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Timothy Matovina, Gary Riebe-Estrella, eds. *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican Traditions in U.S. Catholicism.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. ix + 189 pp. $21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8014-8822-1; $63.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-4011-3.

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A Multi-Disciplinary Investigation of Contemporary Mexican American Catholicism

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The editors of this slender volume, under the aegis of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame, have collected a handful of essays that explore the forms and meanings of twentieth-century, Mexican American Catholic practice. Contributors include scholars in theology and religious and ethnic studies and were selected for inclusion in part because they "in some fashion practice the type of Mexican American religious traditions" they analyze (p. viii). The editors strove for interdisciplinarity and designed the collection to appeal to scholars, pastors, and church leaders. The volume includes a fine introductory essay that highlights the commonalties of theme and omission in the following chapters, four detailed case studies of Mexican American devotions, and two theoretical concluding essays.

As with all edited collections, some essays are stronger than others. The problem of unevenness is particularly acute in this volume due to its multiple intended audiences and the variety of disciplinary approaches employed by its contributors. Historians and social scientists on the one hand, and theologians and ecclesiastics on the other, are certain to find different essays more appealing. Historians searching for careful analyses of the historical development of Mexican American devotions will find the volume disappointing. All but the first of the collection's six essays treat contemporary manifestations of piety and pay little attention to change over time.

Historians and social scientists will find the first two case studies the most valuable chapters of the book. In the first study, Timothy Matovina, a professor of theology, examines the resurgence of Guadalupan devotions in San Antonio's (Texas) San Fernando parish during the first half of the twentieth century. He argues that Mexicans exiled during the Cristero Rebellion, an insurgency with religious overtones against the Mexican revolutionary state from 1926 to 1929, largely accounted for this rekindling. Matovina further contends that these Guadalupan devotions carried many meanings, ranging from resistance against racism to justifications for social and gender hierarchy. Most prevalent, however, was the message that Mexican exiles in San Antonio, rather than Mexicans who remained in Mexico, were the true bearers of Mexican identity and patriotism. Although Matovina has produced a carefully researched account well grounded in the milieu of early-twentieth-century San Antonio, he does not engage the rich historiography on Guadalupan piety. It is therefore difficult to determine how the author's interpretation of this particular case of Guadalupan devotion sheds light on Mexican American or Guadalupan devotions in general.

Karen Mary Davalos's careful analysis of the meanings of the public enactment of the Via Crucis in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood is the finest essay in the collection. Mexican American performance of the Via Crucis in Pilsen began in 1977, shortly after a fire in a neighborhood apartment building took the lives of ten children. Davalos contends that the public enactment of the stations of the cross began as a protest against racism and a lack of social services. Organizers orchestrated the procession's stops and prayers to highlight the unspoken forms of domination at work in Pilsen. The Via Crucis subsequently became an annual event. Through rit-

ual performance and the consequent sacralization of participants and neighborhood, Mexican Americans claim Pilsen as their own, challenge authoritative constructions of "white public space" (p. 65), and proclaim a discourse of equality and justice.

The third and fourth case studies examine contemporary Mexican American religious practices in Los Angeles. Both are based on ethnographic research and are highly descriptive in nature. Lara Medina and Gilbert R. Cadena offer an account of public Dia de los Muertos celebrations, principally the festivities in 1998. Medina and Cadena reveal that the public Dia de los Muertos activities in Los Angeles, much like the Via Crucis performance in Chicago, are of recent vintage, beginning in the 1970s. Over the years, the celebrations have expanded. The authors argue that the "public nature of the ritual and its underlying Mesoamerican Indigenous worldview" resist mainstream attempts to silence Mexican American culture and spirituality (p. 72). Furthermore, the celebration "heals the wounds ... of European and Euro-American colonization" (p. 86) and defies the Anglo-American false dichotomy between life and death.

Luis D. Leon examines the work of curanderas, or traditional faith healers, in an urban Mexican American community. In this highly descriptive, sympathetic, and admittedly preliminary account, Leon contends that Mexican Americans resort to curanderas to help heal the wounds of body and soul inflicted by "the harsh realities of intense late capitalism" (p. 96). Although practitioners and their clients perceive a contradiction between curanderismo, or the practice of faith healing, and institutional Catholicism, most nonetheless identify themselves as faithful Catholics. Most intriguing, Leon argues that curanderismo, a site of solace and refuge from oppressive economic realities, has itself been transformed by late capitalism. Once privately performed in the home and the purview of practitioners who asked no fixed payment, curanderismo has mutated. Now, individual curanderas in Los Angeles serve as contract workers in storefront shops and list fixed prices for specific services.

Roberto S. Goizueta draws on the insights provided in the preceding four case studies to present a synchronic and non-contextual analysis of the worldview underlying Mexican American Catholicism. Goizueta contends that Mexican American devotions challenge the dichotomies of life and death, individual and community, material and spiritual, and public and private established in Euro-American Catholicism. Moreover, he calls on the church to work in solidarity with Mexican American Catholics, for as theologians of liberation have argued, God often reveals himself most clearly among the marginalized.

The volume's last essay is a theological work by Orlando O. Espin. Espin is primarily concerned with the divergence and often conflictual relationship between official church doctrine and the "popular Catholicism" of Mexican Americans. He contends that theological approaches to the truth are contingent upon time and culture and that God reveals himself in the "sensus fidelium," or the intuitions of the culturally bound Christian faithful. Therefore, he calls upon theologians to examine Mexican American religious traditions for doctrinal insights.

Resistance is the leitmotif of the volume. All the contributors celebrate the many ways in which Mexican American Catholicism has challenged racism, social hierarchy, economic exploitation, the authoritative construction of public space, and the marginalization of popular piety by the institutional church. With the exception of Timothy Matovina's case study of early twentieth-century Guadalupan devotions, the contributors neglect to analyze how Mexican American Catholic practices simultaneously structure hierarchy and promote accommodation as well as offer resistance. A more nuanced approach would have made this volume a more rewarding read. This reviewer would have also appreciated more attention paid to the ways in which Mexican American Catholicism has changed over time due to its constant interaction and confrontation with Euro-American Catholicism.

Although many are sure to find this collection valuable–particularly those engaged in active ministry or those new to Mexican American Catholic practice–the uneven nature of the volume's essays and their lack of historical consciousness renders it less satisfying for the professional historian.

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