



Paying the Price: Ignacio Ellacuria and the Murdered Jesuits of El Salvador

Teresa Whitfield

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On November 16, 1989, on the campus of El Salvador's University of Central America, six Jesuits and two women were murdered by members of the Salvadoran army, an army funded and trained by the United States. One of the murdered Jesuits was Ignacio Ellacuria, the university's Rector and a key, although controversial, figure in Salvadoran public life. From an opening account of this terrible crime, *Paying the Price* asks, Why were they killed and what have their deaths meant? Answers come through Teresa Whitfield's detailed examination of Ellacuria's life and work. His story is told in juxtaposition with the crucial role played by the unraveling investigation of the Jesuits' murders within El Salvador's peace process. A complex and nuanced book, *Paying the Price* offers a history of the Church in El Salvador in recent decades, an analysis of Ellacuria's philosophy and theology, an introduction to liberation theology, and an account of the critical importance of the University of Central America. In the end, Whitfield's comprehensive picture of conditions in El Salvador suggest that the Jesuits' murders were almost inevitable. A crime that proved a turning point in El Salvador's civil war, the murders expressed the deep tragedy of the Salvadoran people beyond suffering the heartless cruelty, violence, and deceitfulness of a corrupt military and their patrons in the U.S. government. Whitfield draws on her extensive research of Jesuit archives and private papers, Ellacuria's diaries, documents declassified by the U.S. government, and 200 interviews conducted with sources ranging from Jesuits to Salvadoran military officers, U.S. officials and congressmen to human rights campaigners.

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