A Faith that Does Justice

“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.”

San Oscar Romero

Prelude

Gathering

*Opening Prayer (in unison):

Let us pray

Loving Creator you have made us in your image and we yearn for the healing of all your people, fill our hearts with the fire of your love and our minds with the thirst for justice. As we keep the memory of your servant, Oscar Romero, embolden us to cry out against oppression, empower us to work for the coming of your reign on earth, and enrich us with your life-giving Spirit so that all creation may feel your touch and be healed. We ask this in the name of our crucified, risen Lord, our liberator and redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen.
**CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 146):**

All: *Praise the Lord.*

Leader: Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praises to my God as long as I live.

People: *God upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, and gives sight to the blind.*

Leader: The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow. The Lord reigns forever.

All: *Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; we will sing praise to our God as long as we live.*

*Hymn: “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” UMH 57 (1,2,4 stanza).*

**Litany of Sadness:**

In the midst of hatred that divides people of different nations, ethnic groups, classes, religions and genders, 
*God forgive us.*

In the midst of our difficulty in accepting each other and in respecting our differences, 
*God forgive us.*

In the midst of the covetous desires of the people and nations to possess what is not their own. 
*God forgive us.*

In the midst of the greediness which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth, 
*God forgive us.*

In the midst of our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the undocumented, the refugees and migrant workers, 
*God forgive us.*

In the midst of pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God, 
*God forgive us. Lord have mercy upon us.*

Amen.
Prayer Before Reading:

Liberator Christ, you gave your servant, Oscar Romero, the courage to witness to the Gospel of Christ, even to the point of giving his life for it, in pursuit of justice. Come to us in this place now till we learn to endure all suffering for love of you, and seek you with all our hearts, for you alone are the source of life. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*Amen.*

Scripture: Luke 4: 16-21

Ojos que Han Llorado

(Original text)

Hay muchas cosas que solo se pueden ver a través de los ojos que han llorado.

(Translation)

There are many things that can only be seen through the eyes that have cried.

SERMON: Romero Light for the Church

*HYMN OF PREPARATION: “Cuando El Pobre”*  

*Response to the Word*

Leader: The prophet is a light for our world, a voice that illuminates the darkness of sin and points the way towards overcoming that darkness. Take your light to follow the way pointed out to us by Oscar Romero and other prophets of mercy, justice and peace in our time. And now, listen to the voice of Oscar Romero as he calls us to be prophets and light in the world.

People: The church has put itself on the side of the poor and has assumed their defense.

Romero: This means that the church incarnates itself in the world of the poor, proclaims good news, gives hope, inspires a liberating praxis, defends the cause of the poor and participates in their destiny.

People: Loving God, may our church, and we who are church, become participants in your incarnation.
Romero: A Christian who does not wish to live this commitment of solidarity with the poor is not worthy of the name Christian.

People: Loving God, may our church, and we who are church, be worthy of being called Christian.

Romero: What marks the genuine church is a word…burning like the word of the prophets.

People: Loving Christ, may our church, and we who are church, take this word as our own to burn within us and light a fire in our world.

Romero: The church is in the world so as to signify and bring into being the liberating love of God, manifested in Christ. It therefore understands Christ’s preference for the poor, because the poor are those who place before the church a challenge and a mission that it cannot sidestep and to which it must respond with a speed and boldness adequate to the urgency of the times.

People: Loving God, may we respond to the challenge and mission presented by the poor and oppressed peoples of our world with the speed and boldness adequate to the urgency of our times. With confidence and hope, God, hear our prayer.

Closing Hymn  "Leaning on the Ever Lasting Arms"

SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

*Please stand in body or in spirit

About Oscar Romero
Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in El Salvador. He was ordained a priest in 1942 and, after being an auxiliary Bishop, he was appointed as Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977.

Archbishop Oscar Romero Oscar Arnulfo Romero was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador on February 22, 1977. At that time, the country of El Salvador was ruled by a military government that violently repressed the people; widespread social and political tension was growing. Romero became an outspoken voice of the impoverished and persecuted of the country; he became a well-known critic of violence and injustice. On March 24, 1980 Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated as he was celebrating Mass. His last words in the chapel where he was shot dead were: “May God have mercy on the assassin.” He was often asked about death threats, and Romero replied, “If they kill me, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people.” In May 2015, Pope Francis beatified Archbishop Oscar Romero, and October 14, 2018 he was canonized. There were no less than 7,000 Salvadorans at the ceremony in St. Peters Square. Romero’s beatification and canonization ratifies a new standard for what counts as “martyrdom” in Christianity. It’s no longer necessary to die explicitly in odium fidei, at the hands of those who hate the faith, which was the traditional test. In the 21st Century, one can also be recognized as a martyr for dying in odium caritatis, as a victim of those motivated by a hatred of charity. Romero advocated peace during El Salvador's civil war (1980-1992) and defended the poor and victims of military repression in his country.
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you will wake up today
with yesterday’s sadness,

the same illegal label, to
work five days and collect

for three, feeling caged in
the country that trades hate

with jingles, calling across
the border to get news and

bearing the weight of this
city on the tip of the broom

deranded to you by a white
man with a tan. you will speak

in a language America calls
tongues, hear familiar voices

held hostage by shadows and
look into blue eyes on a long

subway ride that never cry for
you. you will wake up today in

a single room sighing about life
and spend time cleaning toilets

in a fancy building searching for
the God who opens doors wide

for you.

h. j. Recinos

The Leadership of the Worship Service
Dr. Harold J. Recinos, Professor of Church and Society, organizer and preacher;
Dr. Christopher Anderson, Associate Professor of Sacred Music, organ/piano;
Michaela Calahan, M.Div. student, readings in English;
Aimee Garnier, M. Div. student, readings in Spanish;
The Seminary Singers, music;
Fernando Berwig Silva, M.S.M. student, composition;
Mykayla Turner, M.S.M. student, Chapel Assistant;
Dr. Mark W. Stamm, Professor of Christian Worship, Chapel Elder.