

Modern-Day Martyrs: Redemptive Love in Action

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 an act of redemptive love.

Purpose of the Activity

1. To learn about the lives of several modern-day martyrs (one in depth)
2. To draw connections between the lives (and, in many cases, deaths) of these people and the life and death of Jesus
3. 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

Directions

1. Together with a partner, you will be assigned one of the following people or groups to research 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. (USA)
 - Saint Maximilian Kolbe (Poland)
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany)
 - Saint Damien De Veuster and/or Saint Marianne Cope (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; El Salvador)
 - Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma)



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2. Focus your research on the following:

- Basic information about the martyr(s), including the place and context in which she, he, or they lived, worked, and died
- The beliefs to which the martyr(s) was/were faithful, despite the risk of suffering and death (Were they religious beliefs? political beliefs? something else?)
- What, specifically, the martyr(s) suffered in order to remain faithful to those beliefs
- Similarities between the story of the martyr(s) and the story of Jesus' suffering and death

3. Organize your notes on these points so that you can share what you have learned about the martyr(s) with the whole class.

