

Who was Romero?

- A special man
- Archbishop of San Salvador
- Stood up for poor communities in El Salvador
- Spoke out against inequality and injustice



1917

Oscar Amulfo Romero was born into a family of ten on 15 August in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador. His father was in charge of the local telegraph office. Sometimes the young Romero helped his father to deliver telegrams. Oscar learned to be a carpenter, making tables, chairs and doors.



1930

When he was 14 years old, Oscar wanted to be a priest so he went to study at junior seminary. When his mother was ill and they needed money for medicine, Oscar left the seminary for three months and worked in the gold mine in Potosí. He earned about 4p a day.



1937

Oscar went to Rome to study and stayed there during World War II. His father and brother died while he was in Rome.



1942

Romero was ordained a priest and returned to El Salvador. He became famous for his sermons. He also did a lot of parish work like visiting prisons, organising catechism classes and working with others in the Church to provide help and food for the poor.



1970

Romero was made a bishop on 21 June.



1974

Violence increased in El Salvador by mid 1970s, as the government and army began killing poor people who stood up for their rights. When the army killed three people in the village of Tres Calles in Romero's diocese, he comforted the families and wrote to the President to protest about the murders.



1977

Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador. Some rich people were happy because they thought he would stop priests from helping the poor to stand up for their basic rights. But a few weeks later, his friend Fr Rutilio Grande was shot and killed, along with two companions. The following Sunday, Romero allowed only one Mass in the whole diocese - at the Cathedral - where he spoke out against the murders.



1977-80

As the violence in El Salvador continued, Romero continued to speak out. Every Sunday his sermon was broadcast by radio. The whole country listened. Romero's life was often threatened. Romero was a CAFOD partner and when his radio station was bombed, CAFOD rebuilt it.



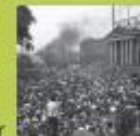
1980

In his sermon on 23 March, Romero ordered the army to stop killing people: "In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I beg you, I implore you, I order you, in the name of God, stop the repression!"



1980

The next day, a shot killed Romero as he said Mass. A UN report later found that Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, had ordered Romero's death. Thousands came to the funeral. The army fired into the crowd. 30 people died and hundreds were injured. There was civil war in El Salvador until 1992.



2009

On 15 March, the new president of El Salvador announced that his government would be inspired by Romero and the "option for the poor" (choosing to put the most vulnerable people first).



2015

Pope Francis announced that Oscar Romero was a martyr. Romero was beatified on 23 May 2015 and became Blessed Oscar Romero. **May his life inspire us to speak up for justice.**

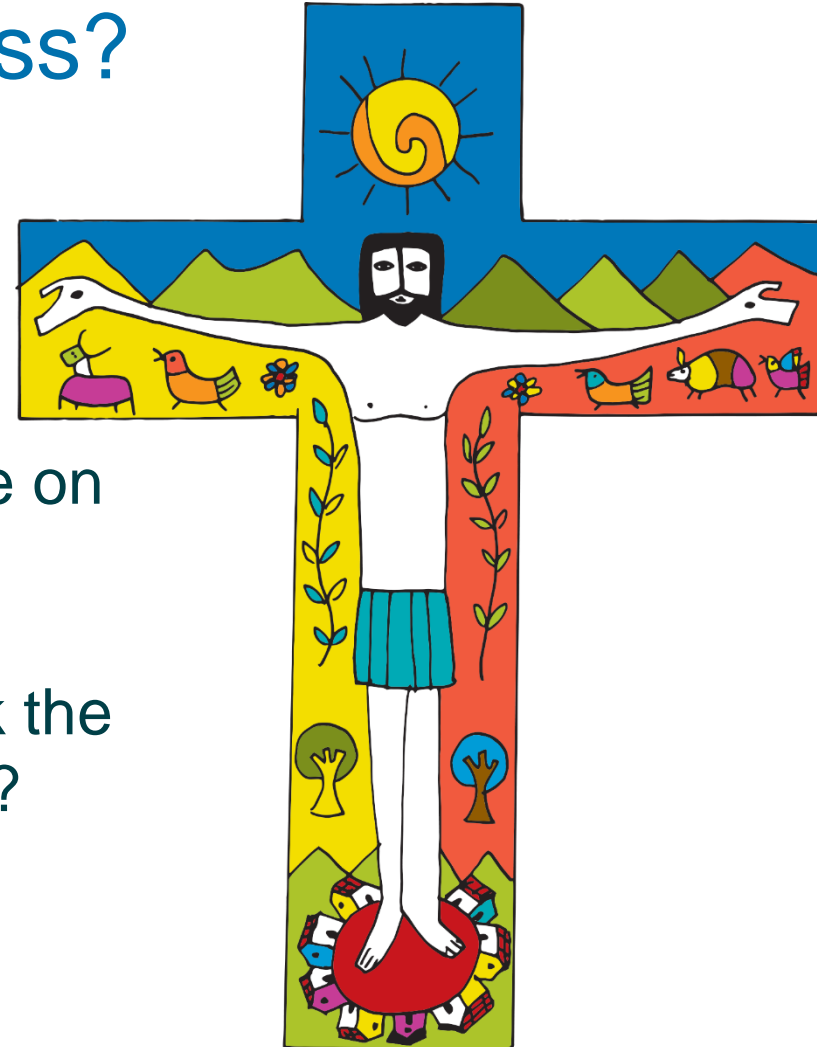


What is a Romero cross?



What can you see on
the cross?

What do you think the
pictures mean?



Fernando Llort's Romero cross



© Sophie Stanes



© Sophie Stanes

Lazaro's cross

