



University of Notre Dame 2016 Award of the Year Rev. Robert S. Pelton, CSC

Thank you for this award at the St. Joseph Valley Notre Dame Club. I have been invited to speak to you this evening about my relationship with the theme of these observations. I have chosen as a theme: "Pope Francis and the Irish Connection."

We are aware that our President of Notre Dame, Fr. John Jenkins, C.S.C., has already met personally with Pope Francis. We are also aware that other members of the Congregation met with the Pope during the General Chapter of the Congregation in Rome last year. (fig. 1)

I will be speaking from the viewpoint of my academic work within the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University.

I founded Latin American/ North American Church Concerns in 1985 and served as its Director until very recently. In 1987, I began the annual series of lectures honoring and exploring the legacy of the now blessed Archbishop Romero. (fig. 2) At Notre Dame, this is the thirtieth anniversary of that series.

The first presenter in this Romero series was Fr. Cesar Jeréz, S.J. the Provincial of the Central American Province. Each year distinguished individuals have contributed to this tradition. Who was Oscar Romero?

Òscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez (fig 3) was born on August 15, 1917, in a village in the mountains of San Salvador. This coming August 15, 2017 will be the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. When he finished his studies at twelve years of age, his father wanted him to become a carpenter. However,



fig 1



fig 2

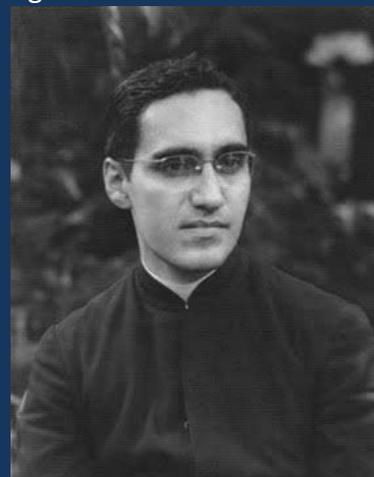


fig 3

Oscar wished to become a diocesan priest of El Salvador, and consequently he entered the diocesan seminary in San Salvador. Later, he was sent to the Gregorian University in Rome where he was ordained to the priesthood at the age of 25 years. (fig 4) Years later, in 1977, he became the Archbishop of San Salvador.



fig 4

When he was appointed to the Archbishopric of San Salvador, the progressive members of the local clergy were disappointed with the appointment. They felt that he was too “Roman” and that he did not really appreciate the reasons for the deep suffering of the Salvadoran people. This was to change quickly through his own response to grace and his own acceptance of the need for personal changes in his life and pastoral ministry. (fig 5) These changes took place quickly, and they led to his pastoral ministry. These changes took place quickly, and they led the then Pope, John Paul II to ask Romero about this “conversion”. Soon, Archbishop Romero gained renown as a prophetic voice of the poor, and was finally martyred and at the altar on March 24, 1980.

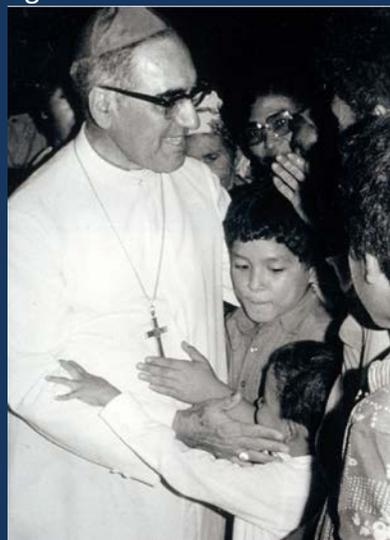


fig. 5

The Romero series has been- and remains- one of the activities of L.A.N.A.C.C., among others. I am now the Emeritus Director of L.A.N.A.C.C., and we are pleased to have with us this evening my successor, Dr. Peter Casarella and his lovely wife, Maria.



fig 6

This evening, I have chosen the theme of sharing how Pope Francis (fig 6) and Archbishop Romero come together in their pastoral teaching of the Gospel- especially in relation to their promotion of the Gospel in the modern world.

When Pope John XXIII (fig 7) called for Vatican II, he emphasized its pastoral role, rather than its teaching- or doctrinal role. It called for a living out of the Gospel in changing historical and cultural circumstances.

Having served in the last session of the Second Vatican Council as a consultant concerning the Religious Life and in various roles in the CELAM Conferences since Vatican II, I was delighted to be selected as a correspondent at CELAM V- the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin American and the Caribbean, held in Aparecida, Brazil on 13-31 of May, 2007. (fig. 8) Since 1965, CELAM has been conducting analyses of the implementation of pastoral teachings of the Second Vatican Council- at Medellín, Puebla, Santo Domingo, and Aparecida. I believe that the Brazilian meeting advanced in a significant way the pastoral dimensions of the Second Vatican Council, as Pope John XXIII had emphasized. Peter Casarella represents this university as a theological advisor to CELAM. This is of natural advantage both to the pastoral role of Latin American Church leadership, but to our own university.

Like the watershed Conference at Medellín in 1968 and most of the subsequent Conferences of Latin America, CELAM V conceptualized its conclusions relevant to the signs of the times by grasping the rapidly changing religious and political changes taking place throughout the Americas. In a very special way, Aparecida prepared the way for a fuller appreciation for the pastoral dimension of the magisterium, as is now being encouraged by Pope Francis. (fig. 9)

Significantly, at Aparecida the bishops re-adopted the inductive “see-judge-act” method of discernment that had proven so fruitful at the Conferences at Medellín 1968 and Puebla.

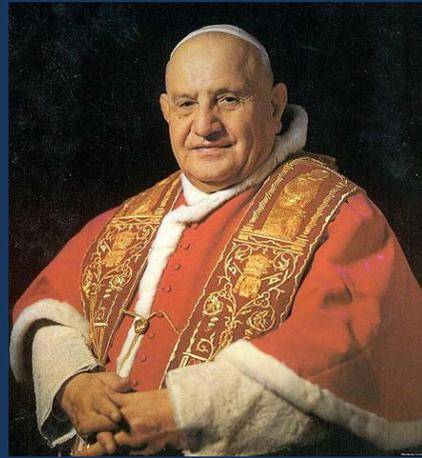


fig. 7



fig. 8



fig. 9

CELAM V clearly endorsed and expanded three key concepts of the Latin American Catholic Church: the preferential option for the poor, (fig 10) ecclesial base communities, and opposition to structural sin within the modern context of economic globalization. Pope Francis clearly encourages returning to the pastoral methodology of Vatican II. Examples of this are found in the following references to Pope Francis¹.

The Church's teaching and her pastoral ministry are not opposed, Pope Francis (fig 10) said in a video message, even though this false dichotomy is frequently cited:

"Not infrequently, an opposition between theology and pastoral ministry emerges, as if they were two opposite and separate realities that had nothing to do with each other. False opposition is generated between theology and pastoral ministry, between Christian reflection and Christian life."

We need to listen carefully to the questioning observations to the way to understand the issue of doctrinal authority in this Francis era². The cited reference is a carefully reasoned article which concludes by articulating and describing six conditions for achieving pastoral magisterium in the Church.

On the subject "structural sin" as a complement to "personal sin" - we are all painfully aware of the "personal sins" of our lives. However, many of us need to be more conscious of "structural sin" which involves entities such as large corporations, industries, or even universities. Our Mendoza School of Business does splendid work in developing moral responsibilities of corporate entities.



fig 10



fig. 11

¹ CAN EWTN News, Sept. 4, 2015 (The Founding of the Faculty of Theology-March 3, 2015, Vatican Library)

² Richard S. Gailardetz. "Doctrinal Authority in the Francis Era." *Commonweal*, Dec. 19, 2016

Fr. Oliver Williams, C.S.C, (fig 12) is a respected leader in the promotion of the ethical dimensions of business practices. Professor Margaret Pfeil of our Theology Department (fig 13) does much to promote the theological aspects of social or institutional sin. She is widely known and respected.

The canonization of Oscar Romero will likely take place in the not-too-distant future, possibly during this year. In view of this reality, is it not reasonable to consider the possibility of Romero being declared a model for “Pastoral Bishop of the Universal Church?”

I was present at the Beatification of Archbishop Romero. It was an event which I shall never forget. (fig 14) I hope and pray to be present at his canonization as well. When I travel overseas I request clearance from our Holy Cross medical team, I hope that this will happen now. I appreciate your prayers. Before concluding I wish to share with you words of Archbishop Romero which are relevant also for our times:

“I said once and I repeat today that if, unhappily, some day they silence our radio and don’t let us write our newspapers, each of you who believe must become a microphone, a radio station, a loud speaker, not to talk, but to call for faith, to live it”

(Archbishop Oscar Romero, The Violence of Love).

Thank you!

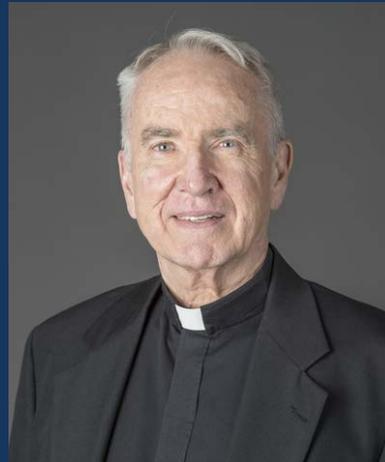


fig. 12



fig. 13



fig. 14

Image Citations

Fig. 1 University of Notre Dame. *Notre Dame leaders meet with Pope Francis*. Office of the President. 20 Jan 2014. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 2 LANCC. *Romero Days Lecture Series*. Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 3 *Oscar Romero in 1941*. 24 May 1941. Flickr Public Domain. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 4 Arzobispado de San Salvador. *Romero, Vatican City, 1942*. 19 Mar 2011. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 5 CADFOD Lancaster Blog. *The second half*. 13 Jan 2014. CAFOD Lancaster Diocese. Web. 21 Feb 2017.

Fig. 6 Korean Culture and Information Service (Jeon Han). *Pastoral Visit of Pope Francis to Korea*. 14 Aug 2014. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 7 Gedoughty02. *Portrait of Pope Saint John Paul XXIII*. 4 Oct 2012. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 8 Campanto/ABr. Valter. *National Sanctuary of Aparecida, Brazil*. 9 May 2007. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 9 Catholic Church England and Mzaur/catholicnews.org.uk. *General Audience with Pope Francis*. 17 Apr 2013. Flickr. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig 10. LaNicoya, Amy Lopez. *Picture of siblings living in extreme poverty in El Salvador*. 2007. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 11 University of Notre Dame Marketing and Communications. *Fr. Oliver Williams, C.S.C. Mendoza College of Business*. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 12 University of Notre Dame Marketing and Communications. *Professor Margaret Pfeil. Theology Department*. Web. 21 Feb 2017

Fig. 13 Cancilleria del Ecuador. *Beautification of Monsenor Oscar Arnulfo Romero*. 23 May 2015. Wikimedia Commons. Web. 21 Feb. 2017