

‘UNDERSTANDING & NURTURING THE HOLY & PROPHETIC IN OUR DNA’

3rd Sunday Ordinary Time Year C. - 27th January 2019

LET US READ TODAY’S GOSPEL SLOWLY - LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21

“Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.

He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

***‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’***

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.

*The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.
Then he began to say to them,*

‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ “

OSCAR ROMERO LIVING OUT THE MISSION OF JESUS

Saint Oscar Romero in his later years was known for his living out of today’s Gospel.

He was a Christian prophet and Catholic Archbishop who was murdered because as a Christian leader, he spoke up for the poor and marginalized people, identified with them in their suffering and journeyed with them in their pain.

He challenged the injustices and corruption of El Salvador during the civil war.

He challenged other nations that had vested interests in the civil war.

He pleaded for respect for human rights and for reconciliation.

In the light of today's Gospel, Saint Oscar believed in the mission of Jesus and that **Jesus had called him to follow that mission.**

The Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

He was anointed by God with a mission:

***'to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'***

POPE FRANCIS ON SAINT OSCAR ROMERO

Pope Francis on Thursday, 24 January 2019,
addressed the Central American Bishops.

He reflected on Oscar Romero and said that,

***'To appeal to the figure of Romero is to appeal
to the holiness and prophetic character
present in the DNA of your particular Churches.'***

That is a big statement to make:

***'the holiness and prophetic character
present in the DNA of your particular Churches'***

THE LIFE OF SAINT OSCAR ROMERO

Let us recall Romero's life.

Born on the 15th August 1917 in El Salvador.

He studied in the seminary, and later went on to complete a licentiate degree in theology at the Gregorian University in Rome.

Ordained a priest in 1942, he ministered in San Miguel in El Salvador for many years.

We all have conversion points in our faith journey.

Let us reflect on Romero's ongoing **conversion**.

SAINT OSCAR ROMERO'S CONVERSION POINTS

± One of the **conversion points** in his life was the experience in 1968 when he attended the 2nd **CELAM** Assembly in Peru.

He was inspired by the insights and passion of others.

He became interested in the issues of El Salvador and Latin America.

Ordained an auxiliary Bishop in 1970, his good friend Fr Rutilio Grande was asked to organize the celebration.

Oscar Romero became Bishop of Santiago de Maria in 1974.

± Another *conversion point* came as he travelled through the diocese and became more aware of the poverty in the rural areas.

± Another *conversion point* came on June 21st 1975 when five villagers were killed by National Guardsmen.
He voiced his solidarity with villagers, led the funeral and protested to the Government.

± In 1977 there was another *conversion point*.
After the cathedral ceremony when he became Archbishop of San Salvador, there was a massacre of people who were demonstrating in the city about injustice. Romero spoke out about human rights, poverty and violence.
He began a process of meeting with people to review each week what was happening in people's lives, and he reflected on and prayed over the Readings of the weekend, and drew together the events of the last week and his reflection and prayer within the weekend homily.
His Sunday morning homilies were often broadcast across the country.

± Another *conversion point* came when Fr Rutilio Grande, prophetic friend and social justice advocate, was murdered.
Rutilio was one of three killed, the others being a 15 year old boy and an elderly man. Romero stated that, after the funeral, on the following Sunday, there would be only one Mass in the Archdiocese, to be at the Cathedral, to remember those who had been murdered.

± Another *conversion point* came later when the military refused him permission to visit the parish of Aquilares.
The military had killed some of the people, exiled the priests in the parish, desecrated the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle and occupied the church. Afterwards, Romero went to the village, listened and ministered to the villagers and celebrated Mass in the Church.

In his homily he said,

*'Your sorrow is the Church's sorrow.
You are the image of the divine one who was pierced...
Let us pray to the Lord for forgiveness and for the due repentance
of those who converted a town into a prison and a place of torment.
Let the Lord touch their hearts.'*

On Monday evening, **March 24th 1980** Archbishop Oscar Romero was celebrating a Memorial Mass in a hospital chapel.

Praying behind the altar he was **shot**,
and **died** some minutes later in a hospital emergency room.

His funeral was held on the next Sunday, Palm Sunday.

His homilies as Archbishop, still provide inspiration to people today, 39 years after his death.

His challenging letter to US President Jimmy Carter is remembered today as peace makers confront the complexities of proxy wars.

It was in the *DNA of Oscar Romero to be holy and prophetic*, but it took time for him to understand it and to nurture it.

Through many conversion points during his life, he deepened his understanding of his mission and faith. Some of those points are mentioned above.

His awareness deepened through his contact with people,

- ± through seeing the reality of people's lives,
- ± through discussion and debate,
- ± through prayer,
- ± through bringing the events of the week to the Sunday Eucharist,
- ± through reflection on the Scriptures,
- ± through Eucharist,
- ± through solidarity with people in their daily lives,
- ± through advocacy for justice, peace and reconciliation.
- ± **through loving God and loving his neighbour.**

CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN 2019

The church leadership
in our parish community,
in our parish ministries,
in our Archdiocese of Brisbane,
in our Archdiocesan agencies,
and in our Plenary Council preparation,
can find meaning in the **Address of Pope Francis to the Central American Bishops**, when he said

*'that we not be afraid to draw near
and touch the wounds of our people, which are our wounds too,
and to do this in the same way that the Lord himself does.*

*A pastor cannot stand aloof from the sufferings of his people;
we can even say that the heart of a pastor is measured by his ability
to be moved by the many lives that are hurting or threatened.*

*To do this as the Lord does, means allowing this suffering
to have an impact on our priorities and our preferences,
influencing vigorously the use of our time and money, and even our way of praying.*

In this way, we will be able to anoint everything and everyone with the consoling friendship of Jesus Christ within a community of faith that contains and opens a constantly new horizon that gives meaning and hope to life.'

As baptized Christians, may we never stand aloof from the sufferings and pain of the People of God.

May they impact our priorities, our preferences, our use of time and money, and our way of praying.

OUR DNA

Today's Gospel of the mission of Jesus, **expresses the DNA of the mission of Jesus.**

As followers of Jesus, it is in the DNA of our mission as a Christian community and as Christians wherever we live. Symbolically, it is in our DNA.

During this week, we are invited to remember some of the conversion points in our own lives.

Let us list them and sit down and reflect on them. And take them to God in prayer.

We pray for the people who have helped us grow in our awareness of mission, and we pray for those who have shown us how to nurture our mission.

We express our gratitude to God. And we ask God in the light of our faith journey, for increased awareness of God now in our lives.

May we never stand aloof.

Our DNA – created in God's image and likeness.

Our DNA – missioned through baptism.

Our DNA – alive in Eucharist.

Let us pray

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/012719.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook27012019>]

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty
to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to
the Lord.”

@stjosephhandsthanthony



Luke 4:18-19

Homily: Understanding & Nurturing the Holy & Prophetic in our DNA