

**DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND MISSION OFFICE  
&  
COAR PEACE MISSION**

**Prayer Service**



**Celebration of the Martyrdom and Legacy  
of St. Oscar A. Romero**

*in thanksgiving for all those who work with and sacrifice for  
the people of El Salvador*

March 21, 2024 ~ 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent

*Celebrated at:*

Blessed Trinity Catholic Church \* 14040 Puritas Avenue \* Cleveland, Ohio 44135

*Via livestream: [coarpeacemission.org](http://coarpeacemission.org)*

## Order of Service

Welcome

Melanie Reda  
President, Board of Directors,  
COAR Peace Mission

Entrance Hymn: *Romero Hymn*

Verses: 1, 3, 5, & 6  
(sung to the tune of *Ode to Joy*)

God, you raise up true disciples, teachers, martyrs, deep in faith.  
Like Romero, holy people, giving witness to your grace.  
Let us listen to their voices, speaking of new ways to live.  
By their words and by their actions, we may know the love you give.

Still our brothers, sisters suffer, helpless and afraid to speak,  
Victims of oppressors using power to dominate the weak.  
When we see injustice near us, we will cry out "This must cease!"  
And by our example, turn this world from violence back to peace.

On the ground a seed has fallen, crushed and buried in the earth.  
There it lies 'till time appointed, then a harvest brings to birth.  
In our struggling and our suffering, help us daily bear our pain,  
As we give our lives for others so they come to know your name.

Brought together by your Spirit, one in you, our risen Lord,  
Now you send us as your chosen, hearts emboldened, hope restored.  
Like Romero, we will serve you and whatever may befall,  
We'll devote ourselves to justice and the common good of all.

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Adorning the Altar  
*Cross*

Chris Janezic  
COAR Peace Mission Board Member

*In Memoriam*

Laura Griesmer  
COAR Peace Mission Board Member

*Basket of Prayer Intentions*

Jenni Maravola  
COAR Peace Mission

Opening Remarks and Prayer

Reverend Steve Vellenga  
Diocese of Cleveland Mission Office  
Former CLAM Team Member

I welcome you to this celebration of St. Romero.

My name is Father Steve Vellenga. I had the honor of serving on the Cleveland Latin American Mission Team in El Salvador from 1988 to 1995. And since 2004 I have had the honor of being the Director of the Cleveland Diocese Mission Office. Those first Mission Team members, who went to El Salvador in 1964, would be astonished at the number of people in the Cleveland Diocese, as well as around the world, who continue to work in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador.

There have been 69 mission team members serving in Salvadoran parishes large and small, urban and rural, and in the eastern and central regions of the country. In addition to catechism and the sacraments, the Team served their communities with new mothers groups, youth groups, literacy and health classes. Together with our Salvadoran and North American partners we have added projects for scholarships, housing, nutrition, clean water, and foster care. However, we have learned that projects are never the most important part of our mission.

Together we have formed deep bonds of friendship. Countless lives have been altered by witnessing the struggles of our Salvadoran friends. We have been transformed by absorbing their faith and resilience and joy in the face of those obstacles. We are, together, more than we were before our partnership began 60 years ago.

But perhaps El Salvador's greatest gift to us, and the whole world, is St. Romero. His words and likeness are found all over the world, in university courses, in houses of prayer, in offices devoted to social justice, and in the smallest, humblest houses in El Salvador.

Many of our Mission Team members worked with St. Romero from when he became Archbishop in 1977, at the beginning of El Salvador's civil war, until his martyrdom on March 24, 1980. He asked members of the Team to work with him, his care for refugees, and in all the other ways that our status as missionaries allowed. In this way two of our members, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Miss Jean Donovan shared the burden of over 60,000 Salvadorans who were killed during that war.

St. Romero showed us all what it means to live a life of courage, faith, and above all, compassion. Compassion for all those who might be different; different politically, different socially, and especially, different because of poverty, and all its vulnerabilities.

So this evening we come together to honor all those who have served in El Salvador, all of our Salvadoran partners who give us friendship and guidance, and St. Romero himself. We join now in prayer under the inspiration of St. Romero, martyr for justice, for peace and non-violence, martyr of our faith.

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

Reading  
Isaiah 58:6-12

Cindy Drennan  
Former CLAM Team Member

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.

“If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

And the LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Reverend Doug Koesel  
Pastor, Blessed Trinity Parish  
Former CLAM Team Member

## Word and Song


*No Hay Amor Mas Grande**Reader*

Please follow along with the refrain, below

Deacon Mark Janezic  
St. Rita Parish**NO HAY AMOR MÁS GRANDE/NO GREATER LOVE**

Bob Hurd

Refrain



No hay a - mor más gran-de que és-te: dar la  
vi-da por sus a - mi-gos. *No great-er love is there than*  
*this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

Text: John 15:9, 12-15, 17. Spanish text © 1972, SOBICAIN. All rights reserved. Used with permission.  
Music and English text adaptation © 2004, Bob Hurd. Published by OCP. All rights reserved.

**Song**

When we struggle for human rights, for freedom, for dignity, when we feel that it is a ministry of the church to concern itself for those who are hungry, for those who are deprived, we are not departing from God's promise. He comes to free us from sin, and the church knows that sin's consequences are all such injustices and abuses. The church knows it is saving the world when it undertakes to speak also of such things.

**DECEMBER 18, 1977**

Only God has security. It is for us to follow humbly wherever God wants to lead, and blessed are those who stay faithful to the ways God inspires them to go and who do not, in order to please others, live with an uneasy conscience in the place where others believe security is to be found.

**JUNE 11, 1978**

If people want to look into their own mystery, the meaning of their pain, of their work, of their suffering, of their hope, let them put themselves next to Christ. If they accomplish what Christ accomplished, doing the Father's will, filling themselves with the life that Christ gives the world, they are fulfilling themselves as true human beings.

**DECEMBER 24, 1978**

The present form of the world passes away, and there remains only the joy of having used this world to establish God's rule here. All pomp, all triumphs, all selfish capitalism, all the false successes of life will pass with the world's form. All of that passes away. What does not pass away is love. When one has turned money, property, work in one's calling into service of others, then the joy of sharing and the feeling that all are one's family does not pass away. In the evening of life you will be judged on love.

**JANUARY 21, 1979**

### **Refrain**

You and I and all of us are worth very much, because we are creatures of God, and God has prodigally given his wonderful gifts to every person. And so the church values human beings and contends for their rights, for their freedom, for their dignity. That is an authentic church endeavor.

**SEPTEMBER 4, 1977**

All of us, if we really want to know the meaning of conversion and of faith and confidence in another, must become poor, or at least make the cause of the poor our own inner motivation. That is when one begins to experience faith and conversion: when one has the heart of the poor, when one knows that financial capital, political influence, and power are worthless, and that without God we are nothing. To feel that need of God is faith and conversion.

**FEBRUARY 18, 1979**

We want a church that is really side by side with the poor. And as we draw near to the poor, we find we are gradually uncovering the genuine face of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. We are getting to know closer at hand the mystery of the Christ who becomes human and becomes poor for us.

**FEBRUARY 17, 1980**

Nothing is so important to the church as human life, as the human person, above all, the person of the poor and the oppressed. Besides being human beings, they are also divine beings, since Jesus said that whatever is done to them he takes as done to him.

**MARCH 16, 1980**

### **Refrain**

I speak a word of encouragement, for the Lord’s light will always brighten these ways. New shepherds will come, but always the same gospel.

**JUNE 19, 1977**

The guarantee of one’s prayer is not in saying a lot of words. The guarantee of one’s petition is very easy to know: how do I treat the poor? The degree to which you approach them, and the love with which you approach them, or the scorn with which you approach them, that is how you approach your God. What you do to them, you do to God. The way you look at them is the way you look at God.

**FEBRUARY 5, 1978**

Advent should admonish us to discover in each brother or sister that we greet, in each friend whose hand we shake, in each beggar who asks for bread, in each worker who wants to use the right to join a union, in each peasant who looks for work in the coffee groves, the face of Christ. They are Christ, and whatever is done to them Christ will take as done to himself.

**DECEMBER 3, 1978**

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.

**MARCH 24, 1980**

**Song**

Intercessions

Mary Stevenson  
Executive Director,  
COAR Peace Mission

**PRESIDER:**

We gather together to ask Christ for the courage to follow all these holy men and women in service to the poor and marginalized. As we celebrate 60 years of missionary work in El Salvador, we re-connect in this prayerful and faith centered way.

**LECTOR:**

Our response will be, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For CLAM and COAR alumni and supporters, that our goals of peace and justice become as real as Oscar Romero envisioned them to be, we pray...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

For the beautiful country of El Salvador, its faith filled people and those who minister to them, we pray ...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

For those in civil governance, that they dedicate themselves to the needs of all God’s people for peace, justice and equality, and put the poorest and most vulnerable around the world first, we pray...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

For the cause of sainthood for Rutilio Grande and the Cleveland Church Women, we pray...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

For all of us here tonight, that we are inspired to continue to give time, talent and treasure to the worthwhile causes we are celebrating, we pray...

*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...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

For those prayers we hold in the silence of our hearts, and those placed in the basket at the foot of the altar...(pause)...we pray...

*Lord, hear our prayer*

**PRESIDER:**

Loving Creator, we are so often overwhelmed by the difficulties in our lives. We ask you, through the intercession of St. Romero, to help us work through them and continue to be instruments of your peace for the world.

This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Oscar Romero’s Prayer

All

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even 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 a 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 program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.



We plant the seeds that one day will 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 far 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 the Lord's grace to enter and 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 of a future not our own.  
Amen

*written by Bishop Ken Untener*

Video: *Beginnings*

Residents of COAR Children's Village  
Zaragoza, El Salvador

Blessing of groups, individuals, and organizations active in El Salvador

Reverend Steve Vellenga

Heavenly Father,  
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he commissioned his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations" and you remind us that through our Baptism we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be courageous and zealous. as St. Romero was, in bearing witness to the Gospel.

Help us make it possible for all peoples to experience the saving love and mercy of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

AMEN

Closing Hymn: *Somos Todos el Pueblo de Dios (We Are All the People of God)*

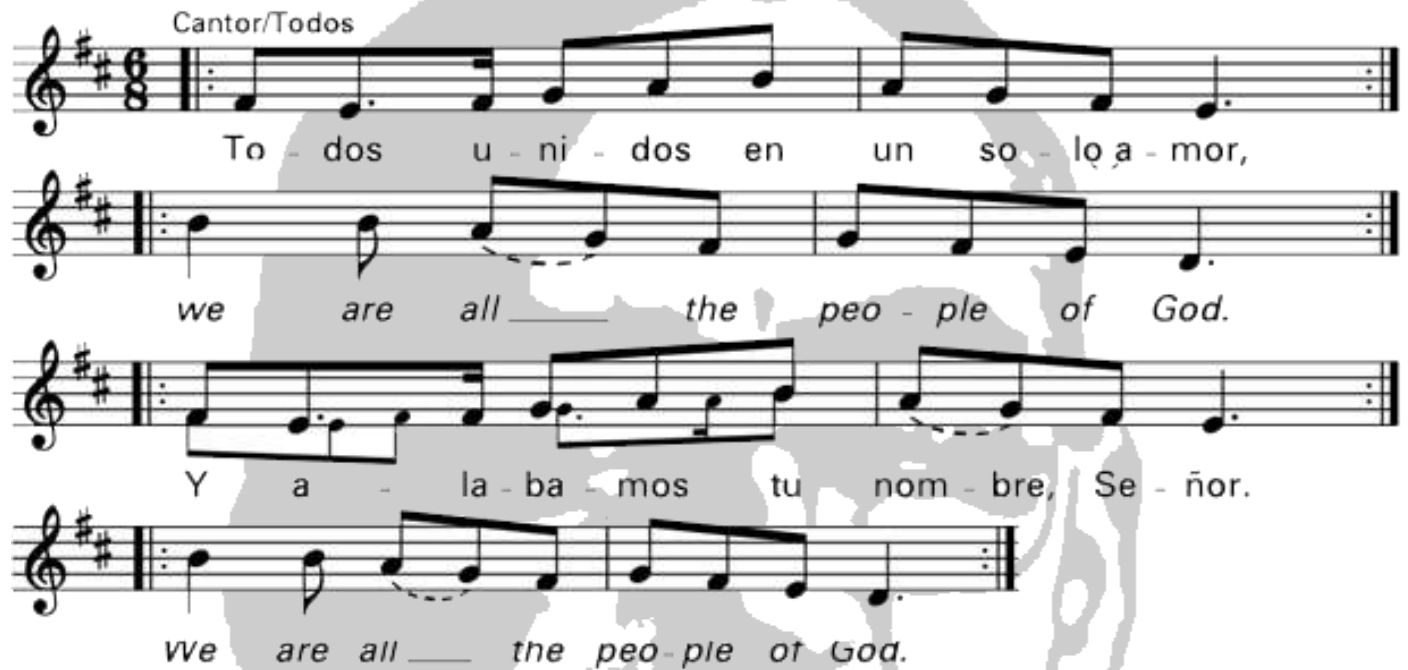
All

# SOMOS TODOS EL PUEBLO DE DIOS/WE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Pedro Rubalcava

## Refrain (Call and Response)

Cantor/Todos



To - dos u - ni - dos en un so - lo a - mor,  
 we are all the peo - ple of God.  
 Y a - la - ba - mos tu nom - bre, Se - ñor.  
 We are all the peo - ple of God.

## Verses



1. ♪ Lift up your voic - es, sing praise to God,  
 2. ♪ Speak to us, Lord, we are lis - ten - ing,  
 3. ♪ Show us your mer - cy, for - give our sins,  
 4. ♪ In - to your hands, Lord, we place our lives,  
 1. let all cre - a - tion sing praise.  
 2. your Word gives us life, O Lord.  
 3. re - new our hearts, O Lord.  
 4. our trust is in you, O Lord.

## CLAM Team Members



Rev. Msgr. Thomas B. Sebian +  
Rev. Denis L. St. Marie +  
Miss Rosemary Smith +  
Rev. William Gibbons +  
Rev. Michael Schneid +  
Sr. Bernadine Baltrinic, OP +  
Sr. Elizabeth Ann Schaeffer, OP +  
Sr. Martha Fox, OP +  
(Rev.) Norbert Hannibal  
(Rev.) Patrick McGuckin  
Sr. Alice Brickman, OSU  
(Sr.) Janet Kearns  
(Sr.) Martha Thiel, OP  
(Rev.) Richard Qualters +  
Rev. James McCreight  
(Sr.) Judith Ress, HM  
Sr. Mary McNulty, CSJ +  
(Sr.) Cindy Drennan, CSJ  
(Rev.) Dennis Tomczyk  
Rev. Kenneth Myers +  
Sr. Dorothy Kazel, OSU +  
Sr. Martha Owen, OSU  
Sr. Christine Rody, SC  
Sr. Loretta Schulte, CSJ  
Sr. M. Luke Nowakowski, CSJ +  
Rev. David Fallon +  
Miss Jean Donovan +  
Sr. Elizabeth Kochik, VSC +  
(Sr.) Mary Therese Osborne, OSU  
Rev. John Loya  
Rev. James P. Kenny +  
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Rev. Doug Koesel  
Sr. Irene Mraz, SC +  
Rev. Rob Reidy

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Rev. Frank Klamet +  
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Rev. Michael Troha  
Sr. Catherine DeVito, OSU  
Rev. James Lynch  
Miss Laura Urgo +  
Miss Kathryn Ann Haag  
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(Sr.) Geraldine Hable, OSU  
Sr. Jean Tobin Lardie, HM  
Rev. R. Stephen Vellenga  
Rev. Robert Wenz  
Sr. Pamela Owens, CSJ  
Rev. Kevin Conroy  
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Sr. Catherine McConnell, HM  
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Sr. Lisa Marie Belz, OSU  
Sr. Mary Lou Tadsen, OSU  
Ms. Judith C. Arzuaga  
Ms. María Dolores Fernández  
(Rev.) John D. King  
Rev. Joseph H. Callahan  
Rev. Mark R. Riley  
Rev. John T. Ostrowski  
Rev. Paul E. Schindler  
Rev. Michael J. Stalla  
Sr. Rose Elizabeth Terrell, OSU

*Free will offering for the Diocese of Cleveland Mission Office  
in the vestibule*

**Please join us for refreshments and fellowship  
at the conclusion of the Prayer Service!**

## Thanks

The Diocese of Cleveland Mission Office and COAR Peace Mission would like to thank the following groups and individuals who contributed to tonight's St. Romero Prayer Service:

- Reverend Steve Vellenga
  - Director, Diocese of Cleveland Mission Office
  - Pastor, St. Mary Catholic Church, Painesville, OH
- Event Committee members:
  - Daphne Held, Chairperson
  - John Hannon
  - Laura Griesmer
  - Terry Tusim
- COAR Children's Village Staff and Residents
  - Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas
  - Rev. Edwin Alexander Henríquez Márquez, Administrator
  - Licda. Marta Elizabeth Calderón Aguirre, Director
- Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, Cleveland, OH
  - Rev. Doug Koesel, Pastor
- COAR Peace Mission Board of Directors
- St. Mary Catholic Church, Painesville, OH
  - Mary Ann Ratchko-Gámez, Music Director
  - Michael Czubaj
  - Feliciano Gámez
  - Yesi Rocha
  - Emily Fonseca

**All those donors and volunteers who work and sacrifice  
and pray for the well-being of the people of El Salvador,  
the living legacy of St. Oscar A. Romero.**

*<https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/offices/mission-office/overview>*

*[www.coarpeacemission.org](http://www.coarpeacemission.org)*

***¡Viva San Romero!  
¡Que viva!***