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August 15, 2017 would have been Blessed Óscar Romero's 100th birthday. An outspoken champion for the people who were suffering during El Salvador's brutal civil war, Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador, was murdered on March 24, 1980. His death was celebrated by the military and the ruling class. The night before his murder, the archbishop made a personal appeal to the soldiers responsible for the escalating violence in El Salvador: "I beseech you, I beg you, I command you! In the name of God: Cease the repression." The next day, he was gunned down while saying Mass.

Romero was beatified on May 23, 2015 and Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the official promoter of Romero's cause for sainthood, has stated that he hopes that archbishop's canonization will take place sometime in 2017 or 2018.

As we wrote during his beatification:

"Romero had as many enemies in death as in life, but we will not be hearing much from them. Everyone these days—even those who hindered his cause for sainthood on the grounds he was a Marxist, even those who promote an economic creed against which he prophesied with hellfire and brimstone, even the erstwhile allies of those believed to have murdered him—has nothing but love for Óscar Romero."

Cardinal Rosa Chávez, a loyal friend of Romero noted, "I wish that his memory were consolidated and that it would inspire new pathways to reach the country we long for, a country that is peaceful, just, supportive and fraternal.

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Death Comes for the Archbishop

by Kevin Clarke

No one may have noticed the red Volkswagen Passat as it glided slowly to a stop near the modest chapel of Divine Providence Hospital. Two other cars haunted the streets outside the small church: one filled with armed men working as “security” for the assassin and, in the other car, two men who loosely supervised the operation waited to assess its outcome.

A thin, bearded man, the Passat’s passenger and a stranger to its driver Amado Garay, told Garay to crouch down and pretend to repair something.

On another typically hot evening in San Salvador, the Carmelite sisters had kindly left the wing-shaped chapel doors open, hoping for a breath of air to cool the congregants inside. Through the open doors of the Divine Providence chapel the assassin had a clear view of Archbishop Oscar Romero at the altar as he made his way through the homily he had prepared for this requiem Mass, one he agreed to celebrate for the mother of a friend.

“My dear sisters and brothers,” the archbishop was saying, his homily gathering steam. “I think we should not only pray this evening for the eternal rest of our dear Doña Sarita, but above all we should take to ourselves her message...that every Christian ought to want to live intensely. Many do not understand; they think Christianity should not be involved in such things,” Archbishop Romero said.



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Stories



‘Opposition to Óscar Romero’s canonization was ‘political,’ Archbishop Paglia says.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, Pontifical Academy for Life president and the postulator for the cause of Blessed Óscar Romero, experienced firsthand pushback against the archbishop’s canonization. The delay was “like a dagger in my heart,” he told James Martin, S.J., in a video interview with



“El Salvador’s new cardinal pledges to protect the legacy of Óscar Romero”

For newly appointed Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez, the time is right to revive Romero’s legacy in a country still battered by violence and poverty.

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