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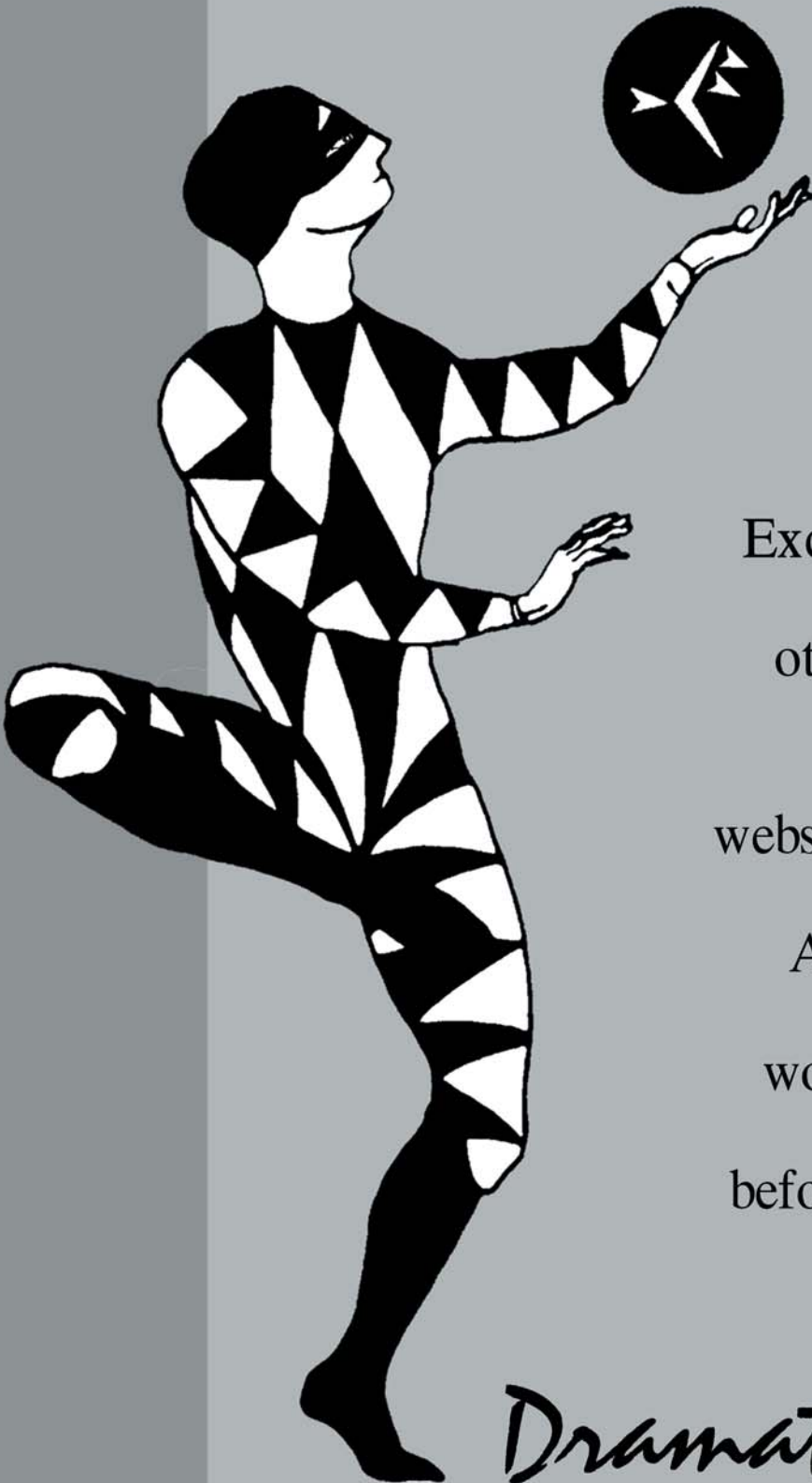
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Dramatic Publishing



The Fifth Sun

(Ensemble Version)

by
NICHOLAS A. PATRICCA

Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(THE FIFTH SUN—Ensemble Version)

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

THE FIFTH SUN presents the life of Oscar Arnulfo Romero from the time of his installation as Archbishop of San Salvador (February 22, 1977) to the day of his assassination (March 24, 1980). It is a dramatic portrait of a human being struggling to cure the ills destroying his people. Rarely does it happen that a person becomes a true hero in the ancient and proper sense of that word, a person who suffers for the well-being of a people. Oscar Romero is one of those few, and that is why I wanted to tell his story.

In the spirit of original tragedy, THE FIFTH SUN is a tomb/ritual play that presents the suffering of the hero for the contemplation of the community. It is synthetically constructed, employing elements of Mesoamerican temple dramas, European medieval mystery plays, and tomb rituals of the ancient Near East to tell a contemporary story in a manner appropriate both to the subject matter and to contemporary drama.

The title comes from the Mayan/Nahuan story of Nanautzin, son of the Lord of the Universe, who voluntarily sacrifices himself for the well-being of all creation. Through this sacrifice Nanautzin becomes the Fifth Sun, the sun that gives light and life to our present world. The Franciscan missionaries, exploiting the obvious analogy here, identified Jesus as the Fifth Sun, thus facilitating the symbiotic absorption of Catholic myth and ritual into Indian culture. To this day, each religion lives through the other.

Although THE FIFTH SUN is based on real events and real people, it is a work of poetic fiction. Every character and every event has been dramatically constructed to reveal Romero and his predicament as I, the playwright, understand them. It is important to me, however, that my artistic feeling for and construction of the characters of Oscar Romero and Rutilio Grande and the other principles involved has been confirmed time and again by those who knew them well.

All the words of this play are my own, except for those of Romero's last sermon which is constructed from his sermon of March 23, 1980 and for those of the congressional hearing which is constructed from several interviews he gave shortly before his assassination.

THE FIFTH SUN is one of three scripts I am submitting for a N.E.A. fellowship in playwrighting in FY 1991. All three scripts have been chosen because they show the kind of theatre I have been making, am making, and want to make. Thank you for your attention.

SCRIPT HISTORY

The professional premiere of the ensemble version of THE FIFTH SUN was given at Latino Chicago Theater, Chicago, Illinois, on March 24, 1988, through Sunday, June 26, 1988, with the following cast: OSCAR ROMERO, Frank Davila; ANNE DUNN, Margret Mazon; HECTOR NAVAREZ, Mike Ramirez; RUTILIO GRANDE/THE COLONEL, Noe Cuellar; NUNCIO, Felipe Camacho; KUKULCAN, Mark J. Fraire; AHPUCH, Laura Ceron; CHAC, Edward Torres; GHANAN, Maricela Ochoa; CHILD, Tony Ramirez. This production was designed by Joel Klaff and directed by Juan Ramirez, artistic director of Latino Chicago Theater Company. This ensemble production was given by invitation at the fourteenth annual Latin American Theatre Festival, TENAZ, in San Antonio, Texas, in August of 1988.

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE STAGING AREA is the ruins of an ancient temple interladen with the signs of destruction from the contemporary civil war. Catholic and Mayan religious symbols should be mingled together as they are in the lives of the people. The set should have a quality that transcends time and space, and it should facilitate the rapid, iconographic transitions required by the script.

THE FIFTH SUN is constructed to be performed with music and dance. The Guardians should play primitive musical instruments, dance, and sing ritual chant to enhance and to develop the dramatic presentation. In addition, a chorus of musicians and dancers might be used to great effect. It is recommended that electronic and taped music be kept to a minimum, if used at all. Mayan music and dance are very different from Latin music and dance: the qualities of each should not be confused and should be properly integrated into the production.

PERSONAE

THE FOUR GUARDIANS, Kukulcan, Ahpuch, Chac, and Ghanan are the four compass points or Suns of the Mayan/Nahuan cosmos. They function as the elemental forces and protectors of the Indian world and of all the people who inhabit the land of El Salvador. The Fifth Sun, the Sun of the people, stands at the center of the cosmic grid. Each Guardian has a distinctive mask/headdress which represents his special function in creation. Each is robed and painted in his cosmic color: Ahpuch (white), Ghanan (red), Chac (blue), Kukulcan (black). If the director chooses to pair some of the people of El Salvador with the Guardians, these people should reflect the colors of the Guardian to which they are joined. Gold is reserved for the Fifth Sun.

THE FIFTH SUN/notes

OSCAR ROMERO is a native Salvadoran man in his sixties and appears dressed in a plain black roman cassock with modest purple piping. He wears a plain wooden crucifix around his neck and black rimmed glasses. He is an earthy man with a teasing sense of humor. He is a "mestizo," a Salvadoran of mixed Spanish and Indian blood. Romero moved to a position of "solidarity" with the poor" from a traditionalist, even pietistic, spirituality. He was judged to be a weak and sickly man by all sides prior to his installation. To the astonishment of all, he grew physically and emotionally stronger as the burdens of his office grew greater.

ANNE DUNN is a native of the USA, a woman in her late thirties and appears dressed in proper and neat civilian clothes. She is a highly intelligent and competent person, with a strong drive to succeed. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago and worked with the AFL/CIO union organizing and land reform projects in El Salvador before joining the Archdiocesan staff. Anne is a pragmatist and a questioning believer.

HECTOR NAVAREZ is a native born Salvadoran man in his late twenties and appears in standard working class clothes. He is of Indian blood, recently ordained, and is passionately committed to making the Catholic church a revolutionary force on the side of the poor.

RUTILIO GRANDE is a native born Salvadoran man in his fifties and appears dressed in a plain black Jesuit cassock or in black street pants with a white shirt. A seminary professor for twenty years, he left his "ivory tower" to become pastor of Aguilares and learn about God from the life of the poor. In Aguilares, Fr. Grande established the first "base community" in El Salvador. Along with his companions, Nelson and Manuel, he was assassinated three weeks after the massacre in Plaza Libertad. Fr. Grande's death was the first of the many assassinations of nuns, priests, and religious lay workers that continue to this day. Fr. Grande was a close friend of Monsenor Romero. His death marked the beginning of Romero's transformation.

THE NUNCIO is a Spaniard in his early seventies and appears dressed in an ornate Roman cassock with red sash and piping, red skull cap, and a gold crucifix around his neck. He is a career diplomat.

THE COLONEL is a native Salvadoran man in his early forties, always impeccably dressed. He is a member of the upper class and fanatically dedicated to preserving the status quo.

THE ASSASSIN is a White Warrior of Christ and appears drssed in a business suit with a white hood over his head and a USA type military rifle in his hands.

GLOSSARY

AHPUCH: (Ah-pooch) god of death, north.

CHAC: god of rain, south.

GHANAN: (Ga-nahn) god of maize or cultivation, east.

KUKULCAN: (Coo-cool-cahn) god of life, west.

BACAB BALAM: (Ba-cahb Ba-lahm) four gods of the cosmic grid

NANAUTZIN: (Na-now-tseen) son of the lord of creation who willingly sacrifices himself to become the fifth sun, the sun of our world.

(All the above Mayan words are accented on the last syllable; the vowel "a" is sounded like the broad "a" in "father.")

THE MATANZA: "the massacre." In 1932, 30,000 Indians and peasants were slaughtered, allegedly to thwart a communist insurrection against the landowners. This massacre virtually wiped out Indian life in El Salvador.

MEDELLIN CONFERENCE: In 1968 the Latin American Bishops Conference met in Medellin, Columbia and declared the Catholic Church to be on the side of the poor. At this same conference, Pope Paul VI proclaimed the right of a people to employ the force of arms to overthrow "an evident and prolonged tyranny."

ORDEN: a paramilitary force organized in the '60's to police the campesinos of the El Salvadoran countryside. The members of ORDEN were so brutal that this organization was officially suppressed after the coup of 1979.

FPL: Popular Liberation Forces, the most powerful of the three main guerilla groups. One of its tactics was to forcefully oppose ORDEN in the countryside and union-busters in the cities.

PLAZA LIBERTAD MASSACRE: In 1977, five days after the installation of Monsenor Romero, thousands marched to Plaza Libertad to protest the fraudulent election of General Romero (no relation to the Monsenor). Several hundred demonstrators were killed when the police and army opened fire on them. Two thousand took refuge in Rosario Church and were saved through the intervention of Monsenor Chavez, the retired Archbishop of San Salvador.

THE FIFTH SUN/notes

WHITE WARRIORS: a vigilante group of elite military personnel who vowed to kill all Jesuits in El Salvador and all foreign or "Marxist" religious workers.

BASE COMMUNITIES: (comunidades de base) a grass roots movement among the Catholic poor based on the pedagogy of the oppressed by Paulo Freire. This movement began in Brazil where there are currently 70,000 such communities. The members of these communities teach themselves to read and write and to meet their own "basic" needs without having to rely on corrupt or inefficient social institutions.

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CRY OF THE PEOPLE. Penny Lernoux. Doubleday, Garden City, NY. 1980.

SALVADOR WITNESS: The Life and Calling of Jean Donovan. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY. 1984

WEAKNESS AND DECEIT: U.S. Policy and El Salvador. Raymond Bonner. Times Books, New York, NY. 1984.

THE FIFTH SUN is dedicated to my grandparents, and to all those who work the land with their own hands.

THE FIFTH SUN/notes

THE FIFTH SUN

A Play in Two Acts

for 13 actors or more (8 men and 5 women) *

CHARACTERS

OSCAR ROMERO	Archbishop of San Salvador
ANNE DUNN	a Mercy sister from the USA
HECTOR NAVAREZ	a diocesan priest of San Salvador
RUTILIO GRANDE	a Jesuit priest from El Salvador
THE NUNCIO	an archbishop, papal ambassador to Central America
THE COLONEL	an officer in the El Salvadoran special forces
KUKULCAN	the Chief Priest and the Lord of Life
AHPUCH	the Lord of Death
CHAC	the Lord of Rain
GHANAN	the Lord of Cultivation
PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR*	
THE BISHOPS*	

SETTING: El Salvador

TIME: The Present (as Remembered Time)

* The first professional production of THE FIFTH SUN employed eight actors to perform all the roles. (Please see the production notes of the first published version.) This new ensemble version of the play is constructed to employ larger casts. Accordingly, in this version, the Four GUARDIANS and their respective counterparts in the PEOPLE are not doubled with other roles. The GUARDIANS may be male or female, again at the discretion of the director and according to the desired qualities of the production.

CHRONOLOGY

- February 3, 1977 Monsenor Luis Chavez y Gonzalez resigns as Archbishop of San Salvador.
- February 20, 1977 General Carlos Humberto Romero elected president in an election judged fraudulent by most observers.
- February 22, 1977 Monsenor Oscar Arnulfo Romero installed as Archbishop of San Salvador.
- February 24, 1977 Colonel Ernesto Claramount, a retired cavalry officer, begins a demonstration/vigil in Plaza Libertad to protest the massive fraud by the government in the general elections.
- February 27, 1977 The army opens fire on the demonstrators in Plaza Libertad, killing or arresting (never to be seen again) between 80 and 300 people. Around 2,000 people seek sanctuary in Rosario Church which adjoins the square. Only the intervention of Monsenor Chavez saves them from the slaughter.
- March 12, 1977 Rutilio Grande, S.J., and his two companions, Nelson and Manuel, are assassinated on their way to El Paisnal, a mission parish in the mountains. Although many priests had been arrested and tortured prior to Fr. Grande's death, this is the first time a priest or a religious has been murdered in El Salvador. This assassination of a religious is the first of many which continue to this day.
- March 14, 1977 Monsenor Romero excommunicates those responsible for the murder of Fr. Grande and his companions and he informs the out-going President Arturo Molina that the Church will not co-operate with the government until it brings the murderers to justice.
- March 26, 1977 Monsenor Romero goes to Rome to explain personally to the Pope (Paul VI) and to the Curia his actions in response to the murder of Fr. Rutilio Grande. This trip was made necessary because of the opposition of the Papal Nuncio who had denounced Romero's conduct.
- May 11, 1977 Four White Warriors murder Fr. Alfonso Navarro and his fifteen year old companion, Luis Torres.
- May 17, 1977 The first massacre of Aguilares takes place. Over fifty peasants are killed by the army. Three Jesuit priests are arrested and expelled.
- May 18, 1977 Monsenor Romero tries to go to Aguilares

but the National Guard will not let him through. The National Guard desecrates the village church.

- June 19, 1977 Monsenor Romero goes to Aguilares to celebrate the restoration of the parish church and to install the new pastor.
- June 21, 1977 The White Warriors warn all Jesuists to leave El Salvador within 30 days, after which they and their institutions would become "military targets."
- July 1, 1977 Monsenor Romero refuses to attend the inauguration of the new president General Carlos Humberto Romero (no relation).
- July 11 - 13 1977 The El Salvadoran Bishops meet as a group to discuss policy issues. In general, the Bishops, except for one, and the Nuncio disagree with Romero's policies and actions.
- July 21, 1977 The deadline the White Warriors had given the Jesuists to leave El Salvador "or else."
- United States House Sub-Committee on International Organizations holds hearings on religious persecutions in El Salvador.
- August 10, 1977 Monsenor Romero meets with President Romero to "reach an understanding." This effort fails.
- August 15, 1977 Monsenor Romero's birthday. The official opening of the Chancery "snack bar" which he championed.
- August 21, 1977 Monsenor Romero visits Aguilares again to consecrate the new tabernacle which had been desecrated by the National Guard.
- August 26, 1977 National Guard and Treasury Police attack catechists in the rural areas, killing and kidnapping them. Romero visits the attacked villages and the families of those killed or "disappeared."
- October 1977 Bishop Revelo, El Salvador's delegate to Bishops Synod in Rome, charges that the best and brightest rural catechists are marxists or under marxist influence. Monsenor Romero writes Revelo and the Nuncio letters to protest this charge.
- November 1977 La Opinion and La Prensa Grafica print many articles accusing Romero of being a marxist and

of supporting violence. In general, the press of El Salvador carry many articles and advertisements seeking to discredit Romero.

- December 1, 1977 Monsenor Romero says mass for the mothers of the thousands of "disappeared" persons. He tells them that to denounce injustice is not meddling in politics, but an act of faith against sin.
- January 1978 Monsenor Romero holds a three day conference on peace and justice. The clergy and religious of the Archdiocese release a statement announcing their support of Romero to counter the opposition of the Nuncio and the Bishops (except for Bishop Rivera y Damas, Romero's lone supporter).
- February 14, 1978 Georgetown University bestows an honorary degree on Romero for his work for peace and human rights.
- March 1978 300 Clergy and religious sign a letter which censures the Nuncio's (Emmanuele Gerada) conduct.
- April 1978 Bishops Aparicio, Barrera, Alvarez, and Revelo publish a letter in support of the Nuncio. Aparicio publicly accuses Romero of "dividing and confusing" the nation.
- March/April ORDEN, a para-military organization based in the countryside, launches a series of attacks on peasant organizations. Romero offers refugee peasants sanctuary in the Chancery and in the Seminary for which he is censured by some of the Bishops.
- April 30 1978 Romero denounces the judiciary of El Salvador for not protecting human rights and for not bringing to justice those responsible for the criminal activities of the security forces.
- May 1978 Romero again ordered to Rome to explain himself. He writes a long report to Cardinal Biaggi before going to Rome.
- June 1978 Romero goes to Rome, meets with Biaggi and Pope Paul VI. The Pope continues to support Romero over the opposition of the Curia and the Nuncio.
- August 1978 Romero issues a pastoral letter recognizing the right of peasants to organize and seek their rights. This letter also recognizes the right of a people to use force in protecting themselves against "an evident and prolonged tyranny that

seriously attacks the fundamental rights of the person and dangerously harms the common good..."

- August 6, 1978 Pope Paul VI dies suddenly. The Nuncio, Cardinal Casariego of Guatemala, and President Romero seek to have Monsenor Romero removed from office.
- September 1978 John Paul I dies "mysteriously."
- October 16, 1978 John Paul II becomes pope.
- November 1978 Monsenor Romero nominated by British Parliament for the Nobel Peace Prize.
- November 28, 1978 Fr. Ernesto "Neto" Barrera, a young priest who worked with labor unions, is killed along with four members of the FPL in a shoot-out with security forces.
- December 1978 Romero decides to give Fr. Barrera a priestly burial even though there is evidence he was a member of the FPL.
- December 1978 Bishop Antonio Quarracino of Avellaneda, Argentina, is appointed Apostolic Visitor to San Salvador and investigates Monsenor Romero. He recommends to Rome that an Apostolic Administrator be named to rule the Archdiocese, leaving Romero only in charge of strictly religious duties.
- January 20, 1979 Fr. Octavio Ortiz, and four young men, are killed by the police who attack some thirty young people on retreat at the diocesan retreat center. The government maintained this retreat was a clandestine meeting of subversives. In his homily, Romero calls the government's account of this incident "a lie from beginning to end."
- January 22, 1979 Monsenor Romero goes to the Latin American Bishops Conference in Puebla, Mexico. The Pope had appointed him an extraordinary delegate to this conference to represent the comunidades de base of all Latin America. The El Salvadoran Bishops had refused to elect him to be their representative to this conference.
- April/May 1979 Romero goes to Rome again where Pope John Paul informs him that Bishop Quarracino had re-

commended that an Apostolic Administrator be named to govern the Archdiocese of San Salvador. In Rome, Romero also discovers a document sent to Rome by Bishops Aparicio, Alvarez, Barrera, and Revelo in which they accuse Romero of being a marxist and Rutilio Grande of being a leftist terrorist.

- May 1, 1979 The government illegally arrests five leaders of an opposition labor party. Members of the party occupy the Cathedral to protest these arrests.
- May 8, 1979 Security forces open fire on a small group of demonstrators in front of the Cathedral. 25 are killed, seventy are wounded. This event was recorded by international TV crews which were covering the demonstration.
- May 22, 1979 Security forces open fire on another small group of demonstrators, killing 14.
- June 20, 1979 The White Warriors kill Fr. Rafael Palacios.
- July 19, 1979 The Sandinistas overthrow Somoza in Nicaragua. Romero publicly expresses his joy over Somoza's ouster.
- July 22, 1979 In his homily, Romero speaks of the proper role of Christians in revolution and social change, using Nicaragua as an example.
- August 6, 1979 Romero issues his fourth pastoral letter in which he again recognizes the right of a people to use force when there is no other remedy. He also distinguishes between marxism as an ideology which he condemns and marxism as a tool of social and economic analysis which ought to be judged by its demonstrated merits. Further, he repeats that the Church equally condemns the sins of liberal capitalism as well as those of marxism. He says: "The fear of marxism keeps many from confronting the oppressive reality of liberal capitalism."
- September 1979 Romero receives a crude death threat from the White Warriors. He sends the threat to the Minister of Defense. Several churches are occupied by various popular organizations seeking justice.
- October 7, 1979 Romero's friend, Appolinario Serrano, a peasant leader, is assassinated along with several other peasants. Romero is secretly approached by a group of reform-minded colonels who seek his

support and advice concerning their plot to oust General Romero. Romero offers advice but refuses to endorse a coup.

October 14, 1979 In his Sunday homily which is always broadcast throughout El Salvador via the Archdiocesan radio station YSAX, Romero lists the deeds of General Romero's government, concluding: "This government has emptied the prisons of political prisoners only to fill the cemeteries with the dead."

October 15, 1979 With U.S. support, the coup against General Romero is successful. The reform-minded colonels set-up a military/civilian junta to run the country. This junta, on paper, represents the first break in military rule of El Salvador since 1932.

Many observers consider this coup to be the most important event in the modern history of El Salvador. They see it as the first genuine opportunity for a truly democratic, coalition government.

November 1979 During the three weeks following the coup, the progressive military officers swiftly lost control of their own coup to the very generals they had sought to remove. Thus, their efforts to eliminate corruption, control the death squads, and establish a civilian government were entirely defeated. In fact, more innocent civilians were killed under this civilian government than under the military government of General Romero.

December 19, 1979 Leftist militants seize the Chancery and other Archdiocesan offices to protest Romero's support of the Junta.

December 28, 1979 The civilian members of the Junta resign to protest the murder and repression of workers, peasants, and religious. The Christian Democrats decide to form a new junta with the military.

January 1980 The Christian Democrats try to organize a new government. They fail to attract capable civilian leaders and they fail to get the military to keep its promises concerning reform and control of the death squads.

January 6, 1980 In his Sunday homily, Romero praises those civilians who resigned from the Junta and asks the military members to resign as well, especially Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia who was closely

identified with the death squads.

- January , 1980 For the first time, the various groups and organizations opposed to government repression united in a broad coalition which included Christian democrats as well as communists. Also, two of the three armed resistance groups agree to join forces.
- January 13 and 20 Romero analyzes the political options for El Salvador in his Sunday homilies. He sees little hope in the military or in the Oligarchy. He praises the efforts of those popular organizations seeking to create unity among the various groups of the left. He concludes his analysis with an appeal to all groups to avoid civil war and to achieve justice.
- January 22, 1980 To commemorate the anniversary of the peasant uprising of 1932 in which 30,000 Indians and campesinos were massacred, and to celebrate the growing unity among the various popular organizations, 200,000 marched to Plaza Libertad where once again they were attacked. 24 were killed and 120 wounded.
- January 30, 1980 Romero again goes to Rome to explain his actions personally to John Paul II. Romero feels that John Paul understands and approves of his handling of the situation.
- February 2, 1980 Romero makes a major address at Louvain University in which he speaks on the political implications of the Catholic faith and the duty of the Church to stand in solidarity with the poor.
- February 17, 1980 During his Sunday homily, Romero denounces the criminal elements of the military, calls upon the Christian Democrats to leave the government, and reads a letter he has drafted to President Carter asking him to stop all aid to El Salvador and to end all economic and diplomatic intervention in El Salvador and to "respect the legitimate self-determination of our people."
- March 3, 1980 Christian Democrats resign from the government. A third Junta is formed.
- March 6, 1980 The new Junta announces a new land reform program which is opposed by the peasants. The new Junta declares a state of seige and attacks all peasant organizations and cooperatives.

- March 1980 The White Warriors begin a massive campaign against Romero and the clergy who support the peasants. Roberto D'Aubuisson, the charismatic and fanatic leader of the Ultra-Rightist ARENA party, goes on national TV to deliver a harranguue against Romero. He lectures a portrait of Romero whom he accuses of being a marxist and an agent of the devil. Many observers link D'Aubuisson to the murder of Romero. There are witnesses who maintain that he and his associates drew straws for the honor of assassinating Romero.
- March 23, 1980 In his Sunday homily, Romero denounces the government's land reform program which the people resist with their blood and calls upon the National Guard and the other security forces to cease using their weapons against their own people.
- March 24, 1980 Romero is assassinated while saying mass for the Carmelite nuns in the chapel in the hospital where he lives. Witnesses say he saw the assassin just before he shot him and that he forgave him.
- March 30, 1980 80,000 people defy the government and attend Romero's funeral. The security forces open fire on the people, killing 40 and wounding hundreds.
- April 2, 1980 Despite Romero's letter and his assassination, both President Carter and the U.S. Congress approve more military aid to El Salvador.
- April 8, 1980 Most of the popular organizations unite to form a united political opposition to the government. It is called the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and includes communists as well as Christian Democrats, small businessmen as well teachers and industrial workers.
- May 4, 1980 600 peasants, mostly women and children, are massacred by Salvadoran and Honduran troops as they try to cross the Sumpul River to escape marauding government troops indiscriminately killing all peasants. The brutality of this massacre shocks many hard-bitten, seasoned reporters.
- June 24, 1980 Army occupies the National University, killing 50. The University never re-opens.
- August 12, 1980 Government bombs a section of San Salvador, killing 200.
- September 1980 U.S. increases military aid to El Salvador.

- October 1980 Army increases its war against the peasants. Archbishop Rivera y Damas, Romero's successor, denounces this "war of extermination" against the people.
- November 11, 1980 The U.S. Bishops Catholic Conference publicly opposes military aid to El Salvador.
- November 19, 1980 The army attacks the Archdiocesan newspaper offices and the radio station.
- November 27, 1980 The army invades a Jesuit High School and arrests six members of the FDR Executive Committee who were meeting with Archdiocesan officials at their request. All six were tortured, then murdered.
- December 4, 1980 The bodies of four U.S. women, three nuns and one lay woman, are found. They had been raped, strangled, and shot by government security forces.
- December 6, 1980 Archbishop Rivera asks the U.S. to stop all military aid to El Salvador, rejects the U.S. idea that the military junta represents the responsible political center. He says the junta represents the ultra-right and is responsible for the killings and the repression.

Prepared by Nicholas A. Patricca for all those involved in the Victory Gardens production of THE FIFTH SUN.

Recommended reading:

WEAKNESS AND DECEIT by Raymond Bonner, correspondent for the New York Times. NY TIMES BOOKS, New York, 1984

THE WORD REMAINS: A LIFE OF OSCAR ROMERO by James R. Brockman, ORBIS BOOKS, Maryknoll, New York, 1982

ARCHBISHOP ROMERO'S

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

February 18, 1980

In the last few days, news has appeared in the national press that worries me greatly. According to the reports your government is studying the possibility of economic and military support and assistance to the present junta government.

Because you are a Christian and because you have shown that you want to defend human rights, I venture to set forth for you my pastoral point of view concerning this news and to make a request.

I am very worried by the news that the government of the United States is studying a form of abetting the arming of El Salvador by sending military teams and advisors to "train three Salvadoran battalions in logistics, communications and intelligence." If this information from the newspapers is correct, the contribution of your government, instead of promoting greater justice and peace in El Salvador, will without doubt sharpen the injustice and repression against the organizations of the people who repeatedly have been struggling to gain respect for their most fundamental human rights.

The present junta government and above all the armed forces and security forces unfortunately have not demonstrated their capacity to resolve, in political and structural practice, the grave national problems. In general they have only reverted to repressive violence, producing a total of deaths and injuries much greater than in the recent military regimes whose systematic violation of

human rights was denounced by the Inter-American Committee on Human Rights.

The brutal form in which the security forces recently attacked and assassinated the occupiers of the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Party in spite of what appears to be the lack of authorization for this operation from the junta government and the party is an indication that the junta and the party do not govern the country, but that political power is in the hands of the unscrupulous military who only know how to repress the people and promote the interests of the Salvadoran oligarchy.

If it is true that last November "a group of six Americans were in El Salvador...providing \$200,000 in gas masks and flak jackets and instructing about their use against demonstrators," you yourself should be informed that it is evident since then that the security forces, with better personal protection and efficiency, have repressed the people even more violently using lethal weapons.

For this reason, given that as a Salvadoran and as archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Salvador I have an obligation to see that faith and justice reign in my country, I ask you, if you truly want to defend human rights, to prohibit the giving of this military aid to the Salvadoran government. Guarantee that your government will not intervene directly or indirectly with military, economic, diplomatic or other pressures to determine the destiny of the Salvadoran people.

In these moments we are living through a grave economic and political crisis in our country, but it is certain that it is increasingly the people who are awakening and organizing and have begun to prepare themselves to manage and be responsible for the future of El Salvador. Only they are capable of overcoming the crisis.

It would be unjust and deplorable if the intrusion of foreign powers were to frustrate the Salvadoran people, were to repress them and block their autonomous decisions about the economic and political path that our country ought to follow. It would violate a right which we Latin American bishops meeting in Puebla publicly recognized when we said: "The legitimate self-determination of our people that permits them to organize according to their own genius and the march of their history and to cooperate in a new international order."

I hope that your religious sentiments and your feelings for the defense of human rights will move you to accept my petition, avoiding by this action worse bloodshed in this suffering country.

THE FIFTH SUN

ACT I

SCENE ONE

(i)

A SUNDAY MARKET IN SAN SALVADOR. THE PRESENT.

THE PEOPLE FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE SURROUNDING SAN SALVADOR ARE PREPARING THEIR WARES AND PRODUCE. ONE WOMAN IS GRINDING CORN; ANOTHER IS MAKING THE DOUGH INTO TORTILLAS; ANOTHER IS COOKING THE TORTILLAS ON A COMAL. THE MARKET SCENE GRADUALLY DEVELOPS.

WOMAN #1

We grind maiz with a metate, metlatl in the tongue of our ancestors. We make the metate and the pestle from the lava of Izalco. We grind the maiz with the strength of our arms.

WOMAN #2

We form the dough into many different things, but mostly we use our fingers and hands, especially the palms of our hands, to make tortillas with it.

WOMAN #3

We cook the tortillas over a fire on a comal. We make the comal from the red clay at the base of Izalco. The tortilla is our bread. It is life.

MAN #1

I come to the city to sell whatever I can because I need money. I need money because my family is hungry and my land was taken from me, for the coffee plantation. The coffee beans like to grow on the sides of Izalco. That's where my land is. I told them: this is my land. They said: where are your papers? My father gave me this land, and his father before him. The soldiers came. They don't need papers, they have guns.

MAN #2

I grow what corn I can on the steep slopes of the volcano, very high up. It's so high up the plantation owners haven't tried to steal it from me yet. Ghanan, the great god of corn, taught the corn how to grow proud and tall, but I've had to teach it to grow sideways, from the side of the mountain, straight out. Otherwise, my family would starve.

AS THE MARKET SCENE DEVELOPS, VOICES OF THE PEOPLE ARE HEARD (- INDICATES CHANGE OF VOICE, SUBJECT TO THE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION):

- too many people
- too many poor people
- too many peasants
- that is the problem
- that is what the government says
- that is what the experts from the United States say
- the problem is: there are too many poor people in El Salvador

Man #3

El Salvador del Mundo, the Savior of the World. You can see him there with his hands stretched out. Christ on the ball. That's what the gringos call him. Our ancestors called this land, Cuzcatlan, land of riches.

THE VOICES:

- El Salvador: the smallest and most densely populated country in Latin America
- El Salvador: fourteen families control 60 percent of the land
- El Salvador: 45 percent of the population has no drinking water
- El Salvador: 70 percent of the children under five are malnourished

WOMAN #1

We used to make our own metate, like our ancestors, but now we must buy them.

WOMAN #3

We used to make our own comals, like our ancestors, but now they're made in New Jersey, from iron, not from the clay of our land.

WOMAN #2

The corn comes from Iowa and Illinois.

MAN #2

I don't have a watch. I can tell time by the position and color of the sun, but I'm not always exact. If you make a mistake, they are allowed to kill you. Your body rots where it falls until the curfew ends. I don't know the sun like my ancestors. They were exact.

THE VOICES:

- since March 24, 1980
- 30,000 people have disappeared
- 70,000 people have been killed
- mostly women and children
- mostly children under the age of 12

WOMAN #1

My mother taught me each human heart is a star like our sun: it can give life to the world. Why, then, is there so much darkness?

GUNFIRE. ALL SCATTER. CEREMONIAL DRUM BEATS OR OTHER APPROPRIATE SOUNDS TO INDICATE THE GODS.

THE GUARDIANS SPEAK FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPASS POINTS (OF THE THEATER OR OF THE STAGE): CHAC, FROM THE SOUTH; GHANAN, FROM THE EAST; AHPUCH, FROM THE NORTH; KUKULCAN, FROM THE WEST.

CHAC

Where there was neither heaven nor earth
The Word declared itself.

GHANAN

The Word unfolded itself, all beauty and grace.
And all the vastness of eternity shuddered.

AHPUCH

And the Word asked its children:
Which one of you will light this world
and give it life, for now it stands
In cold and darkness.

KUKULKAN

And all were afraid
For each knew the price.

AHPUCH

The Word asked again:
Which one of you will give light to the world?
Which one of you will give the world the gift of life?

THE CEREMONIAL DRUMS BEAT. THEN THE CHANTING OF DEMONSTRATORS IS HEARD.

(ii)

ROMERO ENTERS ALONE. HE HAS JUST BEEN INSTALLED AS THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR BY THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO. HE IS STILL PARTIALLY ATTIRED IN THE VESTMENTS FROM THIS CEREMONY. HE HEARS THE CHANTING OF THE DEMONSTRATORS IN THE STREET PROTESTING THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE RECENT ELECTION. HE GOES TO THE WINDOW, LOOKS OUT UPON THEM, STARTS TO PRAY. ENTER THE NUNCIO IN REGULAR ATTIRE.

THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE THE CHANTING OF THE DEMONSTRATORS PRESSES UPON ROMERO.

NUNCIO

(RESPONDING TO THE DEMONSTRATORS CHANTING AND ROMERO'S PRAYING)
Those people never tire of their parades. (JOINS ROMERO AT THE WINDOW.) We'll never get to lunch on time.

ROMERO

There is considerable evidence that the government tampered with the results of the election.

NUNCIO

My dear Oscar, if they had power there wouldn't be any elections. These revolutionaries think themselves pure and

virtuous. They don't know themselves. That's the difference between them and us. (PAUSE) These are sad times, Oscar. All order has collapsed. How did you put it? So eloquent: "We must keep to the center, hold to the traditional way ... Our mission is eminently religious and transcendent..."

ROMERO

While seeking justice...I said while seeking justice.

NUNCIO

(IGNORING ROMERO) "Our duty," you said, "is to serve our priests and the duty of our priests is to serve the religious needs of the people, not politics." (WHILE THE NUNCIO SPEAKS, ROMERO TAKES OUT A SMALL VILE WHICH CONTAINS A LIQUID MEDICINE FOR HIS STOMACH. HE TAKES SOME OF THE MEDICINE) You have a way with words. (THE NUNCIO NOTICES ROMERO TAKING THE MEDICINE.) Even those who think you without stomach for the job admit that. It's getting late, Oscar, it wouldn't look right to keep President Molina waiting.

ROMERO

Please give the President my apologies.

NUNCIO

A missed lunch is a missed opportunity, and, it can be misconstrued.

ROMERO

I'll send him a personal note.

NUNCIO

Oscar, an illness, even a real illness has political implications. In El Salvador, you are the Church, and that means the Church won't be sitting next to the president at lunch.

ROMERO

I'm sure you'll see to it that everyone properly interprets my absence.

NUNCIO

When the Holy Father asked me who should be archbishop, I choose you.

ROMERO

Yes, I know. Thank you.

NUNCIO

It isn't your thanks that I want. (BEAT) Take a little holiday, Oscar. Take a rest, build up your strength. (THE CHANTING INTRUDES.) I'm going to the Shore myself. Too noisy here. Disturbs the digestion.

ROMERO

I was planning to leave tomorrow for Santa Maria, to make my retreat.

NUNCIO

Excellent. Don't worry about things here. (THE CHANTING GETS LOUDER) These parades won't last forever. (THE NUNCIO STARTS TO EXIT, STOPS) When you get back, I insist you see my personal physician. We must fix this stomach of yours.

THE NUNCIO EXITS.

THE CHANTING OF THE DEMONSTRATORS NAGS AT ROMERO'S CONSCIENCE, PULLS HIM TO THE WINDOW. HE CONTEMPLATES WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE STREET. SUDDENLY GUNFIRE IS HEARD. THERE ARE SOUNDS OF PEOPLE SCREAMING AND RUNNING IN PANIC. ROMERO FLEES.

VOICES FROM OFF STAGE:

- Where is Romero?
- Where is the Monsenor?
- We are dying!
- Where is Romero?
- Where is the Archbishop!?

IN THE COMMOTION ANNE AND HECTOR ENTER. THEY RUN INTO EACH OTHER. THEY ARE FLEEING THE NATIONAL GUARD.

ANNE

Hector, thank God you're OK.

HECTOR

Where's Romero?

ANNE

In Santa Maria ... on retreat.

HECTOR

The Bastard! I told you he's one of them. This was planned!

ANNE

We've got to stop this. See if you can get through to Monsenor Chavez. Perhaps, he can do something. I'll try to get through to the American ambassador.

THE GUNSHOTS GET CLOSER AND LOUDER. THEY BOTH FLEE. THE GUARDIANS PRESENT THEMSELVES:

AHPUCH

Ahpuch, Lord of Death.

GHANAN

Ghanan, Lord of Corn.

CHAC

Chac, Lord of Rain.

KUKULCAN

(CENTER STAGE AND FORWARD) Kukulcan, Lord of Life.

CHAC

To us was entrusted the creation.

ALL

We are the guardians!

GHANAN

To us was entrusted the care of the peoples of this land:

Of Chiapas

AHPUCH

Of the Yucatan

GHANAN

Of Guatemala

CHAC

Of Honduras

GHANAN

Of El Salvador

AHPUCH

ALL

We are the Bacab Balam! We are the Jaguar Priests of the Sun!

KUKULCAN PLACES HIS GREAT SHIELD AT THE APEX OF WHAT WILL BECOME
THE SUN/CROSS TOMB MOMUMENT FOR ROMERO.

AHPUCH

To us was entrusted the sacrifice!

KUKULCAN

Then and forever!

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

ANNE AND HECTOR IN THE CHANCERY. (ONE WEEK LATER)

ANNE

Give me a cigarette.

HECTOR

Why, Sister Anne, I thought you quit smoking for Lent.

ANNE

I need the butt-ends to kill the aphids on my begonias.

HECTOR

Women are not supposed to smoke in front of Archbishops.

ANNE

If an Archbishop doesn't want me to smoke, he shouldn't summon me to the Chancery and keep me waiting for an hour.

HECTOR GIVES HER A CIGARETTE. SHE LIGHTS IT HERSELF.

HECTOR

Come the revolution...

ANNE

I know, there will be no aphids on my begonias.

HECTOR

No. They have to live too. Come the revolution we shall summon the Archbishop to explain himself to us and we'll keep him waiting for two hours.

ANNE

God! I hate waiting, especially to be told I've been naughty and have to be sent home, especially when I've already decided to go home.

HECTOR

Quit before you're fired. Did they teach you that at the Univesity of Chicago?

ANNE

I've been educated for success only. First my father, then my teachers. No one ever taught me anything about failure.

HECTOR

Because in the United States to fail means you're inferior or that God doesn't like you.

ANNE

Worse. It means that competence, intelligence, hard work, and good will can add up to nada, double nada, and a terminal case of hemorrhoids.

HECTOR

I told you how to get rid of that particular plague.

ANNE

No disrespect to your grandmother, but we Irish Catholics prefer the sure and familiar knowledge of our suffering to the uncertain character of salvation from blood sucking leeches, especially on our very private parts.

ENTER RUTILIO

RUTILIO

My God, (GREETING IN SPANISH TO HECTOR) it's good to see you. (HE EMBRACES BOTH.) I heard you were both trapped in Rosario Church.

ANNE

We were lucky.

HECTOR

Anne's good looks got us through the (National) Guard lines.

RUTILIO

Thank God you're OK. So many killed or disappeared. What's the latest count.

ANNE

80 dead. Over 200 disappeared.