As social problems become increasingly global, activists are working across state boundaries and forming transnational social movements. However, there is little information that illuminates how groups are able to overcome ethnic, class, ideological and cultural differences that could be obstacles to collaboration. Through an analysis of the story of Salvadoran martyr Archbishop Romero, I demonstrate how this narrative fostered solidarity between the progressive Central American church and U.S. Christians. By symbolically mirroring the social ontology of Christianity and melodramatically presenting the Salvadoran conflict with moral clarity, Romero’s life story facilitated the construction of a transnational collective identity and provided a model of action. The moral credibility of the narrators, and the context in which Romero’s story was told, influenced many Christians’ decision to prioritize this religious identity over their national allegiance.
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