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Activity: Reflection Paper on Romero

Date: May 05, 2022

Word Count: 1, 213 words

Piety Over Power



During the elections at El Salvador on between the year of 1945 to 1950 many people are eager to vote in which it was their right of whom they will chose to be their righteous leaders, yet most of the rich and powerful people including the politicians and the government holds up their freedom since they were afraid to ruin their reign through these poor and innocent civilians. Considering this matter, they let them be ambushed, killed, murdered, tortured, accused, salvaged, raped and was hostage with no justice yet in spite of the severe violence, Archbishop Romero boldly broadcasts about the call of the church to not further harden the hearts of the rich and the powerful people rather it would move them to conversion and that for them to know that they are the principal protagonists in the hour of change, that in them depends the great part to end the violence. They even did not consider the exception of the church, in which its' purpose was told by Archbishop Oscar Romero in the movie that, "Christianity cares about human development, about the political and social aspects of life". As Archbishop Romero continuously lend help to the poor and needy he stood up for the truth and speaks up as the voice of these innocent people hoping to seek justice and peace although even himself experienced the same thing as what he had spoken, "I was often being threatened with death, if they kill me I shall arise in the Salvadoran people, let my blood be seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be reality. Regardless of his sacrifices, struggles and sufferings to reach out for hope, justice and peace, but many people chose not to listen that is reason why more than 60,000 Salvadorans have been killed between 1983 and 1989 and the struggle for peace, freedom, justice and dignity goes on, hence before he passed away he left with these words, "A Bishop may die but the church of God which is the people will never perish".

From the movie itself several Catholic social teaching can be introduced after viewing of the film. The movie conveys and tell us to speak forcefully about the sacredness of life, universal solidarity, and the common good of all. We all have the freedom and nobody can take it away from us, but some certain situations can lead us to the things we did not expect. The movie depicts the difference between your social status, it is a big deal if you are rich and if you are poor. In this whole wide world, we used to spend our life as simple as we can, on the other hand, some of the people tend to not be contented and always wanted more. Throughout the film a sense of the poverty in which the Salvadoran people lived is witnessed on screen and in the testimony of the people. In addition, the film depicts the peasant farmers as experiencing this type of poverty. Through Archbishop Romero pastoral experience, he learned that a Christian's response to Jesus is what we do for the poor and innocent people. The Church is called to display a superior option for the poor. This choice allows us to see things from the perspective of the poor and powerless people, and to assess lifestyle, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. On a personal level, the better option for the poor means that we cannot live immoderately by selfishly using riches and wealth, not just with that standard. It also means we should put into practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Archbishop Romero practiced the works of mercy so as to stand in solidarity with the poor, which is to take an equal position with them. Moreover, solidarity is the virtue of social charity, friendship, and responsible sharing whereby we recognize our interdependence on others and that we are all brothers and sisters of one family under a loving Father despite from. For example, Archbishop Romero made it a point to console and comfort those who mourned for their dead, while at the same time working to overcome the political, social, and economic situations that led to their murders. In viewing the film, questions may arise about why the peasant farmers were so poor. The lack of commitment to the common good of its citizenry by the government and the oligarchy which controlled it was a primary reason. The common good concerns our life together. Achieving the common good requires each individual to protect the welfare of every other individual. Practically, this entails three essential elements: respect for the person, social well-being and development, and peace. As he experienced shouting to the man who's torturing his co-priest saying, "we all are just human beings, please stop it!". Based on the execution made by Archbishop Romero in his pastoral ministry, everyone should treat anyone equally because in the eye of God we are all fair and equal.

Furthermore, the movie deals with conflict against the government, between the wealth and poor people. Archbishop Oscar Romero had not cared much for the corrupt government until his friends, priests, and the innocent people were killed. With that, it is one of the challenges of the movie in the light of the Catholic teaching as Christian Carolinian. The struggles between the rich who control the wealth, the government, and the armed forces; and the poor, some of whom have gone underground and taken up arms to yield revolutionary war against the government they charge with abuse of power and denial of human rights. It should be stop. Everybody have the freedom to live life and let God take it since he is the creator, and Father Romero calls us to liberate our brothers and sisters not in death but in life. The poor and innocent people are getting no support from the government or the rich people. When people speak up about this situation and

asking their rights they end up getting killed. That is why he make an appeal to the fired arms people that we all are human beings, that we are like sisters and brothers, it is like killing your own sister or brother when you kill someone because the Bible tells us “thou shalt not kill”, that each of us is divinely impelled to cherish life, and no soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God. Thus, the movie calls us to stand with the poor in our cultures. He said that he is a shepherd and who with his people who has begun a truth and faith requires to immerse ourselves from the earth. We must live in solidarity and not focus on our own piety but be willing to have the heart of Christ change us. We must allow for the historical example of God working in the world to be a force in our lives. Romero once said, “Unfortunately, brothers and sisters, we are a product of a spiritualized, individualistic education. We are taught: try to save your soul and don’t worry about the rest. We told those who suffered: be patient, heaven will follow, hang on. No, that’s not right, that’s not salvation!”.

Proof of Viewing:



Ad De Gloriam!

(To God be the Glory)