

A Priest for Peace

As a young priest, Father Oscar Romero cared for the poor in a rural parish in his native El Salvador. He was shy by nature, but intelligent and most capable. He also served as rector for a large seminary, working with young men in his country who were preparing to be priests. In 1970, he was named a bishop, and in February 1977, he became archbishop of San Salvador, just as El Salvador exploded into a brutal civil war.

Archbishop Romero called for peace in his homeland – a peace he saw as connected to basic human rights for all in God’s family. He spoke out against the injustices that he saw around him. “The word of God is like the light of the sun,” he said. “It illuminates beautiful things, but also things which we would rather not see.”

On March 24, 1980, as Archbishop Romero stood behind the altar during Mass, he was shot. He died within minutes of the attack.

For Reflection / Action

“Peace is not the product of terror or fear... Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty.”

– Archbishop Oscar Romero

Now that you have read the story of Archbishop Romero, a priest from El Salvador who worked tirelessly, even to the point of death, to bring peace to his country, consider the following actions:

- Write an essay or rap, or shoot a video about what peace means to you.
- Study the life of Archbishop Romero – talk about ways in which he worked for peace.
- Commit to praying the World Mission Rosary at least once a week asking that through Mary’s intercession, God help bring peace to those areas in the Missions where people suffer because of war, violence and terrorism.
- Find out who is the patron saint of peace. Write a blog post on this saint.
- Text your friends your favorite line from the “Prayer of Saint Francis.”
- Ask your teacher or catechist if you can create a “peace award” for your parish or school. Create the qualifications for the award and then nominate potential honorees.
- Create a “peace wall” in your school or parish. Challenge students to draw or decorate the wall with photos, original artwork, poetry, raps, etc. Charge a small fee to participate and donate the money to HCA.

