

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Mar 23rd 2013

On this day in 1980 Archbishop Oscar Romero gave his last and most famous speech appealing to the Salvadoran army. He begged them to stop killing civilian Salvadoran men, women and children. The next day he was assassinated while saying Mass at the Divina Providencia Chapel in San Salvador, a quiet chapel near his simple home. Archbishop Romero received death threats throughout his time as Archbishop in response to his homilies which were shared over the radio in El Salvador during their bloody civil war. To the Salvadoran people, Archbishop Romero was a prophet, a martyr and will someday be a saint. He was moved to his core by the death of his friend, Rutillio Grande, SJ. The same kind of grief I imagine Jesus felt that moved him to raise Lazarus from the dead in John 11, just before today's gospel reading begins.

Jesus' prophetic life and signs also brought threats and, in the end, execution by those who feared his power and message. After raising Lazarus from the dead, the leaders of the day were so shaken, it became clear that he would be put to death. The threats on Jesus' own life were such that he 'no longer walked about in public among the Jews, but he left for the region near the desert.' Jesus withdrew from the public but not from his call. He steadfastly continued on his mission, even knowing that it would end in sacrificing his own life.

Speaking out against injustices, coming to the aid of our friends and family when they need us, acting for social change are all difficult and sometimes have high costs. When praying with today's scripture, knowing that this weekend we celebrate Palm Sunday, I pray in thanksgiving for the example of our prophetic leaders. They were true to themselves, their faith and their vocation from God. I pray that we may all be blessed with their courage. As this Lenten season transitions to Holy Week, I pray that I will continue to make room for God's word to live and work in my life. I pray that we all may be called to live into the covenant of peace with our global community and with our God.

Prayer Reflection on the Words of Oscar Romero

By: Education for Justice

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Lord God, let us believe and work towards the fulfillment of Archbishop Oscar Romero's words:

God works out the history of salvation in each people's history.

Each people is different from every other,

and no imperial power may interfere to influence our people's way of being.

The God of great empires is the God who demands

justice of the powerful in them and defends the poor of their people.

He has plenty to do there.

And the God of our impoverished peoples is also constructing the history of salvation,

with El Salvador's history and not with artificial histories.

History made alive by the Holy Spirit provides, in the resurrection, a wonderful incentive for the Christian people.

The Spirit who raised up Christ has provided in the risen Christ a model for history.

Towards the resurrection all histories must march.

God's reign is already present on our earth in mystery.

When the Lord comes, it will be brought to perfection.

That is the hope of Christians.

We know that every effort to better society,

especially when injustice and sin are so ingrained,

is an effort that God blesses,

...that God wants,

...that God demands of us.

Oscar Romero, Feb. 24, 1980 and March 24, 1980

Kelly Tadeo Orbik