

Archbishop Romero Trust

PO Box 70227, London E9 9BR

romerotrust@gmail.com

17th Trustees' Annual Report - Year Ending April 2021

The Archbishop Romero Trust - also known as the Romero Trust - is a registered charity (number 1110069). It is governed by a Trust Deed executed on 6th September 2004 amended by a deed of variation dated 9th June 2005. The purposes of the Trust are: a) to advance the education of the public in the life and works of Oscar Romero, the martyred Archbishop of San Salvador, and his principles of human rights, social justice and the relief of poverty; b) to advance religion by promoting liturgical celebrations including commemorations of the life of Oscar Romero and prayer for the recognition of his sanctity in the Christian Church; and c) the relief of poverty and the promotion of human rights and social justice (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations Conventions and Declarations and in "Gaudium et Spes", the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council) in Latin America in memory of Oscar Romero.

Governance

The trustees are Dr Julian Filochowski CMG, OBE (Chair), Mr Stephen Davies (Moderator/Vice-Chair), Ms Clare Dixon OBE (Secretary), Rev. Richard Carter, Dr Jan Graffius, Rt. Rev. Nicholas Hudson (from January 2021), Sister Eileen McLoughlin SSHJM, Rev. Jim O'Keefe, Rt. Rev. John Rawsthorne, Mr David Skidmore OBE, and Rev. Dr Frank Turner SJ. Mr Stephen Lloyd is the Trust's Honorary Treasurer and Ms Madge Rondo is the Trust's Honorary Membership Secretary. The mandates of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer run until September 2021.

The Trust is honoured to have Archbishop Leo Cushley, Sister Maria Julia Garcia, Very Rev. Dr John Hall, Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop John Sentamu, Mgr. Rafael Urrutia and Lord Rowan Williams as its Patrons.

The Trust has no offices of its own; but the registered address is PO Box 70227, London E9 9BR and 57 Lyme Grove, London E9 6PX.

The trustees met, on-line via Zoom, on April 30th 2020, July 30th 2020, October 28th 2020, January 21st 2021 and March 30th 2021 to approve budgets and project grants and to oversee the Trust's annual programme

of activities. In making decisions and exercising their powers, the trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance.

Romero Events in Britain

On Saturday August 15th 2020 the Trust once again arranged a special Mass in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, to mark the 103rd anniversary of Oscar Romero's birth. The Service took place on-line because of COVID-19 regulations. Mgr. John O'Toole, Episcopal Vicar for Kent and Guardian of the Romero Shrine, presided and preached.

The celebratory events in March 2021, organised by the Trust to mark St Oscar Romero's Feast Day and the anniversary of his martyrdom, were rather muted given the lockdown restrictions in force at that time. On Saturday March 13th the National Ecumenical Service, with the theme 'Let Us Dream - Unmasking a Post-Covid Future with St Oscar Romero', was live-streamed from St Martin-in-the-Fields Church but without a congregation physically present. Rev Richard Carter led the Service and Gemma Simmonds CJ gave the Address. It has been watched by people around the world over 1,300 times and enabled the Service to reach a far wider audience. On Saturday March 27th Archbishop John Wilson celebrated and preached at the Romero Anniversary Mass in Southwark Cathedral.

December 2nd 2020 was the 40th anniversary of the rape and murder in El Salvador of four US women missionaries (Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel, Jean Donovan) who were key collaborators with Archbishop Romero in protecting fundamental human rights in the midst of repressive violence. Alongside special celebratory events in the United States, the Trust organised a Service of Prayer in Britain, in conjunction with the Conference of Religious, that was live streamed from the Claretian parish in Hayes, Middlesex. The Trust also worked with the International Union of Superiors General in Rome to arrange a Mass to mark the anniversary at the Caravita Oratory there. It was celebrated by Cardinal Michael Czerny.

The Romero Shrine

At the end of 2019 Archbishop John Wilson issued Statutes setting out both the purpose and the governance of the Romero Diocesan Shrine in St George's Cathedral. This included the appointment of four 'Guardians' to assist the Cathedral Dean in the administration and promotion of the Shrine. At the same time the Trust formally transferred ownership of the Romero Cross and the first-class Romero relics to the diocese of Southwark. A ceremony to commission the Guardians of the Shrine formed part of the Romero Anniversary Mass on March 27th.

Romero in Liverpool

In 2019, the Trust made a gift to the Liverpool diocese of a small reliquary containing a first-class relic of St Oscar Romero for permanent display in the Metropolitan Cathedral. Unfortunately, an ecumenical service in the cathedral with the formal presentation of the relic has been twice postponed because of the pandemic. It is now scheduled to take place in October 2021.

A new parish dedicated to St Oscar Romero has been created following the amalgamation of the three Liverpool churches of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Seaforth, St Thomas of Canterbury and St Edmund of Canterbury, Waterloo. The Trust has worked with the parish priest in planning the inaugural celebrations which will be held once Coronavirus restrictions are lifted. But prior to that, in March 2021, the parish hosted Liverpool diocese's annual Mass to mark Romero's martyrdom.

St Oscar Romero Catholic School in Worthing

In September 2020 Chatsmore Catholic High School at Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, became St Oscar Romero Catholic School. The Trust assisted the Head Teacher and his staff team in the preparations for a special day of celebration to mark the renaming and rededication of the school which took place on September 10th. The day began with a Mass during which the Trust presented the school with a bust of Oscar Romero secured from the sculptor Lado Goudjabidze. The Trust has arranged to give talks on Romero to the staff and students.

Communications

The Trust has frequent posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter coordinated by Stephen Davies. These postings often use quotations from St Oscar Romero's homilies for particular Sundays, helping people access the richness of the saint's reflections. The social media posts offer links to the Trust's website whenever appropriate. There are approximately 1700 members of the Romero Trust Facebook Group, around 2000 followers on Twitter and 500 on Instagram - representing a substantial increase on the previous year.

Work has continued throughout the year to transfer the content management system of the Trust's website from Drupal to WordPress to increase the security of the site and enable further updates to be made.

The 26th and 27th issues of Romero News, the Trust's twice-yearly newsletter edited by Clare Dixon, were distributed by post and email to some 900 'Friends of Romero' in August 2020 and January 2021.

Trust Grants and Finances

With the assistance of the Carmelite Friars in Britain, the Trust once again made a grant of US\$6000 (£4,741) towards the running costs of the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital in San Salvador. A grant of US\$8000 (£6,217) was made to the Archdiocese of San Salvador towards the costs of educational materials being planned around the beatification ceremonies for Rutilio Grande, the martyred friend of St Oscar Romero. Following an appeal to Trust supporters, a grant of US\$4,000 (£3380) was made to the Llorc Foundation in San Salvador to assist the artisans at La Palma, Chalatenango, who produce the Trust's Romero Southwark crosses - and who were suffering hardship, without work or income, as a result of El Salvador's draconian COVID measures. Since the radio station in Arcatao, with which the Trust has been working to advance the Romero Solar Park initiative, was facing financial crisis in the wake of the pandemic, a grant of £1250 was made. These grants contributed directly to the public good.

The Trust has no salaried staff members and relies on the voluntary work of its trustees and other benefactors. The bankers for the Trust are the Cooperative Bank plc. For the year ending April 2021 total income came to £24,601. Leaving aside restricted income earmarked for specific programmes, the unrestricted income of the Trust totalled £10,335. This was matched by expenditure of £14,180, giving a deficit for the year in unrestricted funds of £3,844. As a result, £9,955 will be carried forward to 2021/22. The balance sheet shows the figure for total funds held of £63,515 - of which £45,000 is a restricted fund reserved for a capital project at the Divine Providence Cancer Hospital.

The Trust needs to hold reserves to be able to continue to meet its obligations and deliver its programme of activities even in the event of a delay or shortfall in funding. The COVID crisis has led to the cancellation of many Trust events, but it is not anticipated there will be a significant impact on Trust income in the financial year 2021-22. The trustees estimate that reserves of not less than £5,000 are required to provide adequate mitigation against such risks; this estimate is reviewed as the programme of activities develops. Reserves at April 5th 2021 are comfortably in excess of the policy requirement. The relevant financial information is to be lodged with the Charity Commission.

Julian Filochowski,
Chair, Archbishop Romero Trust.

June 2021