



SOMETHING GOOD HAS HAPPENED

By: Jon Sobrino S.J.

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What can I say these days regarding the appointment of Gregorio Rosa Chavez to the office of cardinal?

I write on the morning of July 4th when "Goyo" Rosa, as I have always called him, has just returned to the country. He returns to his land and to his people. In the airport, he said that Pope Francis is very concerned that the Church, and country, of El Salvador make some radical advances.

The Pope has also stated that with this appointment to cardinal, an injustice of many years has been corrected. As for the newly appointed cardinal, without resting from his long trip, he immediately made his way to the cathedral in order to be in the crypt with Archbishop Romero. Thus far, it is his fundamental word.

We have seen many photos and comments from many people in the newspapers. The overwhelming majority of them are joyful and insist that justice has finally come for Monsignor Rosa Chavez after being neglected for so many years. What is bad is not that they have barred Goyo from advancing a career, which would not be ideal for any Christian and much less a bishop. However it has been unjust to ignore his Christian and humane service of many years.

In this sense, the Pope surprises us once again. This week alone he fired two important Roman cardinals, Gerhard Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and George Pell, responsible for the Vatican finances--they both interfered with the Vatican reforms. At the same time, the Pope surprises us with the unexpected appointment. He appoints to cardinal an auxiliary bishop of a country that has never even had a cardinal.

All I can say is that something good is happening. We dearly remember the new cardinal as a collaborator to Archbishop Romero in his early days, in those years stained with blood, but also marked by creativity, both of which called for a great deal of support. It was while sharing those tasks that I met Goyo Rosa.

He was born in 1942 in Sociedad, in the department of Morazán, to a large family. His parents, Mr. Mercedes Salome and Mrs. Domitilia Chavez de Rosa, had 8 children: 6 boys and 2 girls. They lived in a humble house located at the entrance of the municipality of Sociedad. The small town recently offered a mass in gratitude of the Pope's appointment of Gregorio. All of these events give his family a special sense of satisfaction.

We have heard from his brother David, 73, the third of the six sons. He relates that it had always been their father's dream to have a son in the service of God. So one day he called all his children around the dinner table and asked them what they wanted to be when they were older. Most said that they wanted to pursue a career in the university. Gregorio, however, asked for his support in order to study in the seminary in San José de la Montaña. In 1957, Gregorio packed his bags, left Sociedad and started on his journey to serve God. The rest of his siblings are well-known professionals and some do some work with social causes. Now, teary-eyed, David explains how proud he is to have his brother appointed cardinal by Pope Francis. "I am extremely proud and delighted with these great news. I cannot express what I feel in my heart, I'm sure my parents must be even happier."

"Monseñor Gregorio is a blessing for the whole family. One day, some poor men came to buy some basic foodstuffs from us, and Gregorio attended to them very kindly, as he is given to. When the men asked him how much it all cost, he said that there was no cost."

In 1977 Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chavez became the director of the San Jose de la Montaña Seminary in San Salvador, where he previously taught theology. Later he was named

Auxiliary Bishop of the San Salvador archdiocese on July 3, 1982, and is currently the pastor of the San Francisco Church in San Salvador. He was also president of CARITAS for Latin America and the Caribbean and CARITAS El Salvador. He was one of the promoters of the beatification of Archbishop Romero.

I'd like to finish off with some of his words regarding the current problems affecting our country.

"The youth needs for us to approach them, and they also need to be heard. Currently there is repression. We spoke about this with the Pope, and he wants the church to play an active role in the fight against violence. There is also a sector of the youth that is quite good, they are, however, in a cage. They cannot move freely from one place to another. Their lives are at risk, and they must remain inside their homes. How can we prevent this? We have to visit the homes of the families of gang members, you can see that there is a lot of violence there as well."

"Many are victims of abuse, many are children of the war, of homes that are completely disintegrated and dysfunctional. All these issues are behind this phenomenon, and everything becomes complicated with the issue of drug trafficking, which is also a current issue: gangs as a means to move drugs from one country to the next. Before, it was solely confrontations among gang members themselves. Not anymore. Today, there is the element of drugs, which complicates things immensely. Drugs generate vendettas and brutal killings over territorial control."

