



February 20, 2011

Dear Bishops,

Foundation Cristosal would like to take this opportunity, together with the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, to encourage observances during the week of March 24<sup>th</sup> commemorating the Feast of Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador. Oscar Romero, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador from 1977-1980, became the “voice of the voiceless” in El Salvador during a time of terrible government repression and the beginning of that country’s 12-year civil war. His outspokenness on behalf of the poor and oppressed led to his assassination March 24, 1980 while celebrating the Eucharist in the small chapel of La Divina Providencia. Romero is among ten Martyrs of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century represented at the Westminster Abbey in London, and his life and words continue to inspire thousands across denominational and religious lines to give their all to God’s work of justice and reconciliation in a deeply broken world.

Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador were added to the Episcopal Church’s commemorative calendar in 2009. March 24<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent Sunday, the Third Sunday in Lent, March 27<sup>th</sup>, offer particular opportunity for a rededication to the godly values that animated Romero’s life, ministry and martyrdom and the martyrdom of thousands of men and women in El Salvador. Sharing Romero’s words and the testimony of his life on and around the anniversary of his martyrdom is a wonderful way to open the minds and hearts of people in the congregations of your diocese to the daily reality of people in El Salvador and much of the rest of the world.

In addition, Foundation Cristosal hopes that you will invite congregations to become acquainted with our work, and to consider participating in an annual ingathering to assist Foundation Cristosal as it supports the work of the Anglican/Episcopal Church of El Salvador that continues Romero’s social witness. Foundation Cristosal is the principal North American advocacy group working with the Anglican/Episcopal Church of El Salvador. We have a broad range of resources available on our website, [www.cristosal.org](http://www.cristosal.org), from bulletin inserts to photo essays, prayers of the people, and liturgical services, to help your congregations in observance of the Feast during the fourth week of March.

As thousands gather in the streets of San Salvador to honor Romero, we are reminded of the quest for justice among all the peoples of the earth, and of our duty as Christ’s disciples to strive for God’s in-breaking realm. Special contributions made by individuals, congregations, and dioceses through Cristosal’s Romero Week Offering will go directly to support the pastoral and social work of the Anglican/Episcopal Church of El Salvador, a Church which, like Romero, has always made God’s option for the poor the heart of its ministry.

Thank you so much for your solidarity. May God continue to bless you and the people among whom you serve in your constant witness to God’s love and justice.