

PROJECT SALVADOR

Updates on new and ongoing projects



Unsung Heroes by Bill Anderson

Project El Salvador lost two loyal supporters this past year. Both had been with us since our beginnings. Roger Nittler was 88 and Sr. Kathryn Leahy was 100. Both had grown up on farms in Nebraska but found their homes in Denver.

Roger

by Mary Alice Bramming

The church was packed for Roger's funeral. As the priest said at the beginning of his homily - probably every one attending had a story to tell of Roger's generosity. Roger was not only generous with his donations but with his time as a CPA. He and his wife, Dotty, helped form and volunteer with many charitable organizations. In the mid-1980's when the war in El Salvador was killing thousands with the aid of the United States, there were many demonstrations against the US involvement.

Roger, this mild mannered accountant, was right there with his poster. Together, he and his wife Dotty helped Project El Salvador become a viable organization. He was there to help us with our books and IRS reports.



Roger J. Nittler
1932 ~ 2020

Roger was a quiet man and a humble man. Much of his generosity was quiet and private as he was. I think he would have been embarrassed by all the "to do" at his funeral. Roger is survived by his wife, Dotty, and their 5 children. Project El Salvador is eternally grateful for the years of generosity from this wonderful human being who made the world a better place for having lived.

Sister Kathryn

by Mary Alice Bramming

Sister Kathryn was a member of the Marycrest Franciscan Sisters for 83 years. She left her farm family at 16 to join the Sisters of St. Francis at their Motherhouse in New York. For much of her life as a Franciscan she taught elementary and high school and was an administrator at the schools of her order including St. Elizabeth Grade School and Marycrest High School in Denver.

Her last mission was in parish ministry in Denver where she became involved in demonstrating against the US involvement war in El Salvador. And there she became a supporter of Project Salvador. With her meager monthly stipend she contributed regularly. When she returned to the Sisters retirement center in Nebraska

Sister Kathryn Leahy (1919 - 2019)
Posted Oct 21, 2019 8:04 AM



she had their treasurer write a check quarterly from her stipend. She contributed a larger amount from her 75th Jubilee donations. She would send it with a note about her life and her prayers for our work in El Salvador. As she grew older she became profoundly deaf but that did not interfere with her ministry of letter writing. I miss picking up her notes in the post office box.

A Saint For El Salvador by Mary Alice Bramming

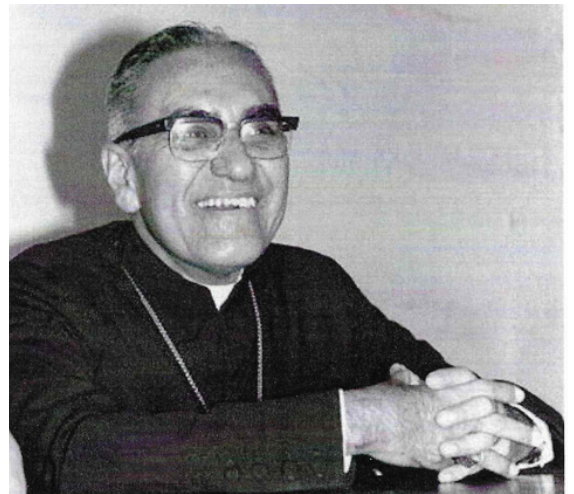
40 years ago, March 24, 1980, a single bullet fired with precision by a professional assassin silenced the voice of the voiceless for the Salvadoran people. In three years as archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero had become the vocal champion of the oppressed of El Salvador. When Oscar Romero was appointed archbishop with the urging of the wealthy and powerful of El Salvador he was seen as peaceable, spiritually oriented, and morally conservative—not one to question the political actions of the oligarchy which ruled the country.

However, in a short few months he was challenged with the assassination of Rutilio Grande, S.J. along with a young boy and an old man. Fr. Grande had been a personal friend of Archbishop Romero's, and his death was not just the death of one priest but the beginning of the attack on the Church, its priests, sisters, and lay leaders.

Fr. Jim Barnett, co-founder of Project Salvador, visited El Salvador in the early 1980's. He said that when Archbishop Romero began to meet the humble people in the village squares and heard their stories,

he experienced a conversion from a churchman to a pastor - one who is one with his people. From then on he used all the resources available to him to challenge the government, the oligarchy, the United States to stop the killing, stop the oppression. He used the Archdiocesan radio station to broadcast his homilies to the whole countryside. But the killing went on and with it armed opposition. He appealed to the individual soldiers: stop killing your brothers.

When the Archbishop was assassinated his flock in El Salvador had no doubt that he had been martyred and was a saint.



Oscar Arnulfo Romero
Archbishop and Martyr of San Salvador
(August 15th 1917 - March 24th 1980)

The official Catholic Church was slow to declare him a saint - which meant nothing to the poor of El Salvador who had his picture in their homes. The election of Pope Francis opened the way for his official canonization.

Pope Francis decreed in 2015 that Archbishop Romero had been killed as a martyr out of hatred for the faith. Archbishop Paglia who spearheaded the cause for his sainthood said that “the decree had confirmed the acceptance of a new understanding that martyrs can be killed, even by churchgoing Catholics, out of hatred for their gospel-inspired work in favor of the poor and disenfranchised.”

The official conferring of sainthood on Oscar Romero October 14, 2018 only confirmed what the poor of El Salvador had always known. He was their voice. He still remains the voice of all the poor and oppressed of the world -- if we only listened.



A Few Scholarship Stories



My name is Xiomara Odaly Linares Perez. I am 18 and I'm in my last year of high school. I want to continue on to University and study medicine to become a pediatrician for children who need help. If I do have success in

my career, I would like to give part of my money to a foundation that helps children with cancer.

My interest in medicine began when I was 7 and I lived in a "Meson" or lodge with many people. I would see so many sick children there whose mothers could not take them to the doctor because they had no money. From that day on - I told myself that I would become a doctor to help those that need it most.

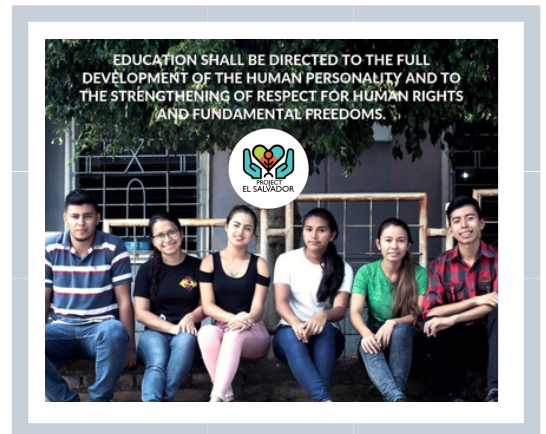
For me, the scholarship program is a blessing. It gives each one of us an opportunity, and I am grateful to be able to grow as a person and to be able to achieve my dreams.

Nancy's Story

The scholarship program is very important to me - without it, I could not have continued my studies. I am 20 years old and am in my second year in university studying psychology. I am thankful to God for the blessings in my life and the people who have given me such help - not only economically but emotionally as well.

People involved in the program always ask us how our studies are going, how our family is getting along, how

we are doing on a personal level. They take interest in us as people and it is wonderful to know that people are sincerely interested in our well-being. The scholarship program is a blessing in my life which has given me the chance to fulfill my dreams.



Support Project El Salvador with electronic bill pay

It is possible to make donations to Project El Salvador through the electronic "bill pay" function of your bank. This can be set up to be a one time or a recurring payment.

Once set up, you get a reminder before the scheduled withdrawal and a notice when the withdrawal goes through - thus making it easier to make a repeated small donation!

You can direct your donation to a specific program within Project El Salvador, whether that's Women's Micro-lending, Radio Victoria, or any other program listed on our website.

Please contact board member Linda Gottschalk, lwgottschalk@gmail.com, for further information.

New Ways to Give



Make a donation through the secure website PayPal.



Go to bit.ly/PayPalPS to set up your donation to Project Salvador today!

New Book Shines Light On Scholarship Program

by Tony Gasbarro

Project El Salvador has been fortunate enough to have a volunteer who has worked diligently with the scholarship program for at least 15 years, traveling to El Salvador many times to meet with students - also getting involved in raising money for the program. As a result of learning the individual journeys of the students, Jerry Westermeyer was motivated to write a book, finished just in the past ten months. The book, "El Salvador Stories: Attaining an Education Despite Poverty and Violence" is now available at Amazon.

When I asked Jerry why he wrote the book, he told me that "the world needs to hear about the terrible conditions that confront many Salvadorans. Because of violence and poverty many are displaced within their own country."

Personal observations made him aware of "the high degree of resilience and the many talents possessed by our students." This book has 18 chapters packed full of personal, heart-rending stories and moving quotations from students and scholars.

All revenue generated from the sale of this book will be donated to the Project El Salvador Scholarship Program.



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