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# The Resurrection Project of Mexican Catholic Chicago: Spiritual Activism and Liberating Praxis

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**Abstract:** Drawing on historical archives, oral history interviews and ethnographic material, this essay explores the history of Chicago's "The Resurrection Project"/*El Proyecto Resurrección*, a community development organization that builds healthy communities through housing and critical consciousness. The mission of the organization emerges from the lived realities of Mexican Catholic Chicago, formulated in large part by the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, as well as a history of exclusion, displacement and marginalization in the Windy City. It argues that the spiritual activism and liberating praxis articulated between 1990 and 2005—namely housing and the formation of a critical consciousness—profoundly links experience, culture and faith. This integration of lived realities, culture and faith suggests an expansive view of popular religion.

**Keywords:** Faith-based Community Development, Chicago History, Pilsen Neighborhood, Latino Religion and Spirituality

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This essay traces the formation and activism of The Resurrection Project/*El Proyecto Resurrección*, a community development organization that predominantly builds and secures housing for Latino residents, and locates the organization within the historical context of *mexicano* Catholicism in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Focusing on the organization's first fifteen years, 1990–2005, and inaugural efforts in Pilsen (in that period, the most densely populated *mexicano* community of Chicago), it uses historical archives, oral history interviews and ethnographic material to view the programs for housing, community development and leadership as a strategy to create a life of dignity, as revelation, and as an expression of "the faith of the people" (Espín, 1997).<sup>2</sup> This research investigates a liberating faith-based embodiment of Catholicism among Mexican Chicago. Moreover, it argues that the framework of "spiritual activism" helps to illuminate the organization's two campaigns—the building of housing and the formation

of a communal consciousness—as profound integration of lived experience, faith and culture (Anzaldúa, 2000).<sup>3</sup>

The Resurrection Project/*El Proyecto Resurrección* is a neighborhood development corporation whose mission has much in common with Chicana/o social movements, faith-based community organizing and Catholic activism in the United States (Muñoz, 1989; Swartz, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Wood, 2002; Interfaith Funders, 2000).<sup>4</sup> Orlando Espín's observations about Latina/o faith as located in human experience, as well as the rejection of any attempt to disconnect faith from the lived realities of Latina/os, is appropriate for this case study of Mexican Catholic Chicago (1997). Building on his observation, this article traces the experience of oppression, specifically the unequal structures of society that produce poverty, inadequate education, political powerlessness, and unstable and substandard housing in Chicago's Mexican neighborhood of Pilsen. As an organization whose mission is to "build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values to create healthy communities through organizing, education and community development," The Resurrection Project/*El Proyecto Resurrección* (TRP) illustrates the penetrating connection between daily life, faith and culture through the creation of "decent, safe, affordable and high-quality housing" for low-income and working-class families who realize, embody and engage their place in Chicago.<sup>5</sup>

The building of homes and healthy communities is historically, affectively and culturally rooted in places and relationships across the Americas, and the consideration of lived realities requires attention to a transnational sensibility. The primary reality for this setting is the relationship between the United States and Mexico, which is marked by invasion, conquest, annexation, exploitation and oppression. This intertwined historical relationship makes it impossible, or at least untenable, to view migratory experiences in the U.S. as if they were separate from centuries of U.S. hegemonic control in the Americas. This is a structurally contingent point to which I turn below, but here I register my argument that the historical and socio-economic conditions through which Mexicans

migrated to the Midwest, their social location as disposable laborers or second-class and gendered citizens, their removal or segregation from specific neighborhoods in Chicago, as well as memories of exclusion from the Catholic Church, comprise the transnational sensibilities that shape and inform the work of TRP.<sup>6</sup> The value for community development, a term that TRP defines as housing and empowerment, or “tangible and intangible assets,” is articulated in Chicago by Mexicans, but it emerges from that long historical relationship between the U.S. and Mexico.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, an account of migrants is not a story of an unanchored community living in the netherworld of fragmented identities (Matovina and Riebe-Estrella, 2002). Instead, the transnational sensibilities of TRP drop cultural anchors in the U.S. and Mexico, and also blend the cultures found within either of these nations. Their transnational attachments, a sense of belonging to two nations, further informs the programs of TRP. The residents of Pilsen are physically distant from Mexico, but it is both their distance from Mexico and their relational and affective ties to Mexico that invigorate their desire to build, renovate and own a home in Chicago, and thereby challenge notions of citizenship, belonging and the nation-state.

During the organization’s first fifteen years, its programs focused on belonging measured in intangible and tangible ways. The campaigns included the following: (1) community organizing and empowerment through the congregations’ block clubs, which are street-level advocacy groups that are related to and sometimes coterminous with *las comunidades de base* (grassroots Christian communities); (2) homeownership services which help residents attain and sustain homeownership through counseling, educational and housing programs; (3) asset management which develops and renovates rental property for low- to moderate-income households; and (4) economic development which assists construction-related small businesses through a cooperative. These programs, especially the creation of “decent, safe, affordable and high-quality housing” and the consciousness that leads to the call for such housing, are a form of “spiritual activism” or “liberating praxis” designed to transform the unjust conditions of Pilsen (Anzaldúa, 2000; Aquino, 1999).<sup>8</sup>

“Spiritual activism,” a term coined by Chicana lesbian feminist philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa, is a critical process of renewal, a radical assessment of oppression, and “a liberatory and holistic spirituality in tandem with social

justice work, usually drawing from alternative spiritualities rather than mainstream religions” (Delgado, 2011: 18). It is a process that shares several characteristics with “the principle of liberating praxis.” Latina feminist theologian, Maria Pilar Aquino, writes, “Latina/o theology is internally articulated by the principle of liberating praxis. Under this light, U.S. Latina/o theological reflection understands itself as a praxis of accompaniment *with, within and from* the Latina/o communities in the latter’s struggle for a new reality free of violence, dehumanization and exclusion” (1999: 32; italics in original). While Aquino emphasizes an internal reflection or discourse and Anzaldúa implies external action that emerges from the assessment of one’s reality, both posit that a radical consciousness manifests “with, within and from” the Latina/o communities’ “struggle for a new reality free of violence, dehumanization and exclusion.”

While the origins and orientation of TRP are fundamentally Catholic and do not draw from “alternative spiritualities,” the organization challenges the patriarchy and hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Women and men parishioners are central to its call to action, leadership and perception of lived realities. Pilsen residents identify the violence done to them and the forces of dehumanization and exclusion, and this knowledge begins their development and application of critical consciousness and faith. An examination of TRP explicitly supports a joining of Chicana feminist scholarship with U.S. Latina/o theology in an analysis of the creation of housing for working-poor and working-class mexicanos and mexicanas in Chicago as an expression of Mexican Catholic faith in action.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, I interpret the work of TRP—the building of 140 new single and multi-unit houses, at a total of 200 new housing options; the renovation of twelve buildings to create 156 affordable rental units; the development of two childcare centers that serve 400 children; the training of eighty-six Mexican and other Latino contractors to begin, develop or expand their own construction businesses; the closure of over 300 loans, including home, conventional, refinance and home improvement loans; the creation of a bilingual second stage housing program for homeless single mothers; and the generation of more than \$65 million in community investment—as a form of spiritual activism and liberating praxis as it accompanies and transforms the lives of Mexicans in Chicago.<sup>10</sup>

## STRUCTURAL CONTINGENCIES

In order to illustrate the context for the spiritual activism and liberating praxis of TRP, I turn to a brief historical portrait of *mexicano* Catholicism in Chicago since the early 1910s and through the 1990s, the decade in which TRP was founded. Included within this historical analysis is a description of the significant moments at which Mexican parishioners exerted their spiritual activism within and against the Catholic Church. This account of Mexican Catholic history, therefore, does not follow the historiography of American Catholicism of Chicago in its description of clergy, ministry and devotional practices *inside* the church (c.f. D'Agostino, 2000; Shanabruach, 1981; Kantowicz, 1983; Avella, 1992; Dahm, 1981). Moving outside of the church allows for the voices and experiences of men and women parishioners to be heard and to register their actions as devotion, their reflections as revelation, and their actions as a "struggle for a new reality."

Limited inclusion, outright exclusion, dispersal, as well as resistance and cultural affirmation characterize the historical presence of Mexicans in Chicago. The ebbs and flows of systematic racism and institutional neglect, as well as Mexican claims to space and identity, have shaped the goals of TRP. It is not surprising that "decent, safe, affordable and high-quality housing" became the central campaign as the Catholic leadership and clients defined shelter as a basic human right, fundamental to other social justice issues.

Unlike Mexican presence in the American Southwest, which pre-dates the formation of the United States, Mexican Catholic Chicago began in the early twentieth century and is directly tied to industrialization, labor struggle and urban development, as well as patriarchal norms. For example, Mexican workers, usually single men, were a commodity that suited capitalist strategies for labor control and were recruited to Chicago as strike-breakers. The American Beet Sugar Company used a different gender strategy and recruited entire Mexican households because they felt that women would promote stability within a temporary labor force (Valdés, 2000: 53). These households, which included women and men, were directed to urban areas when the harvest ended, and this in turn produced the initial sanctioned route for women migrants to Chicago (Arredondo, 2004: 402). Similar to the dominant pressures such as racism, sexism and classism that Mexican-heritage populations experienced in the Southwest, Mexican migrants faced ongoing exclusion

and invisibility in multiple social arenas: education, housing, employment and politics. In addition, Mexican migrants coming to Chicago in the early decades of the twentieth century were primarily Catholic, but did not find churches and social institutions they could call their own. Congregations may have received Spanish-speaking pastors, but pastoral care was not culturally directed at Mexicans (Badillo, 1991: 63–4), and this disconnect played a key factor throughout the century in the emergence of lay people as spiritual leaders and cultural advocates.

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, Mexican Catholic lay leadership developed under the pressures of assimilation in Chicago. Between 1916 and 1929, the Archdiocese of Chicago founded forty-two parishes; only nine were national parishes and of these, two were for Mexicans: Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish established in 1923 and St. Francis of Assisi Church, officially converted in 1927 from an Italian into a Mexican parish (Dolan, 1987: 254). Even as the assimilationist agenda permeated the Archdiocese of Chicago at this time, Mexican parishioners maintained their own faith practices and cultural heritage. Several important examples are worth mentioning. By the late 1920s, the congregation of St. Francis of Assisi Parish had a vibrant Guadalupana organization. It sponsored a carnival and an elaborate altar, participated in the dedication ceremony for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church when the facility was finally built in 1928 on Chicago's south side, and organized a celebration for the feast day of the patroness of Mexico, which by the 1930s became a twelve-day event that included a reenactment of the apparition and the miracle.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere in the city, working-class Mexican Catholics undertook a campaign to purchase a storefront chapel in their Back of the Yards neighborhood. Beginning in the early 1930s, over one hundred Mexican Catholic families independently inaugurated an effort to secure a place for worship after years of renting one location, refurbishing it, and then losing the lease. In 1941, the Mexican Catholic spiritual activists of the Back of the Yards converted an old butcher shop into a chapel to serve over two thousand people. After applying a fresh coat of paint and a decorative motif, the laity adorned Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel on South Ashland, a major artery of the Yard's community, with flowers and images of Guadalupe, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Madonna.<sup>12</sup> The desire to establish a sense of belonging, their own place of worship, their own forms of popular Catholicism and their own images of the divine

was a precursor to the spiritual activism and liberating praxis initiated by TRP in the 1990s.

After steadily increasing in the first few decades of the twentieth century, Mexicans in Chicago formed the fourth largest Mexican-origin community in the United States by 1930.<sup>13</sup> However, racism played a major factor in the disavowal of Mexican and Mexican-American political representation and inclusion in Chicago. The Great Depression proved useful to nativists who called for repatriation campaigns, which disproportionately targeted Midwestern communities. Mexican neighborhoods were nearly devastated in the 1930s, and the setback cannot be underestimated as the dynamism and social capital of Mexican Catholic Chicago evaporated. Households were divided, congregations dwindled, and families were forced to uproot even though they had invested in the city and the nation as Catholics, citizens, workers, students and parents.

While labor control drove migration to Chicago in the 1910s and 1920s, and racist scapegoat policies forced the deportation of Mexicans in the 1930s, market interests in the U.S. during World War II eventually helped to restore Mexican neighborhoods. The Bracero Program, a bilateral agreement between Mexico and U.S. (1943–1964), in which the former nation was to provide temporary labor to U.S. capitalists at both rural and urban worksites, was a major factor in the repopulation of Mexican Catholic Chicago. For example, more than 15,000 workers were contracted to work on the Chicago railroads between 1943 and 1945, or 11% of the total imported laborers for United States railroads (Kerr, 1977: 300). Yet it structured their inclusion as low-wage and disposable laborers, which in turn limited their housing options.

Chicago urban policy after the war reinforced Mexicans residents' disadvantaged socioeconomic position Chicago planners designed the devastation of the industrial sector through an aggressive urban policy that prioritized downtown investment, and the relocation of manufacturing companies produced high unemployment rates among Mexican, as well as African-American communities. By concentrating private development in the downtown area and shifting the economy from heavy industry and railway transportation to finance, management and service, Chicago created a two tier municipal structure that neglected industrial districts, the areas where most Mexicans lived, to favor business and commercial development (Squires, et al., 1987). Included within Chicago's urban policy that privileged downtown

financing, was the building of a new public university, the University of Illinois, Chicago, on the Near West Side (the community area directly north of Pilsen), which at the time was predominately populated by Eastern Europeans and a sizable Mexican community. The Near West Side was, as it is, home to St. Francis of Assisi Parish and thus, as I have described above, the site of significant mexicano leadership and popular Catholicism. Approximately 14,000 housing units were destroyed by the time the university opened in 1965 (Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1984: 76 and 79). The displaced residents of the Near West Side dramatically changed the landscape of Pilsen, including the religious terrain. Several Pilsen parishes rapidly transitioned into Mexican Catholic congregations: St. Pius V Church celebrated the first Spanish-language Mass in 1963, masses at St. Vitus and St. Procopius parishes soon followed. Unofficial estimates by historian Louise Año Nuevo Kerr indicate that of the nine thousand mexicanos forced to leave the area, nearly half of those residents moved to Pilsen. By 1970, 26,000 mexicanos comprised 55% of Pilsen's total population (1976: 29).

The physical removal of Mexican residents was duplicated and supported by national policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Apprehensions by the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) "increased roughly 800% of its 1965 level by 1971 [and] ... Mexican nationals accounted for 85% of the 8,728 INS apprehensions during the 1971 fiscal year." (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003: 37)

The INS used intensive workplace raids and neighborhood roundups, including apprehensions of parishioners as they left Mass, particularly after the Spanish-language service at St. Vitus Parish.<sup>14</sup> In response, St. Vitus parishioners enacted protest demonstrations in 1974 and 1976, denouncing the racial profiling of the Mexican community (Stark, 1981: 175–8). But the creation of a community relations committee in Chicago did not stop racial profiling and assumptions of illegality, and St. Vitus and the wider community of Pilsen continued to struggle for local empowerment.

A brief detour about St. Vitus Parish is important as it eventually became the facility for TRP: The founding executive director had been a member of the parish before it was closed by the archdiocese in 1990. During the 1970s and 1980s, St. Vitus church was a major force in mobilizing and uniting the neighborhood around social issues and popular Catholicism, and their activism helped to establish and maintain lay leadership among Mexican Catholic

Chicago. Pastor James Collier was a worker-priest who welcomed community organizers, undocumented families and union activists into the parish facilities.<sup>15</sup> The parishioners initiated and organized worker strikes; boycotts against stores with poor labor practices; demonstrations against municipal neglect; a campaign against the Chicago Transit Authority for employment inequity; and confrontations with the INS during attempted illegal detentions of mexicanos.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the congregation of St. Vitus organized the first *Vía Crucis* (Way of the Cross enacted on Good Friday) in 1977 after an apartment building fire took the lives of several children. The community felt that firefighters' inability to communicate in Spanish contributed to the tragedy (Stark, 1981: 196–197). For the congregation of St. Vitus, the *Vía Crucis* was one of many actions of solidarity and calls for social justice. Within a few years, the *Vía Crucis* became an event organized by Mexican laity and helped to unify the Catholic parishes in Pilsen who formed the Pilsen Cluster. For the organizers of the Way of the Cross, many of whom later became leaders and founders of TRP, the *Vía Crucis* was envisioned as a rite to “take back the neighborhood” as the procession would reveal God’s salvation in the streets of Pilsen. They deliberately located the Stations of the Cross at businesses known for unfair labor practices, the site of a recent homicide, a corner used by drug dealers, or in front of rental properties owned by absentee landlords. The closing of St. Vitus Parish in 1990 created only a temporary setback for the neighborhood because inter-parish solidarity based on social justice, resistance to the abuses of power, and a claim for local autonomy was sufficient enough to maintain momentum, some of which was channeled into the formation of TRP, the subject to which I now turn.

## **SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM AND LIBERATING PRAXIS**

The Resurrection Project is a faith-based community federation of Catholic parishes, largely comprised of the Pilsen Cluster, and it has grown to include other parish members in Little Village and the Back of the Yards.<sup>17</sup> This research focuses on the organization’s first fifteen years and its inaugural work in Pilsen because the core of the organization’s activism and leadership has remained in Pilsen.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, some criticism of the organization points to the overwhelming resources located in Pilsen compared to Little Village and the Back of the Yards

(Wilson, 2008: 187). Nevertheless, a systematic exploration of the organization’s formation and earliest initiatives illuminates the foundational role of spiritual activism and liberating praxis, a profound integration of lived experience, faith and culture.

TRP was established in 1990 with an initial investment of \$30,000 from six founding parishes in Pilsen. The membership parishes of the Pilsen Cluster had been structurally linked since the 1980s through the coordination of sacraments, religious education and ministry, as well as community-wide events, such as the *Vía Crucis*. Their systematic integration and collaboration generated a robust dialogue across otherwise autonomous parishes. In 1988, six of the nine Catholic parishes in Pilsen began organizing residents. With the help of the Industrial Areas Foundation organizer, Mike Loftin, lay and clerical leadership from the parishes of Holy Trinity, Providence of God, St. Adalbert, St. Pius V, St. Procopius, and St. Vitus formed the Catholic Community of Pilsen (CCP). Reverend Charles W. Dahm of St. Pius V Church had been instrumental in developing the theological, critical and activist orientations in Pilsen, and later by extension in TRP, and he urged the CCP to consider community-based strategies to create social change.<sup>19</sup> Through group meetings and formal organizing efforts, the CCP learned that Pilsen residents were most concerned about municipal neglect, poor education, housing and crime. Continuing over a decade of advocacy and activism in Pilsen, the CCP began to create a base of leaders through training classes on empowerment, *comunidades de base* and the participation of lay members, not just leaders. For example, in 1990, CCP worked during the Lenten season with the congregations’ sixty *comunidades de base* and encouraged the small Christian neighborhood groups to reflect on their experiences with gang violence and Catholic teaching about compassion and justice.<sup>20</sup> The CCP also asked the groups to discuss possible solutions to drug-trafficking and its related violence. After four weeks of meetings in residents’ homes, over four hundred people assembled at the St. Pius V auditorium to meet officials from the city’s police, housing and building departments and the state’s attorney general. Three committees formed, each to address and solve a particular issue: regular and increased trash pick-up, communication with police, and a comprehensive housing strategy in order to meet the needs of the residents. Concerned with overcoming oppression, as it is defined by residents, and grounded in faith, the

housing committee rapidly captured the imagination of the community (Dahm, 1999).

### WHY HOUSING?

While the organization was developing and still designated as the CCP, displacement of low-income families and substandard housing threatened community formation and the growing political power of Mexican Chicago. Similarly, Mexican residents experienced ongoing vulnerability that resulted from the ways in which they had been racialized and considered illegal regardless of their documentation and status. Families hoping to stay in Pilsen had limited opportunities. During the decades in which Pilsen's Mexican population swelled, nearly 2,000 units were destroyed. In addition, Pilsen has some of the oldest housing stock in the city, with seventy-eight percent of all units built before 1939. Only twenty-three percent of these homes were owner occupied in the 1980s. The area was plagued by violence and municipal neglect, including a lack of police programs and presence. Moreover, despite their demographic majority in Pilsen, Latinos owned less than half of all owner-occupied units in the 1980s (Squires, et al., 1987: 99; Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1984). The majority of housing options were, and continue to be, small apartment buildings. Rent studies indicate that Latinos tend to pay higher rents than non-Latinos, and this trend increases for areas with higher concentrations of Latinos, suggesting that realtors and landlords participate in race-based speculation and indicating that Pilsen rents are disproportionate (Betancur, 1996). Housing became a foundational goal for achieving social justice and answering Jesus's call, as the residents articulated cultural and spiritual values for attachment to place: a desire to claim physical rootedness as way of knowing were one belongs, how one is connected to the larger world, and how existence is understood.

The housing committee transformed into the Pilsen Resurrection Development Corporation, which merged in 1994 with the CCP, forming The Resurrection Project.<sup>21</sup> Member institutions provide the faith-based development corporation with financial support, facilities and advocacy. By 2005, the institutional membership included fourteen parishes in Pilsen, Little Village and the Back of the Yards, although the ties to the Back of the Yards have waned over the years.<sup>22</sup> The congregations of St. Pius V and St. Procopius are at the forefront of leadership, and St. Francis of Assisi (a parish outside the boundaries of Pilsen, but

historically significant to many residents on the Southwest side) provides informal guidance and support. TRP is an example of Mexican Catholicism in which clerics and laity "use their social experiences as the starting point for theological discourse" and social action (Cadena and Medina, 1996: 103).

Similar to other faith-based organizations and federations, TRP practices many of the mobilization tactics developed by "the dean of community organizing in the United States, Saul Alinsky," who founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (Wood, 2002: 6). However, periodic and systematic modifications to Alinsky's organizing methods—an emphasis on one-to-one meetings, evaluation of meetings, challenging and holding people accountable—have resulted in church-based organizing that acknowledges, strengthens and makes use of social relationships, cultural knowledge and Catholic values. As Woods and Wilson independently note, faith-based organizing is frequently described as less aggressive than Alinsky's organizing methods, and to this, employees would add, it is also accountable to the Divine, not union leadership or political officials (Wood, 2002; Wilson, 2008). By employing Catholic values of accountability to a higher source, as well as transparency, and by using prayer, reflection and relationships, TRP participates in a unique form of democracy and empowerment.

For example, as is common among other faith-based institutions, TRP employs Catholic rituals and reflections at meetings, events and actions to reinforce and build on the faith of its clients and to register the divine source of its work. Biblical stories and testimony are part of public programs, newsletters and the website, and these frequently attest to the revelation of God in daily experience, such as the purchase of a home or the lease of an affordable and decent rental unit. For the first round of sales of TRP homes, Cardinal Joseph Bernadin symbolically baptized the organization at a ceremony inside Providence of God Parish and blessed the participants who entered a lottery in order to purchase a house, "the first new housing plan in Pilsen in nearly five decades" (Langford, 1997: 155). Anointment is also made in public spaces, sanctifying the everyday and material realities of Pilsen. Lay leadership often organizes summertime street Masses that begin with a procession and blessing of homes. The houses built by TRP are often singled out for anointment, especially during *las posadas*, in which the reenactment of Mary and Joseph's quest for lodging has symbolic meaning for

new homeowners. Some parishes combine las posadas celebrations with activism for affordable housing, calling for “*Vivienda Digna para Todos*” (Dignified Housing for All) as they journey from home to home.

Yet even the most basic of Alinsky’s techniques—the one-to-one meetings—is reformulated as a goal, not a means to an end. One-to-one meetings are a strategy for “building healthy communities” as relationships are essential to TRP’s vision of communal well-being, organized action, collective empowerment and critical consciousness. The dialogue forms a relationship, but it also embodies the process whereby Pilsen residents become “masters of their thinking’ and aware of their ‘significance as human beings.’” (Jacques Maritain quoted in Wilson, 2008: 180) From the collective experience and sharing of stories emerge new ways of placing oneself in the world and exercising one’s vision of salvation on Earth.

Equally relevant to faith-based organizing, TRP relies upon the networking strategies of women who coordinate actions, share resources, develop networks and offer support on a daily basis, particularly the domestic chores of childcare, cooking, cleaning and maintaining family ties. This feminine source of knowledge and action supports a value for women as leaders and agents of social change. TRP creates a Latina/o liberating praxis and spiritual activism that unites the mundane and the sacred through a theological premise that envisions the revelation of God on Earth through the transformation of the social order, including reevaluations of patriarchy.

## REBIRTH AND RENEWAL

The official name of the organization, The Resurrection Project/*El Proyecto Resurrección*, signifies the linguistic social realities of Mexicans in Chicago. The founders wanted a cognate title that monolingual Spanish and English speakers could recognize in either language. The Resurrection Project/*El Proyecto Resurrección* values the various combinations of Spanish and English and does not privilege one language over the other. This sensibility, one that affirms multiple cultural experiences, is part of a transnational life enriched by cultural foundations in the United States and Mexico.

In addition, the spiritual significance of the name foregrounds the larger theological vision of the organization. Although early critics of the organization emphasize the precondition of resurrection—death—and claim the name is offensive because it implies that Pilsen, or

more generally the Mexican community in Chicago, was lifeless; the leadership, active participants and clients emphasize renewal, rejuvenation and rebirth. For them, the word “resurrection/*resurrección*” inspires hope for social transformation, new possibilities, and a sense of responsibility and ownership. The title articulates the politics of potentiality; that something more can come from a dispossessed transnational community living in the shadows of municipal and economic power. Cecilia Paz, founding board member, parishioner and former staff of St. Procopius Church, makes an allegorical reference to a stream that replenishes the body or the community. She states, “You are drawing from it like a spring of fresh water that you need to replenish [yourself] ... a spring of life that we [the leadership of TRP] were using to get us going to where we accomplished [something] for our community.”<sup>23</sup> For Paz, the name serves as a symbol for revitalization that is simultaneously spiritual in that people connect to other-worldly phenomena as well as material accomplishments—be it housing, childcare or cleaner streets. The potentiality for salvation echoes one of Maria Pilar Aquino’s preconditions for U.S. Latina/o theology; *el empapamiento*, an ability to “saturate ourselves,” “imbue ourselves” or “permeate ourselves” with hope, to believe that life will improve or that change will occur (2002: 149).

Raul Raymundo, the founding executive director of TRP, also makes a connection between Christian celestial and worldly salvation. He elaborates,

We wanted a name that means “new life,” and new life means creating a healthy community with good housing, solid family relationships, strong economic growth, job and educational opportunities and positive attitudes. These things surface when we work to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. Jesus’ resurrection is all about new life, and as a primarily Catholic community, we believe in His life and message. (Langford, 1997: 150)

Articulating one orientation of a liberating praxis, Raymundo clarifies how the work of TRP is a strategy to establish salvation through the elimination of poor housing and substandard schooling, and by creating economic opportunities for Mexicans. TRP literally *builds*



God's kingdom on Earth. It draws on a gospel of liberation through a praxis that eliminates the sins of exploitation, violence and dehumanization.

As a community development corporation focused on housing, TRP's spiritual activism and liberating praxis takes physical form. Renovation of industrial buildings allows the organization to reclaim and transform blight into rental units and to remove derelict properties that support crime hot spots from the community. In the design of housing, TRP makes use of cultural values. In one instance, TRP challenged a city policy that subsidized single-family homes because the policy did not serve a cultural norm among Mexicans who live as extended families, or *familia*. The city policy could not accommodate a preference for familia, and TRP aimed to build affordable multi-unit homes. In the mid-1990s, TRP was able to successfully lobby the city's housing department to include multi-unit housing in its development program, New Homes for Chicago. This allowed TRP to build and subsidize three-level units with ground-floor apartments, often rented to grandparents, single parents, or relatives of the family that occupied the two-level house above the garden apartment. However, both family and non-family renters provided homeowners with significant economic advantages. In some cases, family renters co-signed loans or jointly shared the property. The three-level units became bestsellers for TRP, and these living arrangements reinforced kin networks that extend beyond the nuclear family, while also aligning female and age-based labor in the maintenance of family relationships. In short, TRP crafted a city policy that suited *la familia* and gender expectations in order to provide culturally-informed living arrangements.

A specific example of physical transformation, which also illustrates how TRP depends upon the leadership and organizing skills of women, comes from the work of Alicia Rocha, block club leader and advocate for affordable, safe and decent housing. In 1996, Rocha successfully mobilized for the city-financed demolition of two abandoned grain silos across the street from her home. She could not imagine a decent and secure life in which massive concrete silos threatened the safety of her neighborhood. But the vision of human dignity did not end with the demolition; Rocha organized her community to mobilize city officials to convert the empty lot into housing options for low- and moderate-income households. To build support, Rocha scheduled an annual street Mass to educate and empower

residents, and she met with the local alderman to obtain a commitment to the block club's vision for the empty lot. Rocha explains that her organizing gives her faith and that her faith inspires action: *Toda mi actividad me ha dado fe*. Offered as *testimonio* to me and to the public through TRP annual reports and newsletters, Rocha's words express the lived reality of TRP leaders, and the ways in which action and faith are intertwined. TRP plans to build affordable condominiums on the site.<sup>24</sup>

## HOUSING AND SALVATION

The Resurrection Project builds decent, safe, affordable, high-quality apartments for low-income residents because it dignifies human life and understands relationships among its neighbors as the revelation of God's promise. In this way, TRP has expanded the common understanding of brick and mortar development to include intangible human development. As Raymundo illustrates in his description of the organization's name, the mission of TRP is a combination of secular and spiritual purposes that formulate a liberating praxis. The mission—"build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values to create healthy communities through organizing, education and community development"—is a call to action and a process of radical consciousness.<sup>25</sup> The mission requires residents to "reflect on [their] action in light of faith," and through this reflection, to recognize the ways in which their realities can be transformed by their faith in action (Cadena and Medina, 1996: 103). It is from this awareness that intangible assets develop. Thus, even as TRP aims to change the lives of mexicanos by providing support services, housing and training for workers, it has also invested in a radical oppositional stance and way of seeing the world and one's place in it. Investing in intangible assets requires a proactive education agenda, a major but flexible campaign that consistently changed over the organization's first fifteen years.

At the inception of the new millennium, TRP organized a public life campaign, *Un Buen Cristiano Lucha Por Su Pueblo* (A Good Christian Works for the People/Community), but it also continued to support the initial methods of developing intangible assets, the block clubs and las comunidades de base. The central point is that between 1990 and 2005, TRP continued to seek new strategies for creating and preparing local leaders for full participation in the civic life of Mexican

neighborhoods and the larger metropolitan area and to help it understand that education of Pilsen residents is foundational to spiritual renewal and revelation.

Staff members also connect spiritual salvation or a higher calling with their everyday labor. In general, professionally trained staff members, who also insist on the acknowledgment of their cultural credentials, speak about their work as a calling; they are devoted to eliminating social inequity among Latinos. For instance, Edgar Hernández makes a personal connection to each client he meets and imagines them “as someone that I know, I can relate to because it could be my uncle, it could be my father, it could be my mother, it could be my sisters or my brother that may come here and look for some services.”<sup>26</sup> This relational vision of clients is distinct from the expectations he found in “corporate America,” for which he trained in college, but soon thereafter recognized that he disliked the profit-driven motive. Hernández explains: “Most of us are here [working at TRP] because this is a passion and this is definitely something that you have a vested interest in.” Staff members such as Alvaro Obregón and Salvador Cervantes acknowledge that TRP campaigns emerge from experiential knowledge of the residents, and staff invoke the experiential knowledge with sacred and earthly value. Furthermore, leadership and clients of TRP frequently invoke the Holy Spirit when they talk about the achievements and programs of the organization. Founding board member and staff at Holy Trinity Church, Esperanza Godínez, describes the early work of TRP as a “miracle” because although the original leadership had experience with social services and activism, none had built homes, negotiated with developers or investigated purchasing tax-delinquent and other properties. With a laugh in her voice, she claims that the early successes of TRP were the result of divine intervention (The Resurrection Project, 2000). Guacalda Reyes, a Latina staff member of TRP states: “We have to try to make heaven here ... otherwise, I don’t think there is a reason for us to be here.”<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Legal and de facto disempowerment has not provided the opportunity for consistent, meaningful or equitable civic participation of Mexicans in Chicago. Because the residents’ perspectives and experiences are central to the mission and action of the organization, TRP offers a critical reformulation of historical and everyday erasures,

exclusions and denials as well as new methods and ideas for belonging. The Resurrection Project approaches salvation through the elimination of poverty and oppression by bringing the sacred into daily life and defining homeownership services, including the construction of new homes, the renovation of abandoned buildings for rental housing, and financial education as a path to emancipation and spiritual rejuvenation. Respect for impoverished and racially marginalized people, as well as women, also calls into question the dominant expectations and myths of assimilation, meritocracy, individualism and neo-liberalism. Home ownership might appear to reinforce an American expectation of settlement and assimilation, but the lived realities of Mexican Catholic Chicago complicate an interpretation that would satisfy master narratives of accommodation and accomplishment. TRP residents invoke their cultural heritage, generally Mexican but also other Latin American identities, when they account for or describe feelings of belonging. Indeed, TRP housing designs, floor plans and color schemes of architectural elements are consistently depicted as relevant among Latino households: the yellow of mangos and the green of the *selva*. The brightly hued door and window frames index “Mexicanness” to the Pilsen community in the same way that multi-unit homes confirm their familia households. Simultaneously, Mexican residents claim attachment to their homeland and Chicago when they anoint their homes in Mexican Catholic rituals, such as las posadas, or reclaim their community and demand a better life through the Via Crucis. A transnational sensibility is strong enough to register among Chicago-born Mexican-American youth of St. Pius Parish who, for example, saw their family history in the oral histories they gathered at the El Paso-Juárez border in summer 2004. Although their parents had migrated decades earlier to the Midwest as children or young adults, the youth associated testimonies of suffering, exhaustion and dehydration with Jesus’ final hours, and with the contemporary experiences they documented at the border. In the same way that the youth of St. Pius Parish fashion a transnational sensibility by linking their family history to Jesus and contemporary border-crossers, TRP fashions a sense of belonging that reaches across national borders.

More importantly, the spiritual activism of TRP among Mexican migrants challenges neo-liberalism and its dependency on individualism and patriarchy. When I asked mexicana elders who were celebrating the fortieth

anniversary of Father Dahm's ordination about their work with the block clubs and why it was important to them, they spoke about creating and maintaining networks among women. Street Masses and other public events were sometimes thinly veiled, but officially endorsed practices for "leaving the house" and sharing information and resources. Catholic events, particularly those outside the church, allowed women to come together without a threat of violence or reprimand for leaving the home. Moreover, the women used these public events to share private stories and embody the liberating praxis so fundamental to the organization's mission. They found in the block clubs a space to affirm their feminine solidarity, critique of patriarchy and sense of *compartir*.

The English translation of *compartir* (to share or sharing) does not fully capture the meaning the women described to me. They explained how they share with others who have less material goods or emotional support, and how they share resources even when their own families are in need. For example, if a woman experienced domestic violence, then her closest friends and neighbors would help her seek shelter or solutions; or if a woman needed employment, then the group could refer her to employers. A knowledge of and value for *compartir* creates an alternative value system, indeed a radical notion of self-in-community, collective justice and social equity.

Other clients of TRP embody *compartiendo* when they offer to assist their neighbors. Raúl Hernández, former president of the board, states that residents who live in TRP rental properties frequently approach him after Mass and praise the housing, the organization and its services. Each testimony is followed by the offer to "help in any way." He is amazed that single mothers with little free time, working-poor and disabled residents have offered to "give something back" to their community. These contributions emerge from a spiritually-informed communal obligation or Catholic sense of accountability to a social body beyond one's household. They profess an "ethic of accompaniment" and offer to be with each other as they witness strife, violence or struggle (Goizueta, 1995). In this way, TRP's spiritual activism and liberating praxis does not mimic the master narrative of meritocracy and individualism, but draws instead upon salvation, rebirth and a moral obligation to others while challenging and questioning the structures that limit possibilities for low-income, Mexican households and women. The

Resurrection Project is a method of radical transformation of material, spiritual and spatial conditions.

As a case study of Mexican Catholic Chicago, The Resurrection Project is linked to a variety of faith practices, such as the *Vía Crucis*, *la quinceañera* (a rite of passage for girls), *las posadas*, *las comunidades de base*, the celebration of a Mass in the streets of the community, or the feast day celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, I aim to identify TRP as *one* of the faith practices of Mexican Catholic Chicago and a form of "popular religion" because its relational and communal processes that characterize the organization's mission to engage the sacred (Elizondo, 1986). From my perspective, the study of "the faith of the people" allows for the possibility of many types of actions to be read as "popular religion," not simply those rituals and activities affiliated with devotional practice, church-based celebrations and events that are marked in obvious ways as faithful or spiritual. The daily experience of creating a home as an expression of belonging, as witness to the Divine, and as the embodiment of salvation are mundane, but nevertheless vital articulations of mexicano faith that springs from everyday realities. As with other forms of popular religion, the work of TRP is deeply revelatory, and clients, staff and leaders view their work as bringing to light God's Kingdom and making a sacred landscape in Pilsen. Even those who have very little material wealth offer to accompany their neighbors through the wounds and pressures of life in Chicago, and they understand *compartiendo* as part of God's promise and calling. The spiritual activism and liberating praxis of TRP illuminate a moment of transformation, albeit fragile, but nevertheless affectively and effectively meaningful in people's everyday and spiritual lives. It is these moments of transformation that challenge notions of citizenship, belonging and the nation-state because none depends on a singular homeland, cultural identity or sense of self.

## EPILOGUE

With new housing built or renovated by TRP, Pilsen has received more attention from real estate speculators. During the final phases of my research, particularly the summers of 2003 and 2004 and Holy Week of 2005, I observed "For Sale" and "For Rent" signs throughout Pilsen, and parish leaders and TRP staff noted that the telephone numbers on these signs indicate suburban area codes. The landlords, real estate contractors and property owners

live elsewhere. Ironically, the physical transformation of Pilsen housing and community development generated additional signs of economic instability and exploitation. Reinforcing this pattern of displacement, the eastern part of Pilsen has seen an increase in European-American residents since the redevelopment of Pilsen's northern neighbor, the University of Illinois, Chicago, which is now pushed up against the viaduct that separates the two areas. Empowerment and belonging are fragile conditions for which TRP must consistently renew and replenish through spiritual activism and liberating praxis in its effort to build healthy communities and housing.

While fragile footholds on belonging and empowerment can strain the spiritual, political and economic resources of Pilsen, the neighborhood is generative for Mexicans born in Chicago, particularly those who are college educated. That is, the sense of place is strong enough to support a "return migration" among second- and third-generation Mexican professionals in the new millennium. While current ports-of-entry are suburban Mexican enclaves outside of Chicago, Pilsen is the community in which professional Mexican-American youth want to live. Although it is an emergent phenomenon, the "return migration" of young professionals offers another challenge to the model of the European immigrant in which successive generations move from the urban core to the suburbs. It also exposes the myth of assimilation as these youth are not interested in abandoning their heritage, but reaffirming it and seeking spaces in which their cultural capital translates into social action, spiritual vitality and political power. Suburban municipalities and some parishes are not responding to the needs of Mexican Catholics.<sup>29</sup> Young Latino professionals identify Pilsen as a place that provides for their cultural and spiritual nourishment, health and the bilingual and bicultural education of their children. Although it is unclear if the return migration of young professionals supports or undermines gentrification, it is clear that The Resurrection Project has helped to establish a transnational sensibility, confront daily struggles and affectively as well as physically create dignity and basic necessities for Mexican Catholic Chicago. The spiritual activism and liberating praxis offers insights for the ways in which The Resurrection Project strengthens the heart of Mexican Catholic Chicago.

**N.B.** Financial support allowed this project to come to fruition. The research was initiated during my dissertation

studies, and it was partially funded in 1991–1992 by the Cushwa Center for American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame; Carlos Tortolero, executive director of the National Museum of Mexican Art (formerly the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum), allowed my family and I to stay at the museum's apartment in Pilsen in 2004, as well as the use of a computer while I concluded the research over two summers; two grants from Loyola Marymount University supported this research at critical stages; and a NEH Summer Stipend Award in 2003 enabled me to conduct interviews with The Resurrection Project staff and other community leaders. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendation expressed in this essay do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Spiritual and research assistance came from members and staff of The Resurrection Project. Michael J. Zuccaro, Library Assistant at Loyola Marymount University, provided technical and media assistance. Glennon and María Olivia helped me prepare the tapes for transcription and translation. As small children, they accompanied me on several trips. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the intellectual communities of MALCS and ACTUS, as well as my students at Loyola Marymount University, who nourished this work. Chuck Dahm deserves special thanks as he served as interlocutor, colleague, participant and pastoral advisor. I dedicate this work to the people in Pilsen who opened their hearts to me, giving this *pocha* hours of their time and energy, when they could have been organizing, resting or solving problems.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 All labels are polysemous, but ethical obligations and understanding required from over two decades of research in Chicago cause me to interchangeably use the terms "*mexicano*" and "Mexican," because they are common in Chicago's Mexican-origin neighborhoods. The terms do not designate a specific citizenship status, place of birth or political consciousness. See also De Genova (1998) and Valdés (2000).
- 2 While the focus on the organization's first fifteen years may appear arbitrary, it corresponds to the historicizing scheme used by the organization. Annual Reports (2005, 2006 and 2010) and various publications at the fifteenth anniversary celebration divide the organization's development into two

- periods: 1990–2005 and 2006–2010. My funded research corresponds with the first period, and I conducted fieldwork in 1990–1992 and every subsequent summer until 2005.
- 3 I acknowledge Irene Lara for pointing out to me the connection between The Resurrection Project and Anzaldúa's notion of spiritual activism.
  - 4 Critics will likely find this work too celebratory, as most of my scholarship strategizes to delineate the struggles against oppression and those moments in which the messy dynamics of hegemony are defeated. The Resurrection Project is simply one case study of Mexican Catholic Chicago during a specific time period, 1990–2005, and this work is not meant to exemplify the experience of all contemporary Mexican Catholics in Chicago, nor the entire record of the organization.
  - 5 The Resurrection Project, <<http://www.resurrection-project.org/index.html>>. Web.
  - 6 The premise of structural contingency is found in the work of Latino theologians, such as Virgilio Elizondo (1983: 50) who describes Mexican-Americans as “twice conquered, twice colonized and twice oppressed,” and scholars of Chicana/o history, such as Rodolfo Acuña (1988) who describes an “occupied America.”
  - 7 Interview with Raúl Raymundo conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 27 June 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
  - 8 See also Hurtig (2000: 37) and Wilson (2008: 180) for an interpretation of TRP as a liberating praxis.
  - 9 Although a liberating praxis among U.S. Latinos might resonate with Latin American liberation theology, the comparative analysis is beyond the scope of this work. At various times during my research, 1990–2005, the leadership of TRP has used and rejected the term “liberation theology,” a contradictory position we should expect from Catholics aware of the revolutionary vision of Latin American liberation theologians and the reformist strategies among U.S. Latinos. In addition, the Roman Catholic Church waged an attack against liberation theologians so that any reversal of positions among TRP leadership must be understood in this light. For example, former pastor of St. Pius V Parish, Charles Dahm, has rejected a characterization of his ministry or that of The Resurrection Project as liberationist, but scholars such as Janise Hurtig and Neil Harper argue that U.S. form of liberation theology undergirds the primary mission and identity of St. Pius V and TRP. Wilson (2008) offers another perspective, and her interviews with Dahm document a claim to liberation theology.
  - 10 Since 2005, TRP has continued to build and renovate additional housing options in Pilsen, Little Village, the Back of the Yards and in Chicago suburbs. These figures represent accomplishments to date in December 2003.
  - 11 For archival information about Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, see Claretian Missionary Archives, Eastern Province, Oak Park, Illinois: Our Lady of Guadalupe folder. Also see The New World Archives, Parishes Collection, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish folder. Chicago Archdiocese Publications, Chicago, Illinois.
  - 12 For archival material about the chapel, see New World Archives, Parishes Collection, Holy Cross/Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish folder, clippings “Mexican Chapel and Center Opens on S. Ashland Ave.” 7 September 1945 and “New Chapel Opens with Mission” 16 November 1945.
  - 13 This demographic fact has been hidden by paradigms in Chicana/o Studies that presume the southwest is the normative object of study and experience. Even as Chicago's rank in the nation for one of the largest populations of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans jumped to second place by the twenty-first century, Chicana/o Studies has yet to reformulate its assumptions. See Davalos, et al, 2002.
  - 14 Chicago, IL. The Archdiocese of Chicago's Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Archives and Records Center (hereafter, AAC). St. Vitus Administrative Files, 1977–1991 (Box BB, 10044.07) and Parish Bulletins Files (Box HH, 10715.04).
  - 15 In Catholic context, the worker-priest movement was an experiment in France during the 1940s during which priests took factory jobs to reach out to workers that were alienated from the Church. James Colleran worked “first at loading docks in the fruit market” and later at the gas station near St. Vitus Parish. See Stark (1981: 180).
  - 16 Historical information about St. Vitus Parish is from Chicago, IL. AAC. St. Vitus Administrative Files, 1977–1991 (Box BB, 10044.07) and Parish Bulletins Files (Box HH, 10715.04).

- 17 For the definition of faith-based organizing federation, see Wood (2002: 68).
- 18 Additional research on the organization's twenty-year history might reveal how its inaugural efforts extend to residents of Little Village and the Back of the Yards as well as the suburbs. It was not until 1998 that TRP opened Casa Tabasco, its first affordable rental building in Little Village, with eight units. The critical mass of TRP residents and thus, the presence of a critical consciousness remain, in Pilsen, although the first residence for single mothers, Casa Sor Juana, opened in Little Village, not Pilsen, in 2000. In addition, major new developments were scheduled for the Back of the Yards in 2011.
- 19 Charles Dahm, a priest of the Dominican Order who served in South America and who cofounded the Eight Day Center for Justice in Chicago, is an experienced advocate for the poor. His ministry emphasizes human dignity and the struggle for justice, rejecting material inequality and denouncing discrimination against women and social outcasts. He has been very vocal against domestic violence and has organized separate workshops for victims and perpetrators. Since his arrival in 1986 and particularly since the closing of St. Vitus, Fr. Dahm has influenced TRP spiritual activism, and his retirement as pastor of St. Pius V Parish in 2004 allowed him to devote considerable time to TRP as well as campaigns against domestic violence and immigration reform.
- 20 According to Catherine Wilson, TRP strategized to replace comunidades de base with Social Ministry Action and Reflection Teams (SMART) at every member parish because the Christian base communities were not as robust in the new millennium. See Wilson (2002: 181).
- 21 It is important to register that housing was an issue across Mexican Catholic Chicago, even in the most geographically isolated Mexican community, South Chicago, located at the Illinois and Indiana border. In 1980, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish of South Chicago founded Claretian Associates Neighborhood Development (CANDO). This neighborhood-housing program provided "attractive, moderately priced homes" for low-income residents and built four new homes; purchased seven vacant lots for additional homes; began work with the city's Urban Affairs Office to secure additional sites; and formed block clubs to support homeowner maintenance and education. See Claretian Missionary Archives, Eastern Province, Oak Park, Illinois: Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish folder and "History of the Parishes," p. 694.
- 22 Catherine Wilson reports that "from 1998 until 2001, Holy Cross/IHM Parish [of the Back of the Yards] was a member institution of TRP" but formally separated in 2001 because of TRP's lack of attention to the Back of the Yards (2008: 187). My fieldwork in the summers of 2003 and 2004 suggests that the relationships with Back of the Yards parishes continued in the twenty-first century with and without membership status.
- 23 Interview of Cecilia Paz conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 24 June 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
- 24 Interview of Alicia Rocha conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 14 July 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
- 25 The Resurrection Project, <<http://www.reurrection-project.org/index.html>>. Web. See also interview of Raúl Raymundo conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 27 June 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
- 26 Interview of Edgar Hernández conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 18 July 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
- 27 Interview of Guacalda Reyes conducted by Karen Mary Davalos, 16 July 2003, Chicago, Illinois.
- 28 See Davalos (1997 and 2001) for a discussion of la quinceañera and Via Crucis in Chicago, respectively. The clerical backlash against la quinceañera which surfaced in the 1970s and 1980s was not sufficient to undermine Mexican Catholic popular religion in Pilsen.
- 29 For the case in which Cicero, a western suburb of Chicago, attempted to deny St. Anthony Parish enactment of the Way of the Cross, see Matovina (2012: 169).

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Fernando Llort, *Domingo en La Palma*, silk-screen print, 23" x 15.4", 2003