

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2015*

**Statement on the Beatification of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez**

*May 23, 2015*

I join people in El Salvador and around the world today in welcoming the beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero. I was deeply moved when I had a chance to pay my respects to Monsignor Romero at his tomb on my visit to El Salvador in 2011. Archbishop Romero was an inspiration for people in El Salvador and across the Americas. He was a wise pastor and a courageous man who persevered in the face of opposition from extremes on both sides. He fearlessly confronted the evils he saw, guided by the needs of his beloved *pueblo*, the poor and oppressed people of El Salvador. The day after he called on Salvadoran soldiers to cease carrying out the Government's orders for repression, he was assassinated while saying Mass. He became a martyr, and millions of people throughout the Americas and the world immediately thought of him as a saint.

El Salvador has come a long way in the last 35 years. Those who once fought on the battlefield now compete for votes and negotiate in the National Assembly. But we and the Salvadoran people recognize there is much more to do. Today, in El Salvador and all of Central America, the United States is guided by the vision of Archbishop Romero. We partner with communities to promote economic opportunity, strengthen the rule of law, and create safer neighborhoods.

I am grateful to Pope Francis for his leadership in reminding us of our obligation to help those most in need and for his decision to beatify Blessed Oscar Arnulfo Romero. Let us hope that Archbishop Romero's vision can inspire all of us to respect the dignity of all human beings and to work for justice and peace in our hemisphere and beyond.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez, beatification.

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