

Salvadorean Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero becomes Saint of The Americas



Vatican City, October 15 (RHC)-- Pope Francis on Sunday made murdered Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero a saint, praising him for disregarding his own life "to be close to the poor and to his people."

Archbishop Romero, who had often denounced repression and poverty in his homilies, was shot dead on March 24, 1980, in a hospital chapel in San Salvador, the capital of the impoverished Central American country of El Salvador.

A report from the United Nations Truth Commission in 1993 blamed death squads led by Colonel Roberto D'Aubuisson for his killing. However, an amnesty law, passed in 1993 by the right-wing ARENA government, prevented the opening of any proceedings against him. Other soldiers are also mentioned as perpetrators of the murder.

At the Vatican on Sunday, the leader of the Catholic Church said that Oscar Romero abandoned "the security of the world, including his own safety, to give his life according to the Gospel, close to the poor and his people."

The Salvadorean religious leader raised his voice within popular movements to demand a halt to repression while denouncing the neo-liberal economic system that had condemned his country to misery and poverty.

Pope Francis also proclaimed as saints Pope Paul VI, Francis Spinelli, Vincent Romano, Maria Catalina Kasper, Nazaria Ignacia of Saint Teresa of Jesus and layman Nuncio Sulprizio.

Francis often quotes Paul, showing that he is committed to the reforms of the Council, which allowed the Mass to be said in local languages instead of Latin, declared respect for other religions and launched a landmark reconciliation with Jews.

Paul also became the first pope in modern times to travel outside Italy to see faithful, ushering in a practice which has become synonymous with the papacy. He is the third pope that Francis has made a saint since his election in 2013.

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