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Obama to Visit Romero's Tomb

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Distinctly Catholic

On Wednesday, the last day of his Latin America tour, President Barack Obama will pay his respects at the tomb of martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero at the Metropolitan Cathedral in San Salvador.

At a press briefing on the trip, Press Secretary Jay Carney said:

"Then the last day, Wednesday before we come back, the President will have an opportunity to tour the National Cathedral in San Salvador and, at the National Cathedral, to pay respects at the tomb of Father Oscar Romero, who, of course, is a hero to many people in the Americas."

The visit is of enormous symbolic significance, not least because Romero was gunned down by paramilitary troops who were armed and encouraged by the United States. Romero was and is, as Carney noted, a hero to many people in the Americas. His stand against the national security state of his day was prophetic and he met a prophet's end: Murdered by those who resisted his call to conversion and his defense of human dignity.

Let us hope that the President's visit to Romero's grave inspires the officials in Rome who have been dragging their feet on the canonization of Romero. If Obama, who is not a Catholic, can grasp the significance of this man's life and death, why can't the Church?

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