



World Catholic Association for Communication

ROMERO, COMMUNICATOR
Press Kit

About SIGNIS

SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, is a non-governmental organization that includes members from over 100 countries. As the "World Catholic Association for Communication", it brings professionals together from radio, television, cinema, video, media education, Internet, and digital communication.

SIGNIS was created in November 2001 from the merger between two organizations that were both created in 1928: Unda, for radio and television; and OCIC (International Catholic Organization for Cinema), for cinema and audiovisual. The activities of SIGNIS cover all fields of audiovisual creation: promoting films or television programmes (it has juries at the important international film and TV festivals: Cannes, Berlin, Monte Carlo, Venice, Ouagadougou...), creating, producing and distributing radio, TV and video programmes, building broadcasting studios, supplying equipment, offering Internet services by satellite, training professionals, encouraging the use of new media, promoting media education etc.

The primary objective of all these activities is to promote a Culture of Peace through the media.

The Mission of SIGNIS is:

To engage with media professionals and support Catholic Communicators
To help transform our cultures in the light of the Gospel
By promoting Human Dignity, Justice and Reconciliation.

Short History of SIGNIS

SIGNIS was formed in November 2001 by the merger of the International Catholic Organization for Cinema and Audiovisual (OCIC) and the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television (Unda) both founded in Europe in 1928. OCIC and Unda had similar objectives: to bring together Catholics already working as professionals in the media (OCIC in the field of cinema and Unda in radio and television). Since 2014 and the demise of the International Catholic Union of the Press (UCIP, founded in 1927), SIGNIS has been actively working to offer a space for former members of UCIP and other Catholic journalism organizations.

Catholics were involved in the new art of cinema from its inception (1895), seeing its worldwide influence on families and, above all, on young audiences. OCIC developed a positive approach to this new art. It wanted to offer guidance to audiences and to discover and foster productions which promoted the same values as Christians did. It called for the creation of national organizations dealing with topics such as childhood and cinema, and film reviews, an early form of media education. It also expressed its intention to collaborate with the film industry. One of its concerns was the promotion of 'good' films, both for education and entertainment.

In the same way Catholic radio producers realized by the end of the 1920s that radio had become, like cinema, an important means of spreading ideas. At its first international congress (1929) Unda drew attention to the importance of radio for religious, cultural and social life. In the 1930s Catholic broadcasters worldwide had an optimistic view of the development of radio and, later, of the new medium of television. It could transcend frontiers and bring peoples and cultures together. Radio was thought of as the means par excellence for reconciling peoples, fostering fellowship among nations and promoting peace. Like OCIC, Unda too developed different aspects of media education.



After World War II and during the succeeding decades these principles found new expression in cinema, radio and television activities. OCIC and Unda, extended their activities and became truly global organizations. From the 1960s, Unda and OCIC began to hold joint meetings and assemblies and incorporated work on the small and grassroots media that were then being developed. The 1980s saw the proliferation of video use, soon followed by rapid developments in information technology and the growth of digital media and the internet.

Since many members of Unda and OCIC worked in several media, and since media ministry was cross-media, the impetus for a combined Catholic Association for audiovisual media grew ever stronger, eventually leading to the merger of Unda and OCIC as SIGNIS on November 21st 2001. Its Mission : "To engage with media professionals and support Catholic Communicators to help transform our cultures in the light of the Gospel by promoting Human Dignity, Justice and Reconciliation."

In October 2014 the Holy See formerly approved its Canonical Statutes and recognized SIGNIS as well an International Association of the Faithful.

Romero, Patron of SIGNIS

In June 2015, the SIGNIS Board of Directors during its meeting in Puerto España, Trinidad and Tobago, decided by acclamation to designate Salvadoran Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero as Patron of SIGNIS, due to his exemplary dedication and courage in his ceaseless defense of the poor and the oppressed.

He represents an example for all communicators as someone who lived the values he professed, and was willing to give his life rather than remain silent in the face of injustice.

Prayer on the canonization of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero

God, Merciful Father,

You who called your son Oscar Arnulfo Romero to be a faithful disciple of your living Word, open our hearts so we may know how to hear you in the encounter with you and with your people, and so we may also communicate out of your Love the truth of who we are as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ.

You who led him to walk with your Son at the side of the poor, the homeless and the oppressed, let us never turn away from them. Let us feel their joys and hopes, and encourage them and serve them with charity, blessed by the witness of Archbishop Romero.

You, Lord, who made of the life and death of Archbishop Romero a grain of wheat sown to die and bear fruit, through his intercession inspire all our works in your name, and strengthens in us the spirit of service, sacrifice and generosity, so that the world has true life.

You who transformed Monsignor Romero into a "microphone of Christ" in the midst of violence, oppression and the suffering of your people, also take our very selves and our mission as communicators, so we may fight for justice, work for peace and reconciliation, defend the dignity of every human being and give voice to the voiceless in our society.

Give us courage and enormous confidence in You, in the midst of our weaknesses, as you did with Archbishop Romero. Give us, through his intercession, the grace to be faithful witnesses of your Kingdom in the midst of the world, and to communicate the truth with a compassionate heart.

Amen.

Luis García Orso, S.J.

ROMERO, COMMUNICATOR

Rome, October 12, 2018, Sala S. Pio X

On the eve of the Canonization of Archbishop and Martyr Oscar Romero of Salvador, SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, in collaboration with the Dicastery for Communication, invites journalists, media operators and communication students to a reflection on this major saint of our time. SIGNIS chose Archbishop Romero as its patron in 2015 because of his willingness to give his life rather than be silent in the face of injustice.

Speakers**Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chávez**

Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chávez was born in Sociedad de Morazán, El Salvador, on September 3, 1942.

Studies

He did his primary school studies in his hometown and then in Jocoro, Morazán. He completed his secondary school studies at the San José de la Montaña Minor Seminary in San Salvador (1957 - 1961). He continued his preparation for the priesthood with Philosophy and Theology at the San José de la Montaña Central Seminary in San Salvador (1962 - 1964, 1966 - 1969). He then attended the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium (1973-1976), obtaining a degree in social communication. He has general knowledge of the following languages: French, English, Portuguese and Italian.

Ecclesial Service

- In 1965 he worked at the Minor Seminary of the Diocese of San Miguel.
- His ordination as a priest took place on January 24, 1970, in the Cathedral of San Miguel, El Salvador, at the hands of Bishop José Eduardo Álvarez Ramírez, c.m., Bishop of San Miguel.
- Episcopal Secretary of the Diocese of San Miguel (1970 - 1973)
- Parish priest of the El Rosario Church, in the city of San Miguel (1970 - 1973).

- Director of the social media of the Diocese of San Miguel: Radio Paz y Semanario Chaparrastique (1971 - 1973).
- Spiritual advisor to several lay associations and movements of the secular apostolate (1970-1973).
- Rector of the Central Seminar San José de la Montaña, San Salvador (1977 - 1982).
- Professor of Theology at the San José de la Montaña Central Seminar, San Salvador (1977 - 1982).
- Member of the Board of Directors of the Organization of Latin American Seminars (1979 - 1982).
- He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of San Salvador on July 3, 1982.
- Pastor of the San Francisco church in San Salvador and president of CÁRITAS for Latin America and the Caribbean and the national CÁRITAS
- Appointed Cardinal of the Church by Pope Francis on June 28, 2017.

Julian Filochowski

Born in 1947 in Normanton, Yorkshire, Julian Filochowski studied Economics at Churchill College, Cambridge. On graduation in 1969 he became Coordinator of the British Volunteer Programme in Central America based in Guatemala City.

In 1973, he joined the Catholic Institute for International Relations in London. For nine years he campaigned on human rights and development issues linked to Latin America. Inter alia, he worked with Archbishop Oscar Romero and organised his Nobel Peace Prize nomination - and attended his funeral on behalf of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales.

In 1982 Julian moved to the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and served as its CEO for 21 years. During that time, he served for five years as a member of the Pontifical Council 'Cor Unum' – the Vatican department with responsibility for international relief and development. He was honoured in Britain with the OBE and CMG awards for services to international development.

During a sabbatical year studying the papers and archives of Archbishop Romero, Julian received an honorary doctorate in human rights from the UCA, the Jesuit University in El Salvador. In 2006, he received an honorary doctorate in law from Roehampton University.

From 2004-17 Julian was a Director of the Tablet magazine. Julian is a founder trustee and Chair of the UK-based Archbishop Romero Trust.

Helen Osman

Helen Osman has more than 30 years of local, national and international experience with particular expertise in mentoring mission-focused organizations to integrate public awareness, catechetical expectations and advocacy priorities across the organization's multiple stakeholders and audiences, while using multiple communication means.

She recently returned to Austin, after an eight-year hiatus in Washington, DC, where she coordinated communications for the US Catholic bishops and shepherded the visits to the United States of Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 and Pope Francis in 2015.

She has served as president, secretary and a board member of the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada, and received its highest honor for personal achievement in 2012.

Today she provides communications support for international, national and local entities, including Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during the historic pan-Orthodox Council held in June 2016.

In March 2017 she coordinated the first-time ever participation of a bishop from the Holy See and representatives of the German bishops' conference at SXSW, one of the largest arts and innovation festivals in the world.

She is president of the international board for SIGNIS, World Association of Catholic Communicators.



World Catholic Association for Communication

The Assassination of Archbishop Romero in the Media

An Exhibition Prepared by SIGNIS

At the time of his murder, Romero was already a global icon for the promotion of justice and peace. Because he made his word the "voice of those without a voice", his tragic and violent death resonated in the mainstream media around the world.

The front pages of six newspapers, are gathered in this installation showing different journalistic perspectives on the murder of Romero. These range from *The New York Times* (the United States), to *El País* (Spain), *Clarín* (Argentina), *La Prensa* and *El Mundo* of El Salvador; to *L'Osservatore Romano*.

In addition to this press display there is a television news piece from the *Antenne 2, Le Journal* network in France, broadcast just one day after the murder of Romero.