

April 15, 2020

Dear Friends,

I spent New Year's this year in El Salvador and I am drawn to one of their national heroes, Oscar Romero. He was an archbishop who was assassinated while celebrating Mass for the poorest of the poor in his country. Before his tragic death, Romero had a 'conversion' experience in which his eyes were opened to the suffering around him, and thus he was willing to risk his own life to reach out and try to make a difference. In the end it seemed that the rich and powerful had won as they snuffed him out forever. But while I was there, I could not help but to notice that he was not snuffed out at all, his legacy and more importantly his liberating message of life and love is very much alive in the people, in fact they have even renamed the airport after him! In the midst of the poverty and suffering there is hope. One thing that Romero once said that has always remained with me is: "There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried."

Much like our own personal lives, the entire world itself has suddenly changed because of loss and grief. Because of our losses, we now can understand what Romero was getting at.... There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried. Now a much greater portion of the population also understands this sentiment. It seems that suffering has been exponentially increased all around us. But where is all this taking us? How are we to learn or grow from all this? We all stand at a crossroads, it seems, as we face this crisis, our own personal losses and our collective losses, -we can choose, in a sense, to get bitter or get better. This will be happening on both an individual basis and on a much greater collective basis as well. Time will tell how we will emerge from it all. Victor Frankl, another incredibly inspiring historical figure, writer and holocaust survivor once said: "Everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Like the humble, impoverished people of El Salvador, like the survivors of the worst human tragedies in our history, we can nurture hope during these challenging times and we may even emerge from it all with the ability "to see many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried."

***God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.***

Peace and Serenity, Kevin