development Service CAFOD partner

CAFOD is supporting the JDS, who work with some of the poorest communities in El Salvador, to the west of the country.

People here grow food to survive, but the steep, rocky landscape makes farming difficult. The JDS helps train farmers, so people can share skills, develop new ways to earn money and create a better life for their families.

Fidel: "The JDS has helped us to develop our farm and shown us how to breed pigs. Looking ahead, I would like my children to learn how to work the land. I hope that they will have a better future and a better quality of food."

A guiding light

Lord Jesus,
We give thanks for the life of Saint Oscar Romero who spread your message and struggled against injustice in El Salvador. Like you, he was a shepherd, a pastor, a brother; Like you, he was taken from us; Like you, he remains in our hearts.

Spirit of hope, work within us, just as you worked in Saint Oscar Romero, so that we too may work for justice and spread the Good News, by living out the Gospel, in solidarity with those living in poverty.

Amen.

Jack Tunnecliffe/CAFOD

The JDS also works to reduce the risk of disasters like floods and mud slides, by providing emergency equipment, helping communities to develop evacuation plans and to plant crops to stop soil erosion.

Sibia: "Since the JDS came, we began to imagine new projects and they told us we could be more creative in the way that we farmed. As a women's group, we started to make cakes. The JDS provided us with tables and training. Thanks to that help, we have been able to support our families."

CAFOD partners in El Salvador today

Our partners focus on four key areas of development:

- 1 Helping farmers to improve their crops and find ways to earn money.
- 2 Reducing the risk of disasters.
- 3 Treatment and raising awareness of HIV and AIDS.
- 4 Creating peace.

Prayers of intercession

For the people of Central America, especially El Salvador: that God might grant them joy, peace and unity as they celebrate the canonisation of Oscar Romero. **Lord, in your mercy...**

For our global family: that through God's grace, and inspired by the message of Saint Oscar Romero, we, and all our brothers and sisters, may live life to the full. **Lord, in your mercy...**

For the poorest people and communities across the world: that the example of the faith of Saint Oscar Romero might inspire a lively commitment to solidarity amongst all peoples.

Lord, in your mercy...

Find more prayers and reflections inspired by Saint Oscar Romero at cafod.org.uk/romero
Follow us on twitter @CAFODprayer

SAINT OSCAR ROMERO

1917–1980

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



Illustration: Julie Lonneman