

# Oscar Centeno

Funeral Service

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Saturday, August 17, 2013

**Minister's Introduction (Minister, Blair Wilson)**

We are gathered today to witness a mystery, the life of a beloved student, our dear friend, Oscar Centeno.

We welcome Oscar's wife Ana, and their children Joshua, Claudia, Michelle, and Monica, and other family members and dear friends.

Oscar Centeno's life forms another jewel in the history of our School. The lessons he learned, his faithfulness to his family and his friends, his gift of understanding the simple, great truth of Presence, his dedication to evolution, his inconspicuous service to our Teacher, all these touch and inspire us.

Each student raises the School through their efforts and their being.

Let us stand, and honor Oscar with our presence. (Silence)

Thank you.

As Oscar returns to the divine source, let us remember that we share the same passage. Robert said, "Ascending souls finish their roles very well prepared, having received the presence allotted to them in this lifetime."

Our life is preparation for another phase, the phase of the soul.

**Music: Chris Bautista, guitarist**

"Julia Florida" and "El Noi de la Mare"

**Reading: Auguste Haboush**

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.  
Camerado, I give you my hand!  
I give you my love more precious than money,  
I give you myself before preaching or law;  
Will you give me yourself?

*Walt Whitman*

**Eulogy: Hanns-Michael Heick**

Oscar was a great traveler, traveling not to arrive somewhere exotic, or to get away, but as a part of his Being. His roads were the roads of Being.

He came with a free and simple spirit, in search of better opportunities from his country, El Salvador, to the U.S., travelling the roads of California for so many years, yet always finding his way back to the heart of the School, always with precious cargo, riding with the company of his efforts and his presence, carrying palm trees and artwork and friends and students.

Oscar occasionally attended Wine Cellar Dinners, making that long, 8- to 10-hour drive from Los Angeles to Apollo in time to join his friends. It was a pleasure to see him arrive, with a slight smile on his face that indicated, like a child, "I have just completed a spiritual journey," and, "It is nice to be with you." It was a double delight for those of us sitting at his assigned table. His speech was soft, often filled with gentle mirth. More than once, he reminded the rest of us – by his presence – of our own spiritual journeys.

His passing was a shock because it felt so untimely. It felt too soon to lose him from our midst. We did not realize how frequently and how deeply he touched us. It's a profound lesson. Robert said, "We lost more than we knew." It is a mystery how much each one of us pays, so when Higher Forces invite one onwards, it is always right, yet always unexpected. A mystery more than the mind can predict or entertain.

Oscar would appear and disappear from Apollo, ephemeral as a gentle genie from a bottle. He would materialize unexpectedly, whenever his route allowed him to stop at Apollo and see his Teacher and his friends, who were his dear commitment. He would appear gently, and take his place wherever there was need, whether to attend a meeting, dine with friends, or roll up his sleeves to wash pots and pans when the kitchen needed help.

He had a keen eye for blanks in the story-line, willing to step in at any time and support the script. He offered help in so many ways. When he could not attend a dinner with Robert, he would pay for a student in need, or give up his seat to a visitor. He was like a dancer on a tightrope, beautifully balanced between his families, that of his wife and children, and that of his fellow students in the school.

His ability to make a person feel accepted and loved was one of his strongest characteristics. One friend wrote of Oscar: "A noble warrior has gone from us now for another world – a real Man who with kindness for all and true humility always remembered his higher Self, his family and his friends. Oscar always kept a steady eye on bringing out the best in those who were lucky to be around him. He touched hearts because his heart was always overflowing with love and gratefulness and so he grasped and then firmly held the charm of life."

Great travelers bring their best with them. Oscar joined the school in Los Angeles in 1976. He stayed loyal to his sweet El Salvadorian essence, a living part of life with his extended family, and in his consistent support for the center in El Salvador, visiting and sending financial aid.

Again, in feeling the suddenness of his departure, there is trust in the perfection of the play as it is written. There is the loss of his physical presence, yet his presence and love remains with us. He would want us to be joyful. After all, he lives in the poetic moments of his life, which each and all of us share.

Oscar loved poetry, and as a poet of the road, of the moments that he travelled, he knew most that the traveler is always arriving.

**Music: Alicia Tussie and Gail Matthews**

Pot of Clay

**Reading, from one of Oscar's favorite poets, Alberto Masferrer:**

Our soul transfuses itself in the soul of all things.

When the mind reaches this fullness,  
then the veil is drawn,  
light floods the temple,  
and naked truth is offered to our eyes,  
white and concise as a snow rose  
opening to the caress of the sun.

**Minister's Conclusion:**

At his passing, we see Oscar Centeno's life as a whole, his accomplishments, the things touched by his hands and loved by his heart. But ultimately, life consists of more than what has happened and what was done. It is the simple, unobtrusive moments of presence that add significance, and many of these we shared with Oscar.

Now it is time to bid our friend farewell.  
May Oscar Centeno's kindness inspire us towards gentleness.  
May his willingness to serve inspire our efforts.  
And may his great love for us deepen our love for one another.  
His work is finished. Ours is to let him go.  
With gratitude, Oscar, friend and fellow-traveler, We Thank Thee.

**Candle ceremony**

As Oscar said, "Our body is just a shell, our soul will continue."

**Procession**