

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Mar 28th 2015

This week we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

He was gunned down while saying Mass on March 24, 1980.

The Vatican has declared him a Martyr for the faith.

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them,

“You know nothing, nor do you consider that

it is better for you

that one man should die instead of the people,

so that the whole nation may not perish.”

He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year,

he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,

and not only for the nation,

but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

So from that day on they planned to kill him. John 11

"You can tell the people that if they succeed in killing me, that I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the church of God, which is the people, will never perish." - Archbishop Romero, speaking to a reporter, days before his murder

It is quite wonderful that we celebrate this 35th Anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Romero in this week before Holy Week. And, today's powerful powerful reading from John's Gospel makes it even more beautiful.

John is clear that the high priest is being prophetic in saying that Jesus will die for the people. But,

Caiphas doesn't know what he's really saying. He was thinking of getting Jesus out of the way, so the Roman authorities wouldn't further hassle the people. In fact, Jesus' death set us free - free from the devastating effects of our sin and free from the power of death.

Romero's death was the result of the Salvadoran military's attempt to get rid of him - to silence him. But, his death, the death of a martyr, shed the blood which the Church has always knows is the seed of further faith. His preaching gave the Salvadoran people, and all oppressed people, the hope of the Gospel. His death gave them the confirmation of their faith's power to witness with the voice of blood itself.

As we approach Holy Week, we come with deep awareness and gratitude for the sacrifice of Jesus - for us. And, we give thanks to God for the witness of Archbishop Romero and many other Servants of God who continue to serve the faith in a way which promotes justice. We can ask for the grace to be anointed this week with greater courage to live the Gospel so that others might see and believe we are Jesus' disciples by the love we have for one another.

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