

# BLESSED OSCAR ARNULFO ROMERO

## LIFE

Oscar Arnulfo Romero was born in Ciudad Barrios (El Salvador) on August 15, 1917. His parents, Santos and Guadalupe, had one daughter and six sons, the second of whom was Oscar. At the age of twelve, he entered the Minor Seminary of San Miguel, thanks to the spiritual and economic help of Bishop Juan Antonio Dueñas. Later he was sent to study in Rome, where he was ordained a priest on April 4, 1942.

When he returned to El Salvador he was Chancellor and Secretary of the Diocese of San Miguel, Vicar General, Parish Priest at the Cathedral, Director of Associations and Apostolic Movements and Rector of the Seminary. He collaborated as Executive Secretary with the SEDAC (Episcopal Secretariat of Central America). He was Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador and finally appointed Archbishop, on February 22, 1977.

His pastoral work focused on paying attention to the clergy and the people, the celebration of the liturgy, the care of the sick and the poor. This he did according to the guidelines of the Council, Medellín, and Puebla. He proclaimed the Good News, denounced sin, and also enlightened the people - through the Gospel - about the reality of the country plunged into violence and division. He called for dialogue and peace while accompanying the victims, continuously demanding the conversion of those who acted with violence, injustice, impunity and corruption, especially the rich and powerful, the guerrillas, and the army.

His prophetic attitude made him live a true ordeal: attempts of manipulation, insults and threats. On March 24, 1980, he was shot dead while celebrating the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital. He was beatified on March 23, 2015.

## SPIRITUALITY

As a good shepherd, he gave his life for his sheep. He was always concerned about the people of El Salvador, especially the poorest and victims of violence. He attended to the priests and pastoral agents, who were dealing with numerous cases of persecution, imprisonment, and assassination of members of the clergy and catechists.

He untiringly preserved peace, calling everyone to conversion, defending the Social Doctrine of the Church, and denouncing all violations of Human Rights. His homilies and declarations illuminated the conflictive situation in El Salvador and guided, the fulfillment of the liberating mission of the Church at the service of the Kingdom of God: "The mission of the Church is to identify itself with the poor, so the Church may find salvation" (November 11, 1977). "The Church, defender of God's rights, of God's Law, and of human dignity, of the person, cannot remain silent before such abomination. We want the government to take it seriously that reforms are useless if they are dyed with so much blood. In the name of God, and in the name of these suffering people, whose cries rise up to the heavens every day more loudly, I ask of you, I beg



you, I order you in the name of God: Stop the repression." (March 23, 1980). His martyrdom crowned a life of following Christ, the option he chose for the Kingdom of God and for his justice by listening to the Word and showing fidelity, courage, a devotion to the Church, and service to people.

## MODEL FOR YOUTH

Follower of Christ  
Choosing the poor  
Fidelity and courage  
Commitment to social justice  
Call for dialogue, peace, and conversion

## FIRST ARCHBISHOP MARTYR OF AMERICA

Defender of the human dignity.  
Consecrated to the service of the Kingdom in the Church