

Newsletter of the Commission for promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion

Archdiocese of Southwark, London



A Special Edition on Racial Justice Sunday 2023



**Saint
Óscar Arnulfo
Romero**



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WILSON'S HOMILY**

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COMING UP

**Homily by
Archbishop John Wilson
on Racial Justice Sunday,
St George's Cathedral, Southwark
(5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) 5 February 2023)**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

The light of Christ must shine out from within us. The light of Christ must shine out from within you and me. Imperfect though we are, we must do everything we can to be the light and goodness of Christ in our world today. You are the light of the world! This, dear friends, is the heart of this Sunday's Gospel. We are to be the light of hope and the goodness of service to the praise of our Father in heaven. And the first question is: Do we believe this? And the second question is: Will we live this?



For so many people, across our global family of nations, and closer to home, even on our doorstep, discrimination casts its ugly shadow of hatred, prejudice and rejection. Towards some this is channelled tragically into violence, even death. This is not the stuff of history. This is not part of our past. It is the toxic reality of our present.

On Racial Justice Sunday let's be absolutely clear: there is no place for racism; not in our world, in our society, or in our Church. Bullying and victimisation, whether because of a person's race, culture, sexuality or belief, are simply not acceptable. Why? Because the fundamental, God-given dignity of every person is non-negotiable. Whether we agree with a person's views, or what they say, or how they live, there's a line that should never be crossed. In the words of Pope Francis: *'Human dignity is the same for all human beings: when I trample on the*

dignity of another, I am trampling on my own.' (25 Feb 2014) Everyone is dehumanised by injustice. There are no winners. We all lose.

Dear friends, we believe an unchanging truth: that every person, without exception, is created in God's image and likeness; that every person, without exception, deserves respect; that every person, without exception, has rights and



responsibilities. Our faith depends on the truth that God our Father sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, into our world; to teach us how much every person is loved by God and to show us their precious worth. Writing on God's love, Pope Benedict XVI said *'love can be commanded, because it has first been given.'* (DCE, 14)

Our faith calls us to put the love we have received into practical expression towards others.



Such love is commanded of each of us. It has the quality of light. It scatters darkness and fear; it brightens and calls to life; it gives direction and warmth. It's a sure guide and a beacon of hope. To love like the Lord Jesus, to radiate

His light, means standing up to injustice. It means defending the fundamental dignity of each person from the first moment of their conception to natural death. The great proponent of Catholic Social Teaching, Dorothy Day, once said: *'I really only love God as much as I love the*



person I love the least.' Let's just think about this. We only love God as much as the person we love the least. This is how we measure how brightly the love-light of Christ is shining in our lives.

Around seven centuries before the Lord Jesus was born, the Prophet Isaiah described the implications of believing in God: sharing food with the hungry; housing the homeless; dressing the naked; stopping hatred, bad-mouthing and warmongering; helping the persecuted and oppressed. This word from the Lord fell again from the lips of Christ, the Word made flesh: *'What you do to the least,'* he said *'you do to me.'* In truth – sometimes painful truth – we only love God as much the person we love the least.

We can put this another way. What we think about others, we think about Christ. What we say to others, we say to Christ. What we do to others, we do to Christ. How challenging and uncomfortable is this? But, it is by Christ's power, through living in His Spirit, that we grow to be more like Him – to think like Him, to speak like Him, and to act like Him. In short, to love like Him.

Today, dear sisters and brothers, we announce again that there is no place for racism anywhere. The ethnic and cultural diversity of people in the parishes and schools of our Archdiocese is a blessing; an immense and beautiful blessing. Anyone who doesn't believe this must be reading a very different Gospel to me. It is by the power of God, not by any flawed human thinking, that we are one in Christ. By the power of God, and the love-light of Christ, we are one with each other and for each other; and for our neighbour and the stranger. We are one in Christ.

This coming week I travel to El Salvador to walk in the footsteps of St Oscar Romero, the martyred Archbishop of San Salvador who gave his life in the fight against injustice. We have a shrine to him in our Cathedral. Preaching this Sunday in 1978, St Oscar Romero said: *'People shine brightest when they are the Lord's light, when they make their work a way of serving humanity, when they are lamps that are consumed as they give out light.'*

Dear friends, individually and together, we shine brightest when we shine with the light of Christ's love. We shine brightest when we serve with the light of Christ's love, especially towards the weakest and the poorest. We shine brightest when the light we radiate also burns brightly in our hearts. One in Christ, in all our beautiful diversity, let us shine with Christ's love-light for everyone to see. Amen.





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- Hipo Eze

Sub Committees:

RoadMap for Parishes Racial Justice and Cultural Inclusion Commission Hubs:

- Deacon Alfred Banya (Coordinator)
- Hipo Eze
- John Siraut

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- Jenifer Da Silva (Coordinator)
- Fr Patrick D'Souza
- Fr Fernandes Feroz
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Coming Up ...

**The Commission for Racial & Cultural
Inclusion Fellowship Day on
Saturday 25th March 2023**

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ABOUT SAINT ÓSCAR ARNULFO ROMERO

Saint Oscar Romero was born on 15 August 1917. He served as the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, then as Bishop of Santiago de Maria before becoming the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador. Saint Oscar spoke against the social injustice the poor and marginalised suffered and the violence and conflict during the Salvadorian civil war. He spoke against the military government during his popular weekly sermons broadcast in the church's radio station YSAX, where he would list the names of those who had disappearances or were murdered and had been tortured.

On 24 March 1980, during Mass, Archbishop Romero was assassinated. He was buried in the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Salvador. In 1997 Saint Pope John Paul II named Romero: Servant of God. In 2012, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reopened the cause for his beatification. On 3 February 2021, Pope Francis declared him a martyr and beatified him. On 14 October 2018, Pope Francis canonised Romero as a saint.

Quote: "There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried."

