

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)
- Saint 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 the 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.

