

REMEMBERING ROMERO AFTER 9/11: NAMING THE POWERS

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In memoriam Sr. Marie Augusta Neal, SND de N, and Albert LeMay

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“From 1965 onward, I began Sociology 101 with a question: Why are there poor people in a rich society like the United States? When it became clearer in the early '70s that we were already developing as a world community, I changed the question to this one: Why is it that two-thirds of the world is poor, when we have resources and technologies sufficient to provide well for all but we do not?”
Sr. Marie Augusta Neal, SND de N: *Themes of a Lifetime*.¹

I. WHICH SEPTEMBER ELEVEN?

I was driving to University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, for a check-up with my oncologist at the end of my second year in remission from throat cancer, when a plane struck World Trade Center on the morning of Tuesday, 9/11/02. “A sad accident,” thought aloud the radio newscaster. As I entered the hospital’s parking lot, the news about a second plane crashing against the Twin Towers was being broadcast. Suddenly, it was obvious this was no accident. As everybody else in the hospital, I was transfixed in disbelief watching on TV as the towers fell down. Suddenly, panic, and the realization that this might be just the beginning of something much worse, propelled me to the phone to call my kid’s school, my wife’s office, our home – no answer. I ran to the parking lot and drove back as fast as I could.

A barrage of feelings and thoughts overwhelmed me. One thought among others struck me right away: unless this atrocity had been perpetrated by a group of Euro-American right-wing Christians (like the Oklahoma bombings), all of us ‘other-than-that’

¹ Cited in an obituary by David Schoetz: “Sister Marie Neal; challenged roles of women, church; at 82,” *The Boston Globe* (3/1/2004) B7. I dedicate these reflections to the memory of Sr. Marie Augusta Neal, the colleague and friend who still inspires and encourages my struggles – with gratefulness and admiration for a humble, steadfast, brave life well lived in solidarity with the least amongst us.

were going to pay for the perpetrators, sooner or later, in ways big or small. Through the following days, many colleagues, students, and friends – several Euro-Americans included – recounted similar emotions and thoughts.

Amid the fear and pain elicited by the absurd death of so many innocent people – in a city where my wife and I had lived, loved, and given birth to our son; in an area where she had been for years a student and a teacher, where we had so many loved ones and so many cherished memories – some other uncomfortable feelings started boiling inside me, scrambling for words to be articulated. I only could start uttering these after others around me – in the unbearably tense and intense week that followed – began doing likewise. Somebody told me that week, “Of course you remember that other September 11.” I couldn’t understand what she implied. “What do you mean?” I replied. Then, her words jolted my memory: “1973. Chile.” September 11, 1973, was the day in which the Latin American country with the longest tradition of legal, peaceful, and democratically elected governments experienced a violent coup supported by the U.S.:² the beginning of the right-wing military dictatorship which executed over 3,000 people – as usual, mostly innocent, unarmed civilians, children and U.S. citizens included.

In September 2001, as the days went, I heard many people voice a question similar to the one my oncologist voiced that fateful day as she saw the towers go down on the screen: “Why? What have we done? Why us, God?” For a few weeks – despite the rhetoric of vengeance and self-righteousness that populated the media, alongside a scary brand of militaristic patriotism emerging all around us in bumper stickers, together with

² See U.S. declassified documents on Chile at <<http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/Search.asp>>, <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm>> <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/chile/documents/>, <<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/42a/index-dg.html>>, and <<http://www.lakota.clara.net/Library/nsaebb8/nsaebb8.htm>>, all accessed 3/13/04.

an unbelievably crass but omnipresent commercialization and political exploitation of the tragedy – I began to cherish the hope that maybe some good could emerge amid, despite and over against the evil of such a murderous attack. Maybe, just maybe, these questions oft voiced all around us – “Why? What have we done? Why us, God?” – were a glimpse of hopeful light amid the tragedy. Maybe, just maybe, this nation was going to discover, to remember, to ponder its own legacy of centuries of building its power through deadly physical violence inflicted on innocent civilians all over the globe – beginning with American Indians and enslaved Africans and continuing on with a toll close to a quarter million victims in Central America alone, just since 1954.

In fact, some relatives of the victims of the 9/11 attacks proved that such hope was not vain and a novel path is feasible: witness the wonderfully altruistic, pacifist response of www.peacefultomorrows.org – an organization of relatives of victims of the U.S. 9/11 who cries out against the military exploitation of the tragedy the watchword “Not in our name!”

Sadly, the official U.S. response has been that of imperialist war: Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Haiti – with already more innocent, unarmed civilians killed in each of the first two countries by U.S. attacks than people died in the Twin Towers.

II. TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO TODAY.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, apprentice carpenter and later diocesan priest, was appointed in 1977 by Pope Paul VI as Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador in the Republic of El Salvador, Central America, “to the satisfaction of the wealthy and the

consternation of the Jesuits and other pastoral leaders.”³ Three years later, on Sunday 3/23/1980, he delivered a homily where he pleaded to the Salvadoran soldiers "Brothers, you came from our own people. You are killing your own brothers. Any human order to kill must be subordinate to the law of God, which says, 'Thou shalt not kill'. No soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God. No one has to obey an immoral law. It is high time you obeyed your consciences rather than sinful orders. The church cannot remain silent before such an abomination. ...In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cry rises to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you, I order you: stop the repression.”⁴

The very next day, Monday, 3/24/1980, while elevating the host during a mass he regularly celebrated in the chapel of the Hospital of the Divine Providence, a single, deadly shot, pierced his heart. Last year, on 9/16/03, the Center for Justice and Accountability filed a lawsuit in a federal court in Fresno, California, accusing former Salvadoran Air Force Captain Alvaro Rafael Saravia of involvement in the assassination. “The complaint against Saravia alleges that he obtained weapons, vehicles and other equipment for the assassination, provided his personal driver to transport the assassin and paid him after the killing.”⁵ Captain Saravia has been living in the U.S. for 24 years now, and except for a 14-month stint in jail on immigration charges, he hasn’t been bothered by the authorities. He is probably just one among the possibly ten thousand torturers Sr.

³ Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico: “Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. Biographical Sketch,” accessed 3/9/04, <http://www.rtfcam.org/resources/packets/romero/2003_packet/bio.pdf>.

⁴ See <<http://www.icomm.ca/carecen/page25.html>>, accessed 3/12/04.

⁵ William Branigin: “Suit Filed in ’80 Death of Salvadoran Bishop,” *The Washington Post*, 9/17/2003, A-16, accessed 3/9/04 <<http://www.cja.org/cases/romeropr2.htm>>.

Dianna Ortiz (herself a survivor of torture) estimates that are living in the U.S. today,⁶ most of these former employees of U.S.-backed dictatorships. Homeland Security does not lose sleep about them.

Robert E. White, not yet two weeks as U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador when Msgr. Romero was assassinated, left office less than eleven months later and has since been a staunch critic of U.S. policies in Latin America, including the policies that allowed for the murder of Msgr. Romero and that aided and abetted the State terrorism that escalated in El Salvador from then on. After Msgr. Romero's assassination the Salvadoran governments carried a persecution against the opposition (with a billion dollars in U.S. military aid, despite the protests of church & human rights organizations within and without the U.S.) where El Salvador lost near 75,000 of its citizens, most of them innocent unarmed civilians, and most of them killed by U.S. trained, equipped, funded and supported Salvadoran armed forces.⁷

To fathom the dimensions of the Salvadoran bloodbath, just realize that the 75,000 people killed in that decade were 2% of the Salvadoran population. In order to kill 2% of the U.S. population in ten years, the 9/11 attacks would have to be repeated every other day for the forthcoming ten years. In a sense, Romero was a speck of dust in a sandstorm. Except that he came to be the most renowned, visible, known, heard, read and mourned from among those tens of thousands of innocent Salvadorans killed with the billion dollars in military aid granted by the U.S. to Salvadoran governments from the

⁶ In a lecture about her experience as a victim of torture given in November 2003 at the *Call to Action* conference in Milwaukee (WI). See her book, Sr. Dianna Ortiz (with Patricia Davis): *The Blindfold's Eyes. My Journey from Torture to Truth*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

⁷ For the U.S. official declassified document on U.S. involvement in El Salvador 1980-1994, see <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/elintro.htm>>, and <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/publications/elsalvador/elsalvador.html>>, all accessed 3/13/

assassination of Msgr. Romero in 3/23/1980, through that of Sisters Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Dorothy Kazel, together with lay missionary Jean Donovan on Dec. 2nd of the same year, to that – on November 16, 1989 – of the six Jesuits Joaquín López, Segundo Montes, Juan Ramón Moreno, Ignacio Ellacuría, my friends Ignacio Martín-Baró and Amando López, their housekeeper Elba Julia Ramos and her daughter Celina Maricet.

III. ROMERO – A CHRISTIAN MARTYR?

Unfortunately, the life and death of Msgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero means absolutely nothing for most people in today's globalized world. We could reasonably suspect that, in fact, outside of El Salvador, most people in the Americas, even most Catholics in the Americas, would not even recognize his name or his face. We humans forget too much, too soon, too easily – possibly as a survival mechanism, so that our lives don't get too complicated. And, unfortunately, not all ways of remembering Romero are better – in my view – than just plain forgetting about him. There are, among many others, two ways of remembering Romero that particularly worry me sick – sicker than a few others that I also detest for somewhat similar reasons.

One is the remembrance of Romero as an individual Christian martyr, with little or no reference to the complex of socio-economic and political-military factors that connect his death to the near-75,000 Salvadorans killed throughout the 80s, to the 200,000 Guatemalans slaughtered since 1954, to the bloodied history of Central America since the early 20th century, to the complicity of the Christian churches in that bloodied history to our present day, and, last but not least, to the weight of the economic, political and military interests and presence of the U.S. in that very same history and geography

until today. Otherwise stated, I abhor reducing Romero's remembrance to something like the way Jesus is remembered, for instance, in *The Passion of the Christ*.

As many feminist theologians have pointed it out⁸ – especially in cultures and milieus where the Christian theologies of atonement prevail – there is a short path from the commemorative remembrance of the martyr as exemplar, through the complete obliteration of the contextual and historical forces against which the martyr fought and by which the martyr was martyred, up to, in the ironic last instance, the sadomasochistic understanding of submissively accepted suffering as a privileged way to holiness and salvation – an understanding that is as suitable to assuage the conscience of the powerful as they exploit or punish the weak, as it is for helping the most vulnerable to submit meekly to their abusers knowing that either they deserve their abuse or else they will be recompensed for their forbearance in the afterlife. In both cases, the martyr serves well the perpetuation of injustice. We already applied this magic trick to Jesus a thousand times over through the last two thousand years – why would Romero escape such a tragic fate?

The irony, of course, is that Romero's journey constituted precisely a painful and gradual remembrance of Jesus' witness and message through different, shocking, not exactly freely chosen, experiences. Romero started off as a “fearful, shy, conservative pastor”⁹ and bishop with very good relations with the well-to-do, who wasn't particularly inclined to make waves or upset the established order, but who happened to care honestly, deeply, and directly for the peasants under his pastorate: the exploited coffee

⁸ See, among others, Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca An Parker: *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

⁹ Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico: “Rutilio Grande: A Common Table, Big Enough for Everyone,” accessed 3/14/03 at <http://www.rtfcam.org/martyrs/fullness_of_life/rutilio_grande.htm>.

growers in one area, the peasants hacked to pieces by the National Guard for protesting such exploitation in another, the priests beaten and expelled by the government forces for protecting the peasants elsewhere, and, finally, his own friend – Jesuit priest Rutilio Grande – killed with a peasant and his child for accompanying and encouraging peasants to gather in Christian communities, to learn to read and write, to examine the bible in community, to bring forth their own lay church leaders, and to struggle peacefully for a better life for all. And it was only through years of giving time and attention to the poor and downtrodden, of suffering shock after shock witnessing the degree of violence and insensitivity toward the poor that his respectable friends among the powerful were capable of, that this bishop, originally welcome by the wealthy as one of their own, started realizing the impossibility of being neutral, above the fray, before the injustices perpetrated by the powerful against the most vulnerable and defenseless in the land. From then on, Romero took his distances from the government officials and was shunned among his former rich friends. His defense of the lives of the poor, as well as his concomitant critiques of the economic exploitation and armed repression which targeted workers and their defenders, was what prompted the powerful to silence him. He saw it coming. The only other choice was the easy one, the decent and respectable choice of most: go back among the old cronies, turn away from the downtrodden, forget most of what he saw, and get on with church business as usual. Morally, he just couldn't. And that's how he came to be martyred. He is not a saint because he's a martyr. On the contrary: he ended up martyred because he was, in a very deep sense, a saint – one who didn't let money, power, renown, safety or comfort get the best of him. One who resisted the temptation of handing the least among his fellow human beings over to the authorities

in exchange for a few crumbs of earthly power. He didn't want to be a martyr. He didn't set up martyrdom as a goal or a value. He wanted a decent, joyful life for all Salvadorans – not just for the few wealthy ones, his earlier friends, who were rich because others were poor, over the labor of the poor, at the expense of the poor. He wanted to halt the martyrdom of the many even if it had to be at the evil price of his own martyrdom. Shouldn't we thus be wary of remembering Romero as a saint because he was a martyr?

That is one way of remembering Romero which makes me sick.

IV. ROMERO – A VICTIM OF ARMED VIOLENCE?

But if it is tragic to remember Romero as an individual Christian martyr, with little or no reference to the ways his death is connected to the near-75,000 Salvadorans killed throughout the 80s, it is in a sense more troublesome to remember Romero almost exclusively in connection to those near-75,000 Salvadorans killed throughout the 80s: an insidious remembrance which I have witnessed growing since the days after his assassination; a much more elusive and pervasive one – and one that might probably connect Romero much more clearly to the predicament in which we find ourselves in this nation after that second tragic 9/11 – the one in the U.S.

I am referring to remembering Romero as a victim of armed violence, of evil men, of the violation of human rights, erasing the socio-economic context and dynamics – within and beyond Central America – which elicited and sustained violent repression in Central America; forgetting that the 75,000 killed by direct repression are only the tip of the mountain of those killed by hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, lack of access to

health care and/or transportation – that is, the ‘collateral damages’ of both the juicy profits of transnational corporations and the accessible prices of sugar, corn & coffee for the middle and upper classes at home and abroad. I am talking about remembering Romero as if his death was an exception to business as usual in the global capitalist dynamics; as if official armed violence against organized labor was an odd occurrence typical of “those primitive people” south of the Rio Grande; as if accommodating the need to restrain by force – even by deadly armed force – those who struggle for better salaries and working conditions was something that rarely happened with ordinary, civilized, reputable people and nations; as if ‘the’ problem behind the thousands of slaughtered Salvadorans was the brutality of exceptional, accidental, monstrous leaders and groups who didn’t care for the individual, human rights of their victims.

This all too common way of remembering the Christian martyrs of the liberation struggles in the Third World has several advantages: it confirms the moral superiority of the white northern tribes in contrast with the moral degradation of dark-skinned tribes from warm lands; it gives a chance to altruistic souls both South and North to embark in missions of saintly solidarity with the downtrodden without questioning the very context from which they come (missions often comprising military invasions and occupations); and, last but not least, it helps nurturing the illusion that, once the most blatant violence and violations of individual rights are dispelled, once a democratic process gets on its way, things are going to be alright and we can then all get back to business as usual.

Allow me to suggest for a few minutes that the reason Romero lost the trust and friendship of his former, powerful buddies; the reason he and tens of thousands others were killed in the eighties in Central America; the reason the U.S. government, military

and corporations aided, abetted and covered up such massive butchery; the reason we are forgetting so fast these crimes and many others, is deeply related to a simple fact of normal life in today's economy: the profits of the large multinational corporations (be they in banana trade or in the trade of weapons), the wealth of the most powerful groups in most contemporary nations, the international credit of the governments and businesses of most countries, the ease of life of the common citizens of industrialized nations, and the wealth and might of the mightiest and wealthiest nations in today's world, all of these depend enormously on the constant flow of cheap raw materials and cheap labor. But cheap raw materials and cheap labor kill, directly and indirectly, slowly and massively, through the consequences of their premises: low salaries, unstable jobs, little or no benefits, hindrances for unionizing, massive unemployment, and lack of health insurance for most workers.

Raw materials do not develop a will of their own, nor do they get organized, or protest, or resist. But labor does: labor is people, human beings; and people, at times, do develop a will of their own, do get organized, do protest, and do resist. And when people do such things, profits aren't as good as they were; the wealthy get a bit less wealth and a lot more uncomfortable and jumpy; the international credit of local governments and businesses might suffer; products get more expensive – and a lot of people upstairs get upset and start putting pressure on those below them to do something about it. And they do: they investigate, interrogate, threaten, persuade, dissuade, detain, torture, evict, expel, beat, disappear, maim, kill. Most of us, most of the time don't want to know this, we don't want to remember, we don't want to consider; we don't want to be reminded that this might be the case. And when someone like Msgr. Romero – who can't be easily

dismissed or silenced – comes along and starts reminding us of such possibilities, then again, a lot of people upstairs get upset and start putting pressure on those below them to do something about it. And these ones do: they investigate, interrogate, threaten, persuade, dissuade, detain, torture, evict, expel, beat, disappear, maim, kill. It happens all the time– here in the U.S. and elsewhere, subtly or less subtly. And it happened to Romero, as he suspected it was probably going to happen for years before it finally happened.

Romero was not a victim of armed violence. He was another victim of a global system of profits and privileges where those who don't learn early and well to toe the line – at home, in school, in church, in the media – end up subject to harsher means to make them toe the line. Armed violence, legal or not, official or not, is just the last resort to force the questioners, the dissidents, the critics of the global system of profit and privilege to toe the line, or else be silenced forever. Democracy, due process, the rule of law, the balance of powers, etc. are compatible with capitalism only rarely: when, where, and as long as the large majority of the populace has learned to toe the line – either because they enjoy privileges that allow them to feel there's no need to change much in the prevailing system of profits and privileges, or because they have more or less sound hopes of one day partaking in those privileges through long years of hard work and/or god luck, or because they cringe in fear as to the consequences of rebelling against the system. But when democracy and growing dissatisfaction generate too many checks and balances, too many critiques and curbs over the system of profits and privileges, then a lot of people upstairs get upset and start finding allies at home and abroad to curtail “democratic excesses,” they blackmail and bribe governmental authorities, they try to get

their most loyal people elected to office – and if all else fails, then democracy has to go and a right-wing pro-capitalist military coup is in order: Venezuela 1948, Guatemala 1954, Dominican Republic 1963, Brazil 1964, Argentina 1966, Chile 1973, Uruguay 1973, Haiti 1991, are some examples south of the Rio Grande where the “four usual suspects” (big business, military elites, church leaders, and the U.S.) got together to overthrow democratically elected governments which didn’t play their games and put in their stead complacent military dictators.

Military and paramilitary repression and violations of human rights are all too often only last resort means to achieve the end of protecting the profits and privileges of the wealthiest and most powerful, at home and abroad. Romero knew it too well and denounced it loud and clear – that is why he had to go. Focusing on, critiquing, loathing and denouncing the assassination of Msgr. Romero while slyly avoiding to analyze, assess critically, and point the finger at the national and international system of profits and privileges underlying the dynamics of repression of organized labor behind Romero’s death – a system where the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the U.S. corporations, government, and armed forces play major roles – is, I feel, one more profanation of Romero’s memory.

The journey of Msgr. Romero was precisely one of slowly discovering, horrified, the deep injustices which are an intrinsic part of an economic system of unbridled capitalism; the depth of the attachment of the powerful and wealthy to their profits and privileges; the extent of the ordinary, deadly violence of low salaries, expensive social services, inaccessible education and health care, seasonal jobs, unemployment, malnutrition, etc.; the degree of collusion among political, economic, military, police and

ecclesiastical elites to protect the status quo; the extraordinary violence the armed forces could inflict upon the majority of a nation in order to protect the prerogatives of a tiny elite from the threat of a more equitable distribution of resources; and the level of complicity in such dynamics that could be displayed by the mainstream media and the leadership of powerful nations.

Already in 1976, Romero began to see what we so easily forget or trivialize: “the church must cry out by command of God: ‘God has meant the earth and all it contains for use of the whole human race. Created wealth should reach all in just form, under the aegis of justice and accompanied by charity...’ It saddens and concerns us to see the selfishness with which means and dispositions are found to nullify the just wage of harvesters. How we would wish that the joy of this rain of rubies and of all the harvests of the earth would not be darkened by the tragic sentence of the Bible: ‘Behold, the day wage of laborers that cut your fields, defrauded by you, is crying out, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord’” (James 5:4).¹⁰

What killed Romero was this increasingly clear grasp of *both* the absurdity of a system in which the lives of the many are daily, ordinarily, insensitively, imperceptibly sacrificed in the altar of power, privileges and profits – the altar of Mammon – *and* of the urgency of the Christian injunction to take sides with the oppressed, the poor, the widows, the orphans, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the homeless, the unemployed, the imprisoned and the tortured, even at the price of the friendship and protection of people in high places, nay, even at the price of one’s own comfort, security, health, housing, job, freedom and life itself. Sharing this grasp with the common people

¹⁰ Sermon preached in November 1976, accessed on 3/15/04 at http://www.rtfcam.org/resources/packets/romero/2003_packet/bio.pdf.

from a position of religious authority – i.e., legitimizing the hopes and struggles of the poor for a fairer economic system in their own land – was too much to bear for the rich and famous. Romero had to be killed, and so had to be the tens of thousands that could have been already contaminated with this contagious plague of thinking and acting as if all humans were really created equal, as if we really were creatures of the same Spirit, with the same real inalienable rights to a decent wage, decent conditions of work, decent housing, decent health care, decent transportation, decent education, decent rest and leisure periods, as their sisters and brothers in high political posts, the corporate world, military officialdom, or ecclesiastical leadership.

“It’s the economy, stupid,” that needed to rid Central America of the threat represented by Romero’s naïve reading of the gospel in compassionate solidarity with the poor – so that the powerful South and North could get going with business as usual.

V. SO WHAT? WHAT DO WE DO WITH ROMERO’S LEGACY FROM HERE ON?

Crucial, deep, radical changes have taken place in the Americas and the world in the years after Romero’s death; changes deepened after 9/11, and all too important for rethinking Romero’s legacy and what can we do of it in these times.

For starters, the U.S. has imposed itself as the sole global empire – and its interests and criteria as compulsory points of reference for any economic, political or military decisions anywhere in the planet – or else. This hegemony of the U.S. has toughened the imposition and enforcement (with the gracious help of the IMF, WB, WTO, NAFTA) of the same single brand of capitalism for each and every distinct national economy – regardless of size, culture, resources, regime or circumstances.

Then, a widening breach between the rich and the poor, as well as a growing impoverishment of the majority of the world's population, have accompanied the upsurge of local billionaires in almost every nation as governments sheepishly implement the policies of neo-liberal globalization: decentralization, deregulation, reduction of the public sector, cuts in social expenditures, 'liberation' of prices, salary freezes, currency devaluations, elimination of tariffs and subsidies, tax breaks, and other incentives to stimulate private investors. Massive dislocations and migratory movements affecting the entire planet are part of the 'collateral damages' of this new world economic order.

Finally, the churches and the remainders of the left in Latin America – with a few, remarkable, and brave exceptions here and there – seem to have all but abandoned the poor at the mercy of the blind, voracious forces of free-market fundamentalism.

For these, and other, more complex dynamics, the feasibility of social, economic and political changes – and the hope for such changes – has all but waned in important sectors and regions of the Americas and the world.

True, in Romero's times many had (count me in) our naïve, simplistic illusions about there being a close-range solution in stock for the ravages of unbridled capitalism. Nowadays, hopelessness, despair, individual escapisms, and all sorts of attempts to try and save one's own skin before we get caught by the tsunami are much more in order than the former hopes for a democratic process of redistribution of resources leading to a more equitable social and economic organization of Latin American nations.

How do we do in these post-modern, globalized conditions, under such redoubled imperial duress as we are experiencing after 9/11, to remember Romero in a truly liberating, life-giving, hope-nurturing way. You will have to forgive me, but I carry with

me no answer to this burning question – just the heavy burden of the unanswered question. Maybe a way to faithfully remember Romero after 9/11 is to shed old answers and humbly share the weight of our most pressing, deep, feared questions. Maybe.

A SAMPLE OF POSSIBLE READINGS WHILE REMEMBERING ROMERO

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<http://www.fas.org/asmp/resources/govern/crs-rl31529.pdf>
- World Policy Institute (New School for Social Research) Arms Trade Resource Center
<http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports.html>

U.S. State Department budget data (11/10/03)
<http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/iab/2003/7807.htm>

Arms trade links
<http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/links.html>

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Defense Technical Information Center
<http://www.dtic.mil/>

Federation of American Scientists' facts on global arms trade
http://www.fas.org/asmp/fast_facts.htm

U.S. arms transfers (government data)
<http://www.fas.org/asmp/profiles/worldfms.html>

International Trade Center (UNCTAD/WTO) statistics of arms & ammunition trade
<http://www.intracen.org/tradstat/sitc3-3d/ep891.htm>

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