



Press Release

Romero, Communicator Event at Vatican Celebrates Saint's Unique Use of Media Hosted by SIGNIS and Dicastery for Communication

(Rome, 12 October) By his powerful use of church media to denounce injustice against the poor Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador, assassinated in 1980, who is to be canonized as a Catholic Saint this Sunday by Pope Francis, presents a challenge to church communicators everywhere.

So noted **Julian Filochowski** during an event today in the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, hosted by SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication and the Dicastery. Filochowski knew Romero as a friend and worked with him. He currently heads the Romero Trust, based in England. He stated:

The challenge to the Christian media now is to avoid the temptation to present to the Church a decaffeinated Romero, a milk and water saint, a charismatic prayerful guy who got hit by a bullet from a crazy gunman whilst celebrating Mass! No, Archbishop Romero was killed in a deliberate, planned attempt to silence the voice of truth in a society fed on a diet of distortions and lies. The voice of the voiceless was assassinated at the altar. He was in the end executed like Jesus of Nazareth. So please tell the story like it really was.

Romero, while not a media professional, was said to have had an innate sense of how to communicate his message through his archdiocesan newspaper and especially radio - his Sunday homilies were widely heard on the San Salvador Archdiocese's radio station all over the country. In the midst of a civil war, he steadfastly catalogued and condemned the murders, atrocities and abuses of human rights.

The event, attended by members of the Vatican Press Corps and church officials, also featured remarks by Helen Osman, President of SIGNIS, and **Cardinal José Gregorio Rosa Chávez**, who collaborated closely with Romero in the archdiocese, who spoke of how Romero, a shy man, was transformed into a man on fire when he went before a microphone. The Cardinal said that Romero is still very much alive with a message that is relevant today, and that his compassionate way of communicating is vital in our world, in which we are connected but do not really communicate.

Several exhibitions accompanied the symposium: Romero's assassination as reported in the world press, photos presenting his role as a prophet of truth in El Salvador, and another from La Voz de la Diaspora (Voice of the Diaspora), a worldwide association of journalists started by Salvadoran journalists in exile.

A reception followed in which many those attending stayed to discuss the presentations and to meet and converse with the speakers.

For more information on the event, including a photo selection and other resources, please go to [#RomeroSIGNIS](#).

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