

# SAINT *of the* WEEK

## Oscar Romero



Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez was born on August 15, 1917, in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1942 and appointed archbishop of El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, in February 1977, at a time when reports of human rights violations by government troops and death squads were on the rise.

A little more than a month after his appointment to San Salvador, Archbishop Romero's close friend and minister to El Salvador's campesinos, Jesuit Fr. Rutilio Grande, was assassinated. Later that same year, El Salvador's right-wing government was overthrown, and civil war erupted.

Following Fr. Grande's death, and amid increasing violence against Salvadoran citizens, Archbishop Romero began to preach against the war and for the restoration of human rights. In February 1980, he sent an open letter to

U.S. President Jimmy Carter, asking him to suspend U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran regime.

On March 23, 1980, Archbishop Romero delivered a homily in which he asked Salvadoran soldiers to disobey orders to kill their countrymen. The very next day, he was gunned down by an assassin while celebrating Mass in a hospital chapel in San Salvador.

The Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints authorized the opening of Oscar Romero's cause for sainthood in 1993. On February 4, 2015, Pope Francis declared Romero a martyr, opening the way for his beatification, which will take place on May 23, 2015, in El Salvador.

*Image: CNS Photo/Octavio Duran*

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