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Spring 2017

Oscar Romero (Assignment #8)

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Recommended Citation

Ksiazek, Alan, "Oscar Romero (Assignment #8)" (2017). *Writing Across the Curriculum*. 26.
https://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/wac_prize/26

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Assignment #8

Oscar Romero

In my very first day of college, at Sacred Heart University I was assigned to live in Oscar Romero hall of the Christian Witness Commons. Curious and excited of this new adventure of my life, I wanted to learn more about Sacred Heart and all it had to offer. I did what any new student would naturally do if

they wanted to know something, I googled it. "Who is Oscar Romero?" returned tons of hits on google, giving me a quick insight on the archbishop from El Salvador.

Intrigued, I read through few articles and a Wikipedia page on him before my interest shifted to something else. Although my



education for Oscar Romero didn't go much further then that moment in that exact day, his name stuck with me as a figure in Catholicism that had an impact on the world through his faith. Ultimately, this led me to this point where I am given the chance to delve deeper into the life of Oscar Romero and all the contributions he made to the world.

Officially known as Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez, Oscar was an influential figure in the Roman Catholic Community. He was born in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador on August 15th, 1917 and had an

early passion for his faith. When Oscar was thirteen years old, his father had brought him in to apprentice under him as a carpenter. However, Oscar left after only a year to join a seminary to fulfill his dream to work under God. He studied in both El Salvador and Rome, and was officially ordained as a priest in the Catholic Church in 1942.



Romero's impact on the Catholic Church, and society is directly correlated with the environment he was placed in. He was passionate on the social injustices that he faced, and was considered a controversial figure because of it. However, he was not always perceived as this "social justice" warrior that we

associate with him to this day. He was considered to be quite a conservative priest among his peers, and was criticized amongst those that were dedicated to the socially committed clergy.

Soon after he became an archbishop in 1977, Romero took a strong stance on combatting social injustice surprising those who had doubted him. He stated that it was largely in part due to his time spent as a bishop in Santiago de Maria. There he was subjected to numerous accounts of social inequalities from the citizens, leading to him to change his mind set on how the church can use their impact to fight the issues at hand. During that time period, he was a part of many instances where the government was abusing their powers and were committing violent acts. There was an increase in the extreme inequalities that occurred between government officials and religious figures that led to Romero's dedication to protesting against it. One of the most influential moments that justified Romero's future actions was the assassination of a friend and fellow religious figure Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande. An immediate reaction was made by Romero, by gathering community members in protest of the unwarranted assassination and demanded accountability for the murder.

His protest against the violence did not end there, he continued to voice his opinion by gathering masses to listen to him and the social injustices that they all had faced. As time went on, his popularity grew and many began to support him and his cause. He looked to gain attention and support in any way he could, soon enough he was broadcasting his sermons over the radio. Serving as the archbishop, his morality was unquestioned given his just actions, and was soon given the nickname "Voice of the Voiceless". His action was not only limited to the immediate region which he served, he even called upon the United States President at the time, Jimmy Carter to eliminate any military aid to the country. He proclaimed that "We are fed up with weapons and bullets." Attempting to display that society was clearly not in favor of the government's actions and intentions.

Oscar Romero's impact was appreciated throughout the world, and not just within El Salvador. He had a following which extended around the globe which led to many recognitions. His perseverance and dedication to the causes he fought, were not only impactful and a societal level, but expressed how faith and religion in general can be used to support the lives of all that are effected. It set a standard for Catholicism, on how injustices should not be ignored by religious figures and how much of an impact those that are close with God can have in the community. Romero's fame even extended to him receiving a Nobel Peace Prize Nomination. Unfortunately, Romero was shot on March 24th, 1980 while he was in Mass and was killed immediately. Although, his physical presence ended on that day, his spirit and impact on the world will never be forgotten.

Video Library on Oscar Romero

Below is a list of links that I have compiled, that are relevant to understanding of Oscar Romero and the impact he had made. These were both used in my research and are great tools to use for one to use to gain a better understanding in a visual format.

1) **Overview of Oscar Romero's impact**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ2j9W780Mo>

2) **How Salvadorian's view Oscar Romero**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPMJ9UgkBqQ>

3) **Pope Francis speaking on Oscar Romero**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHzrzmqngQQ>

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