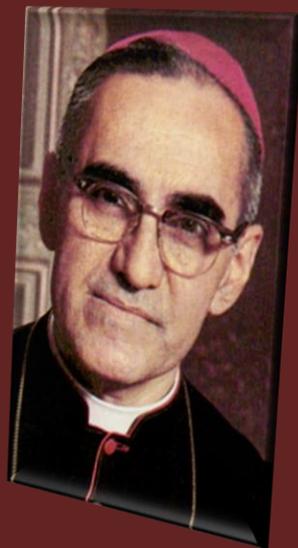


**O**SCAR ARNULFO ROMERO GALDÁMEZ was born in the rural municipality of Ciudad Barrios on 15 August 1917, the second of the seven children of Santos Romero and Guadalupe de Jesús Galdámez. At thirteen, he left home to enter the minor seminary of the diocese of San Miguel. Twelve years later, he was ordained priest on 4 April 1942 in Rome. Upon returning to El Salvador in 1943, he became parish priest of Anamorós, La Union. The following year, he was appointed secretary of the diocese of San Miguel, a post he held for the next twenty-three years.

Romero became auxiliary bishop of San Salvador in 1970, at a time when the pronouncements of Vatican II and the Latin American Bishops Conference of Medellín began impacting the Salvadoran church. Cautious and conservative by disposition, he found himself at odds with progressive members of the clergy and sincerely believed in the basic goodness of those who ran the country's government.

Romero experienced a conversion of heart and mind after he encountered the brutal repression of the poor during his first year as bishop of the diocese of Santiago de María (1974-77). In June 1975,



members of the Salvadoran National Guard assassinated six rural workers in the village of Tres Calles. A heart-broken Romero wrote to Arturo Molina Barraza, president of El Salvador, to express his “*firm protest*” for “*the way in which a ‘security force’ had wrongfully acted, as if it had the right to mistreat and kill.*” He recounted: “*I went there to console the families that had been attacked by a platoon of National Guard .... On the way to their homes, I stopped to pray by the body of a still-unburied victim who had been shot in the head. His wife and mother were beside him, weeping. When I arrived at the houses that had been invaded by the armed forces, it broke my heart to hear the bitter laments of the widows and orphans who, sobbing inconsolably, told me about the attack....*”



*This was a violation of the dignity and life to which every human being has a right, even criminals, until they have been brought before a court of law.”*

The poverty and violence endured by his flock stirred righteous anger within him and he began to distance himself from the powerful who wanted to preserve the status quo.

Very shortly after Romero was consecrated archbishop of San Salvador in



February 1977, the military and paramilitary groups began a full-scale attack on the church for its support of workers and peasants. It was in this climate that he led the archdiocese in countering propaganda emanating from the state-controlled media. The warrantless arrest, torture, and disappearance of thousands and the murder of several priests and lay leaders sealed his commitment to the cause of justice. In a country whose economy was controlled by fourteen families, the naturally timid archbishop became the fearless voice for the poor and oppressed majority.

Those in power attacked him through a well-funded smear-campaign – labeling him “Oscar Marxnulfo Romero” – and threatened his life.

Romero faced all these challenges with faith and hope: *“I have often been threatened with death. Nevertheless, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people. As a pastor, I am obliged to give my life for those I love – for all Salvadorans, even for those who may be about to kill me. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish.”* (Interview with Guatemalan journalist José Calderón Sánchez of the Mexican newspaper *Excélsior*, 11 March 1980)

On 23 March 1980, Romero delivered a homily that was broadcast throughout the country. In it, he made an appeal to members of the country's security forces: *"In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people, whose laments rise to heaven each day more tumultuous, I beg you, I beseech you, I order you in the name of God: Stop the repression!"* It is widely believed that he signed his fate with those words.

The following day, 24 March, at approximately 6:25 p.m., Romero was shot after delivering the homily during a mass at the chapel of La Divina Providencia Hospital. He died on the spot. Later, security forces disrupted his funeral on 30 March, firing at mourners outside the cathedral and killing between 30 to 50 of them.

In March 1993, the United Nations Truth Commission on El Salvador stated in its findings that there is "full evidence that former Major Roberto D'Aubuisson [founder of the right-wing ARENA party] gave the order to assassinate the Archbishop and gave precise instructions to members of his security service, acting as a 'death squad,' to organize and supervise the assassination."



## INFORMATION ON THE CAUSE

1. **COMPETENT FORUM: San Salvador (El Salvador)**

2. **ITER:**

- ❖ rescript of “nihil obstat”: **13 September 1993**
  - opening of diocesan inquiry: **24 March 1994**
  - closing of diocesan inquiry: **01 November 1996**
- ❖ validation of diocesan inquiry: **04 July 1997**
- ❖ consignment of Positio to CCS: **2014**
- ❖ meeting of theological consultors: **07 January 2015**
- ❖ session of CCS Cardinals and Bishops: **03 February 2015**
- ❖ promulgation of decree on martyrdom: **03 February 2015**
- ❖ beatification: **23 May 2015**
- ❖ promulgation of decree on a miracle for canonization: **06 March 2018**
- ❖ canonization: **14 October 2018**

3. **POSTULATOR: Bp. Vincenzo Paglia** (beatification and canonization)

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