

# The Shrine of St Oscar Romero in London

## The Statutes of the Diocesan Shrine in St George's Cathedral, Southwark

### Background

The Diocesan Shrine of St Oscar Romero is situated in the Romero Chapel, off the South Aisle within St George's Cathedral, Southwark. The centrepiece of the Shrine is the three-dimensional Romero Cross, (approx. 4.3 x 3.2 x 0.3 metres) whose faces were designed and painted by the renowned Salvadoran artist, Fernando Llort.

The Cross contains a reliquary holding a precious fragment of the blood-stained alb that was part of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom clothing as he celebrated Mass on March 24th 1980. This is the heart of the Shrine. Displayed alongside is a zucchetto, one of St Oscar Romero's episcopal skullcaps. The Cross is overlooked by a bust of Archbishop Romero by the artist, Lado Goudjabidze.

The Shrine was inaugurated at an ecumenical service in September 2013 and formally designated a Diocesan Shrine with a decree issued by Archbishop Peter Smith on October 14th 2018, the day of Oscar Romero's canonisation in Rome.

### The Shrine's Mission and Purpose

The Romero Shrine is erected to the Greater Glory of God and to foster devotion to St Oscar Romero and the martyrs of El Salvador. It is established for the spiritual benefit of the People of God in the diocese of Southwark and its metropolitan area in the South of England. The Shrine will make votive materials available to assist its mission and purpose:

- a.** To be a sign for the whole local Church that the Archdiocese of Southwark accepts and seeks to embrace the prophetic dimension of its evangelising mission and the risks that that might entail in the pursuit of reconciliation and peace;
- b.** To offer an inspiring setting for private prayer for pilgrims and visitors, especially for members of parish and diocesan justice and peace groups, agencies combatting poverty, and refugee and social movements working for a better world;
- c.** To provide a focal point for special liturgies and Eucharistic celebrations which seek to underline and promote a spirituality of justice and of a poor Church for and with the poor, the ignored, the despised and the excluded - locally and globally;
- d.** To encourage and enable pilgrims and visitors to the shrine to seek the intercession of St Oscar Romero in all the struggles and dilemmas they encounter as they work to make God's kingdom of love, justice, truth and peace more evident in our society and in our world;
- e.** To encourage pilgrims and visitors, inspired by the martyrdom of Oscar Romero, to strive to become gradually more authentic missionary disciples, returning home strengthened in their resolve to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the midst of the world;
- f.** To offer a model and an example, for emulation in the Church, of a bishop, an utterly orthodox and faithful follower of Jesus Christ, who embraced and lived a preferential option for the poor in his ministry and in his daily life;
- g.** To assist pilgrims to find affirmation and consolation from St Oscar Romero's immersion in the 'Word of God' and the 'World of the Poor', as they try to live out a prayerful spirituality together with courageous and loving service to their neighbour in need;

**h.** To break down the false barriers that too often exist between a prayerful faith-filled Catholic and action for social justice - so that love of God and effective love of neighbour are recognised everywhere in the diocese as quite inseparable;

**i.** To foster warm relationships and coordinate liturgies with other shrines and holy places that embrace and honour the Christian martyrs of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, especially the parish of St Thomas in Canterbury and our near neighbours across the Thames at Westminster Abbey.