



Office of the Vice President for Mission

TO: The Gonzaga Community
FROM: Frank Case, S.J.
SUBJ: Moment for Mission
DATE: November 11, 2014

The UCA Jesuit Martyrs

This weekend in San Salvador a large number of our Ignatian/Jesuit family will be gathering to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the murders of six Jesuits, their cook, and her daughter. The Jesuits were professors in the *Universidad de Centro America* (UCA) and lived in a small Jesuit community residence on campus. A troop of soldiers of the El Salvadoran army entered their residence during the night, forcefully dragged the residents out to the front yard and shot them. Several years earlier the army had executed Archbishop Oscar Romero, shooting him while he was celebrating Mass in a small rural chapel. A few years after Romero's death the army also executed four U.S. churchwomen, members of religious congregations. The remembrances of these lives will serve as the inspiration of the events this weekend at UCA.

The UCA Jesuits, in their deaths as in their lives, had a profound influence on the Society of Jesus, ratifying in their day the Society's growing commitment to the promotion of justice as an integral dimension of our service of faith. Over the years our understanding of the justice we are to promote has developed from a rather secular sense of justice, at times even promoted by violent means, to a more spiritually based sense of the justice of the Kingdom that Christ came to proclaim, where all people are invited into a loving community. In more recent years this justice has broadened or deepened to a commitment to promote the reconciliation of relationships of people with God, of people with one another, and of people with creation. These values are now an integral dimension of our mission here at Gonzaga.

We have much for which to be grateful to these Jesuit martyrs. We do them no greater honor than to carry on the mission for which they gave their lives.