

Biography of Oscar Romero

"I must tell you, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If I am killed, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people."

OSCAR ROMERO was born in Ciudad Barrios, a town in the mountains in the eastern part of El Salvador in 1917. When Oscar was only thirteen years old, he told his family that he wanted to be a priest.

Romero went to a seminary in San Miguel, then to the capital San Salvador, and from there to Rome. He was ordained in 1942. In January 1944 was called back to San Miguel by his bishop and was soon secretary of the diocese. The people enjoyed his sermons, which were broadcast on the radio.

Over the next 30 years, Romero worked in the offices of the Catholic Church in El Salvador. He helped the church administration to run smoothly, and he enjoyed studying theology.

In February 1977, Oscar Romero became archbishop of San Salvador, which means he was the spiritual leader for all of the Catholics in El Salvador. In that month a crowd of protesters were attacked by soldiers in the town square of the capital. Then, on March 12, 1977, a priest and friend of Romero's, Rutilio Grande, was murdered in Aguilares.

Romero saw that the people in power in his country were violent men. The wealthy families supported this violent government. Death squads committed murder in the cities while soldiers killed as they wished in the countryside. Romero was sad and angry because so many people were being hurt.

During this time, the poor people suffered the most. Romero spoke out against the soldiers and the government who were attacking the poor. Romero believed that the church needed to work to change the government, because the government was going against the teachings of Jesus.

Archbishop Romero used his sermons to call for peace. Crowds of poor people came to listen to Romero in person, and others crowded around their radios to hear him. His message to the victims of violence was that Jesus was suffering in them. His message to the murderers was that they were crucifying Jesus when they killed others, and that even though they killed people, God still loved them.

Romero knew his life was in danger. He said that his blood would be the seed for liberty for his people. On March 24, 1980 Oscar Romero was suddenly shot dead while celebrating mass in the chapel of the cancer hospital where he lived and worked. His death was like a seed, that grew and grew in the hearts of the poor people in El Salvador.

Today the memory of Oscar Romero is treasured by the people of El Salvador, and by countless Christians across the world. Romero stands as an example of faith and trust in Jesus. His story inspires many people to share Jesus' love by caring for hurting people.