Modern-Day Martyrs: Redemptive Love
in Action

Introduction

Learning about modern-day martyrs―people who have witnessed to the importance of their beliefs by enduring great personal suffering―will lead to a deeper understanding of Jesus’ suffering and death as acts of redemptive love.

Purposes

* to learn about the lives of several modern-day martyrs (one in-depth)
* to draw connections between the lives (and, in many cases, deaths) of these people and the life and death of Jesus
* to explore what the witness of martyrs, from the time of Jesus to the present, might teach us about our own lives, values, and priorities

Instructions

**1.** Together with a partner, you will research one of the following online:

* Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera (Guatemala)
* Fr. Stanley Rother (Guatemala)
* Sr. Dorothy Stang (Brazil)
* Sr. Alicia Domon (Argentina)
* Archbishop Oscar Romero (El Salvador)
* Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (United States)
* Saint Maximilian Kolbe (Poland)
* Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany)
* Blessed Damien de Veuster (Hawaii)
* Nelson Mandela (South Africa)
* Sr. Maura Clarke, Sr. Dorothy Kazel, Sr. Ita Ford, and Jean Donovan (combined; El Salvador)
* Tenzin Gyatso (the Dalai Lama; Tibet)
* Mahatma Gandhi (India)
* Bishop Carlos Belo (East Timor)
* The Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador, Julia Elba Ramos, and Celina Meredith Ramos (combined)
* Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma)

**2.** You will be given 30 to 40 minutes to conduct your research. Focus on the following:

* basic information about your person, including the place and context in which she or lived, worked, and died
* the beliefs to which this person was faithful, despite the risk of suffering and death (Were they religious beliefs? political beliefs? something else?)
* what, specifically, this person suffered in order to remain faithful to those beliefs
* similarities between this person’s story and the story of Jesus’ suffering and death

**3.** Take some notes on these points so you can share what you have learned about your person with
the whole class.