

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH OSCAR ROMERO

[122] + THE DISAPPEARED

It is not politics, brothers and sisters, what I am about to say. In our archdiocese, we have carried out a very detailed study of the disappeared. We have carefully analyzed ninety-nine cases. We have the name, age, where they were taken, what legal efforts were made on their behalf, how many times the mother has gone to look for her dear one. I am a witness to the truth of these ninety-nine cases. Because of this, I have every right to ask: where are they? And to say, in the name of the anguish of this people: bring them before a court if they are alive, and if, unfortunately, the agents of the security forces have already killed them, hold them responsible and invoke sanctions on them, whomever they might be. The one who has killed must pay. I think this demand is just.

August 20, 1978

[123] + THE LAW IS LIKE A SNAKE

The other study that we have done is an analysis of the Law of Defense and the Guarantee of Public Order... In it, we studied specific recent cases of the application of this law that is doing real damage, especially to our poor. Because a poor person said something to me that you will never forget, just as I won't: "The law, Archbishop, is like a snake: it only stings those of us who go barefoot." In the study, we also collected the statements of repudiation, they are voices of the people that we must listen to.

August 20, 1978

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[124] + THE MARTYRS

Yesterday, Saturday the twenty-sixth, in Tejutla, when we celebrated the first anniversary of the death of Felipe de Jesús Chacón, I also realized that our land offers to the pope, like I told him in my previous visits, martyrs! I was horrified when they told me! Felipe de Jesús' face with no skin on it and what is even worse, slandered in the press as a cattle thief, when he was really a brave catechist who followed the gospel to its most dangerous consequences.

August 27, 1978

READINGS: ISAIAH 22:19–23; ROMANS 11:33–36; MATTHEW 16:13–20

[125] + HEARTS OVERFLOWING WITH THE GOSPEL

The church doesn't have a wish, an intention of speaking only in order to denounce. I am the one who feels, more than anyone else, repugnance at saying such things! But I feel that it is my duty, that is not creating a spectacle, but is merely the truth. And we have to see the truth with our eyes wide open and our feet firmly planted on the ground, but with our hearts full to bursting with the gospel and of God, in order to search for solutions, not to violent, cruel, and criminal things which have just happened, but rather the solution of justice. Only justice can be the root of peace.

August 27, 1978

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH OSCAR ROMERO

[126] + THE WILL OF GOD

Let us not attribute to God the fruits of our laziness. Let us not blame God for unjust inequalities. Let us not blame God for the underdevelopment of humankind. God does not want these things.

September 3, 1978

READINGS: JEREMIAH 20:7-9; ROMANS 12 :1-2; MATTHEW 16:21-27

[127] + FALSE PRUDENCE

The cross provokes Christ himself to defend his mission, which is cross and sacrifice. How easy it is to act like Saint Peter, flee like today many Christians are fleeing. It is easier to hide. "Let's not create conflict. Prudence! We have to be more prudent." But Christ didn't think this way and he called the one who advised him not to put himself in danger Satan, he called him scandal.

September 3, 1978

[128] + PRESSURES

How awful are pressures when they try to separate us from what God wants, so that we do what humans want!

September 3, 1978

[129] + TOUCHSTONE

You all know how silversmiths establish the authenticity of silver or gold. There is a touchstone, they touch it to the stone to see if it produces sound and calculate the carats.

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The cross is our touchstone. We hit our life on the cross and we see what it sounds like. It sounds like cowardice, like fear, like the thoughts of humans and not of God. The cross is the authentic proof of the person who wants to follow Christ. Because of this the Lord says: let those who want to follow me take up their crosses.

September 3, 1978

[130] + GOD AND SUFFERING

Christianity isn't a kind of masochism, that philosophy of suffering for suffering's sake, or that stoicism of the Greeks of suffering for the sake of suffering. No! God didn't make us to suffer. God made us for happiness.

September 3, 1978

[131] + WITHOUT THE CROSS LIFE IS A FAILURE

Without the cross life is a failure. What does it mean to not embrace the cross? What is the failure in our lives? Saint Paul, in today's second reading, tells us not to be conformed to this world. That is to throw aside the cross: to be conformed to this world and not to follow the cross. The world says that money is happiness and Christ says blessed are the poor in spirit! Christ says that we have to forgive and the world repeats the pagan *adagio*: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, revenge, violence and hatred. Don't conform yourselves, then, to the world's thought. And so we can continue to describe in infinity two lines that grow ever farther apart: the line of conformity with the will of God and the line of conformity with this world.

September 3, 1978

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH OSCAR ROMERO

[132] + IT IS SAD TO HAVE TO LEAVE ONE'S COUNTRY

It's sad to have to leave one's country because, in that country, there is not a just order where one can find work.

September 3, 1978

[133] + I AM NOT A BOSS

The authority of the church is not in giving orders, it is in service. I ask forgiveness, from my community, when I have not been able to function as your servant in my role as bishop. I am not a boss; I am not someone who merely gives orders; I am not an authority that is imposed. I want to be the servant of God and of all of you.

September 10, 1978

READINGS: EZEKIEL 33:7–9; ROMANS 13:8–10; MATTHEW 18:15–20

[134] + PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SIN

Many are scandalized, they say that sin is personal and not societal. Certainly the Bible of today tells us: the evildoer will be lost because of his guilt. But it has also mentioned the shared responsibility of the prophet who does not prophesy. Those who allow injustice to exist, especially if they could avoid it, every family that prostitutes itself with selfishness and doesn't have a Christian sense of life, every home that is not sanctified as God wants it to be sanctified and in which they are living in sin, is contaminated. They have become accomplices. They have committed social sin. And the atmosphere—like that in El Salvador—becomes such that they even decree a law to preserve order. What order? It is the order of injustice that is not to be questioned. The situation is to be maintained, not denounced, because that

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would be sticking your nose in politics. El Salvador is in a state of institutionalized sin.

September 10, 1978

[135] + I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH

Dear brothers and sisters, especially you my dear brothers and sisters that hate me, you my dear brothers and sisters that think that I am preaching violence, and defame me and know it is not true, you who have hands stained with crime, with torture, with abuse, with injustice: be converted! I love you very much, but you cause me sorrow, because you are on the road to hell.

September 10, 1978

[136] + CHRISTIAN BASE COMMUNITIES

How could my heart not be filled with hope by a church where the Christian Base Communities flourish! And why should I not ask my dear brother priests to make these communities flourish everywhere, in the *barrios*, in the tiny villages, in families!

September 10, 1978

[137] + THE WILL OF GOD

It is not the will of God for some to have everything and for others to have nothing. This cannot be of God. It is his will that all his children be happy.

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[138] + THE CHURCH EXISTS TO SERVE

A church cannot only be concerned with taking care of itself, like those who live obsessed only with their health and never have time to do anything else, because they are taking care of their health. The church takes care of its health, but not through selfishness, rather so that it might be strong and healthy, and serve. The church has as its goal to serve.

September 17, 1978

[139] + PLURALISM IN THE CHURCH

You, with your charismatic movement; you, with your *Cursillo* movement of Christianity; you, with your community studying catechism; you, with your traditional thoughts; you, with your progressive thoughts, why do you do this? Do you defend what you do because it is comfortable? Then you are going the wrong way. This is not the right thing to do. Do you do it in order to serve God sincerely? Well, do it this way and try to understand others who do what they are doing for God. This is true pluralism in the church.

September 17, 1978

[140] + THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

The national anthem is not dogma and contains a great deal that is beautiful and true. We have to bring this beauty and truth to the reality of the country, so that we are not singing about something that doesn't really exist, and so that we make the beauty of the anthem reality in this country.

September 24, 1978

READINGS: ISAIAH 55:6–9; PHILIPPIANS 1:20C–24, 27A; MATTHEW 20:1–16

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[141] + SERVICE TO HUMANKIND

We shouldn't see professions only as a way to earn money and establish ourselves politically or socially. We have to seek, as the young people are doing now, service to humankind, the best use of my life, not to earn but rather to serve.

September 24, 1978

[142] + GOD IN MY POCKET

Many actually want, like the song says, God in their pocket, a God that accommodates to their idols, a God that is content with what I pay my day laborers, a God that approves my abuses of others. How can some people pray to this God the Our Father if they treat him as one of their servants or workers?

September 24, 1978

[143] + GOD CALLS YOU AND FORGIVES YOU

I repeat again what I have said so many times on the radio speaking to those who perhaps are the cause of so much injustice and violence, those who have caused weeping in so many homes, those who are stained with blood from so many murders, those whose hands are stained by torture, those who have silenced their consciences, that aren't moved when they see a man humiliated under their heel, suffering, perhaps about to die. To all of them, I say: your crimes don't matter, they are ugly, horrible, you have violated the most dignified part of a human being, but God calls you and forgives you.

September 24, 1978

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH OSCAR ROMERO

[144] + KENOSIS

Kenosis means to empty oneself, throw off the rank of God, as if a sovereign were to leave his throne and mantle and everything, and dress in peasant rags to go among the peasants without disrupting them with his presence as a king. Christ dresses himself in humanity and appears as an ordinary man. If Christ were present here, in the cathedral, among the people that have the goodness to be listening to me, I would not recognize him. And knowing that he was the son of God in the form of a man! And, even more than that, it wasn't enough for him to look like a man, but he also humiliated himself to take on the form of a slave to die like a slave, crucified on a cross, like a thief, like a castoff of Israel who was to be crucified outside the city, like trash. This is Christ, the God that humiliated himself through this kenosis, through this profound emptying of who he was.

October 1, 1978

READINGS: EZEKIEL 18:25–28; PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11; MATTHEW 21:28–32

[145] + HUMBLE AND POOR CHURCH

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the glory of the church; to carry inside itself all the kenosis of Christ. And because of this, it has to be humble and poor. A lofty church, a church that depends on earthly powers, a church without kenosis, a church full of pride, a self-sufficient church, this is not the church of Saint Paul's kenosis.

October 1, 1978

DAILY MEDITATIONS

[146] + NON-CHRISTIANS

Brothers and sisters, what goodness, what truth, how much good there is beyond the Christian borders! We must respect this. Because many times we think that because we are in the church that we are the world's best. Who knows if here, in the church, we are less good, less noble, less human than those outside.

October 8, 1978

READINGS: ISAIAH 5:1-7; PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9; MATTHEW 21:33-43

[147] + FANATICISM

Let us not be fanatics! Fanaticism among Christians has done a great deal of harm.

October 8, 1978