

Who was Oscar Romero?

Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was shot dead while saying Mass on 24 March 1980.

At the time, his country was governed by the wealthy who were oppressing the poorest with help from the army. Thousands were imprisoned, tortured, murdered or simply disappeared.

Voice of the voiceless

Romero denounced the violence in his Sunday sermons, which were broadcast by radio. He became known as the voice of the voiceless. CAFOD supporters funded the rebuilding of his radio station when it was bombed by those who did not want his voice to be heard.

Brave under threat of death

Romero knew his life was under threat. A few days before he died he said, "If I am killed, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people."

The path to sainthood

After Romero's death, many of the ordinary people of El Salvador began calling him 'San (Saint) Romero' and came to his tomb to pray. In February 2015, Pope Francis declared that Romero was a martyr. This meant that he would become known as 'Blessed Oscar Romero', the first step to being officially declared a saint.

El Salvador crosses

In El Salvador, there is a tradition of producing very colourful crucifixes. The bright decorations not only have a figure of Jesus at the centre but also include images of the local community set in a Salvadoran landscape.

Romero cross

The design on the right is produced by a CAFOD partner and has become known in England and Wales as a 'Romero Cross'.

- What can you see on this cross?
- Why would someone paint a cross like this for Romero?



In the blank outline of a cross or using the template on the next page, design a cross with drawings or cut-out photos for your own school, parish or other community of faith.

Think about the background landscape, colours that reflect your surroundings and which aspects of your community's life to include.

As you work, bring your community's joys and sufferings to Jesus on the cross.

