



BEING CHURCH: Speaking Out with the Poor

A prayer service inspired by the witness of Blessed Oscar Romero

“A Church that does not join the poor in order to speak out from the side of the poor against the injustices committed against them is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.”

—Blessed Oscar Romero

faith. action. results.

opening prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit ...

Christ of the margins,

Help us to recognize you in the faces of the
poorest and most vulnerable people.

Be with us as we gather together and pray
that your justice will reign throughout the earth.

We pray that we may, in the spirit of Blessed Oscar Romero,
be courageous enough to speak out on behalf of those who
face injustice, no matter the cost.

In your name we pray.

Amen

scripture reading

A reading from the Gospel of Luke:

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and
went according to his custom into the synagogue
on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed
a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll
and found the passage where it was written:

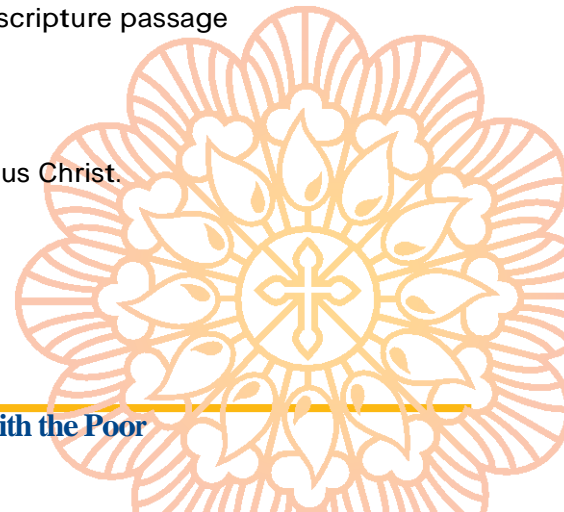
“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed
me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery
of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to
proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and
sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently
at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage
is fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



song

“The Heart of the Poor” (David Haas)

reflection

Prayer of Oscar Romero



It helps now and then, to step back
and take the long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work.

Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

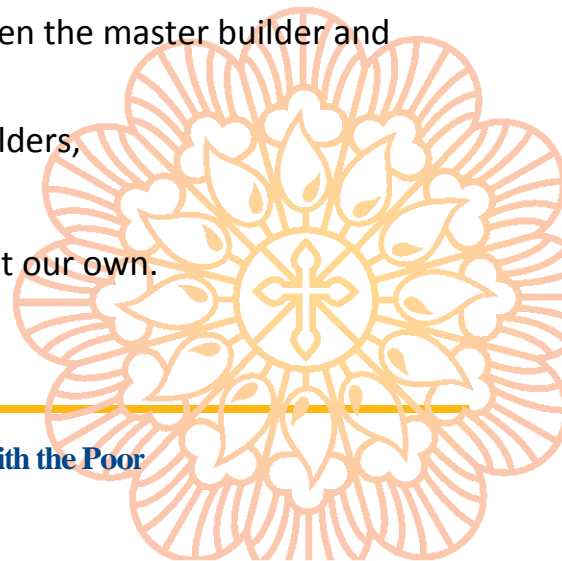
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:

We plant seeds that will one day grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and to do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
ministers not messiahs.
We are prophets for a future not our own.



litany

We ask God to give us the courage and grace of Blessed Oscar Romero so we may stand with the poor, reach out to the oppressed and embrace those cast aside by society. And so as Christ's disciples, we call upon those saints and holy ones who have helped fulfill the words of Isaiah the prophet. May they be in solidarity with us today. To these invocations, we respond: "Presente."

St. Lawrence of Rome, who declared the poor, the sick, the widow and the orphan to be the true treasure of the Church, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, who looked upon a world of exploitation and indifference and rejected it, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Damien of Molokai, whose solidarity with the leper ran so deep that he ultimately lived and died as one of them, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Frances Cabrini, who tenderly loved the forgotten immigrant, reaching out as a mother from the slums of New York to the dark mines of Colorado, we call on you in solidarity ...

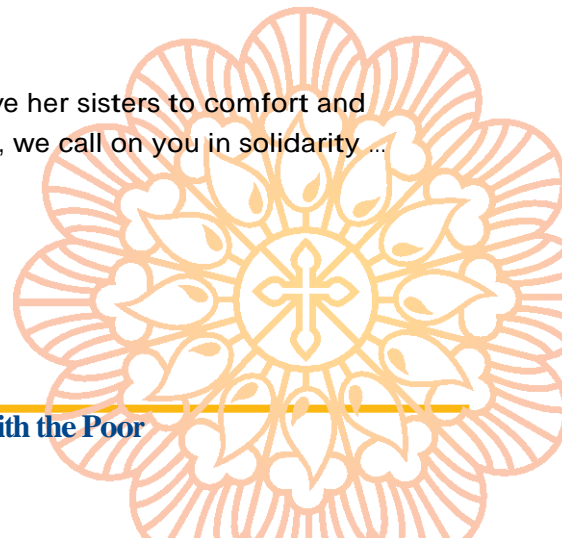
RESPONSE: Presente.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, who protected our Jewish brothers and sisters during World War II and died in a concentration camp so they might live, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who drove her sisters to comfort and affirm the dignity of those cast aside, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.



Dorothy Day, servant of God, who challenged society to reach out to the stranger, to offer the best seat at the table to the poor and broken, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

And Blessed Oscar Romero, and those in El Salvador who spoke out against the atrocities visited upon the poor of El Salvador and upon the body of Christ, we call on you in solidarity ...

RESPONSE: Presente.

All you Saints and holy ones, who walked in solidarity with God's people and brought the Gospel to life within our broken world, be with us in solidarity today.

RESPONSE: Presente.

Amen

silent reflection

Like the Saints and holy ones who have gone before us, Christ invites each of us to offer our gifts and talents as his disciples.

We will take a moment now to silently reflect on how Christ might be calling us to participate in building God's Kingdom by standing against injustice. We take some time to reflect on the ways we can commit to this in our lives when we return home.

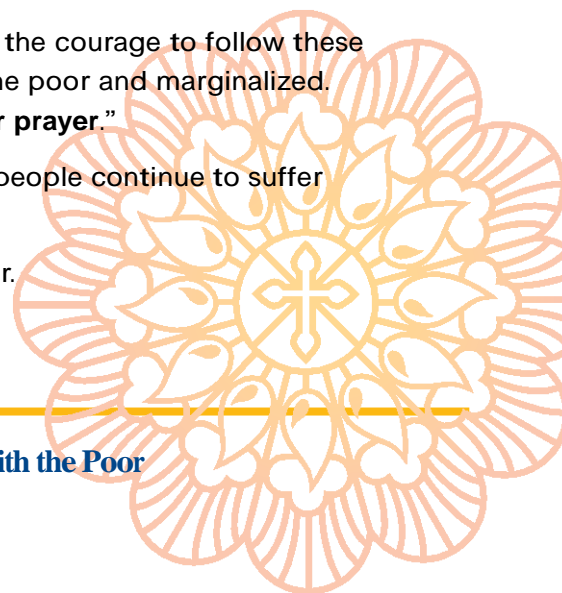
prayer intentions

Invite those gathered to stand.

We gather together to ask Christ for the courage to follow these holy men and women in service to the poor and marginalized. Our response will be, "**Lord, hear our prayer.**"

That Christ's peace will reign where people continue to suffer violence, we pray ...

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.



That we may find ways to comfort those who suffer around the world, especially victims of violence, those who go without food or water and all who continue to live in fear, we pray ...

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

For political leaders, that they will put the poorest and most vulnerable around the world first, we pray ...

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all of us gathered here: That we will not be indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world but that, like Blessed Oscar Romero, we will rise up on their behalf, even when it is uncomfortable or unpopular, we pray ...

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

We offer all these prayers through Christ, Our Lord.

Amen

closing prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

Christ Jesus,

We ask that like Blessed Oscar Romero
we will not be afraid to risk all that we have to follow you,
to stand with the poor and oppressed.

May you grant us the same courage you gave
Blessed Oscar Romero:

That we will feel what we are afraid to feel
That we will not be overwhelmed
by all that needs to be done—
but that we will follow you,

And trust that you will walk with us
on our journey of discipleship,
wherever it may lead.

May our walk be one of true solidarity
As Archbishop Romero's was.

And in life and death
May we bear much fruit.

Amen

