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Mexican Migrants and the 1920s Cristeros Era: An Interview with Historian Julia G. Young

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Editor's Note: The release last year of the film *For Greater Glory*,¹ provided an opportunity to learn about an early 20th century segment of Mexican contemporary history, of which many people in the U.S. were unaware. While the *Cristeros* ("Christers") Revolt was, in many ways, a final segment to the Mexican Revolution launched in 1910, a struggle which sought rights and citizenship for all (which had not been achieved through independence from Spain a century earlier), it was also a religious struggle. The new Mexican Constitution of 1917 included statutes for the separation of church and state (since the institution of the colonial era, the Catholic Church shared power equally with the government), but it was left to new presidencies to interpret how to enact them. As a result, initial laws called for an extreme halt in church practices; this greatly impacted everyday community life, and the populace objected by launching a new struggle. It should be remembered that the Catholic Church has always been involved in Mexican struggles, on both sides; in fact, it was Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla who launched the Revolution at midnight on September 15, 1910, with his *grito*, from the church tower (after their plans had been discovered by colonial authorities). A few months later, he was caught by the colonial army and beheaded. Thus, this priest is a great hero to contemporary Mexico, his *grito*, or yell, emulated each year for independence celebrations.

For context on the film *For Greater Glory*, Dr. Peter Casarella contacted an expert on the Cristero Revolt, and in January 2013 conducted a phone interview with Dr. Julia G. Young, Assistant Professor of History at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C. She is also a specialist on Mexican immigration to Chicago during the early 20th century, with several articles published on this period. She provides information from her book in preparation, titled: *Cristero Diaspora: Religion, Nationalism, and Identity Among Mexican Immigrants* (2012). Dr. Young previously taught at George Mason University, Georgetown University, and at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago. Her Ph.D. in Latin American History was received in 2009 from the University of Chicago; her dissertation was on Mexican emigration

during the Cristero Revolt of 1926-1929. In this interview, she also addresses ideas of presumed secularization after immigration.

Peter J. Casarella (PJC): It's an honor to speak to you, Julia. As a professional historian in [the] areas of the Mexican Revolution and Cristero Revolt, you can provide interesting perspective on this film.

Julia G. Young (JGY): Thank you. It's great to be here with you.

PJC: I'm excited to hear your comments on this subject.

JGY: I'd be happy to do that. As you can imagine, I was very interested in the movie when it came out, and arranged for a screening on the Catholic University campus, both because I wanted to see it, and also to publicize, let people know a little more about the Cristero [uprising]. I was very interested in seeing what the audience reaction would be. My own reaction was probably similar to that of any historian seeing a movie on the historical subject they examine: that it was a great picture but it was much more complicated than [depicted]. Part of the problem with a subject getting Hollywood treatment is that you lose a lot of the nuance and subtleties that we as historians see in the archives and try to bring out in our books. The job of the Hollywood movie is not necessarily to deal with subtleties.

I found it visually appealing, and emotionally resonant, although at times I thought it was a little emotionally overwrought. I wished the movie had dealt with the conflict in a more balanced way, in particular, to show those who are heroic and noble as well as those who commit vicious acts and heinous crimes, be they practicing Catholics or not. [Due to the 1910 Revolution], this was a really violent period in Mexican history, and violence came from both sides. There were also the ways that the movie portrayed those who represented the Mexican government, which I found somewhat simplistic, because most of these people were depicted as simple caricatures of godlessness and evil.

If you read the historical documents, you find people who were struggling [with the issue], people who considered themselves Catholic, but were also opposed to the role of the Catholic Church in the public sphere of the Mexican State.

The violence during the Cristero period was awful and bloody, and really a terrible time for many people in Mexico [not unlike the decade prior], but there were also people on both sides of the conflict who were trying to resolve the conflict through discussion and debate. This is lost in the movie because it simply focuses on the battles and bloodshed and moments of heroism. But on a positive note, I was glad the movie got people talking about Mexico in the 1920s, a topic that is not at the forefront of most peoples' understanding of Mexico and Mexican history. It was great to have the opportunity to screen this movie and talk about it with a much wider audience than I am accustomed to.

PJC: I agree with you that there was a lack of nuance in the presentation. Also, the movie didn't have a giant distribution. I had to go out to Cicero Avenue in Chicago, an area that is predominantly Mexican, in order to find a theater where it was playing. In follow-up, what do you think the impact was for Mexican Catholics in urban areas like Chicago, especially the younger generation, without a finely grained sense of their parents' historical past? I think that was one of the groups they were targeting.

JGY: That's interesting because the audience that I showed it to was primarily *not* Mexican-American, they were mostly Catholic, students of Catholic University, and they had a pretty positive reaction. Many of them said, "Wow, I never knew this conflict existed," or, "I never knew that there was such a strict crackdown on Catholics in Mexico." It was interesting to them, I think, precisely because they didn't know much about [history], and the movie just didn't give that to them. In terms of Mexican-Americans, it depends, I think, on which group of Mexican-Americans you talk to. I've spoken to some people who have family memories of the Cristero conflict. If they come from the area of the country where the war was fought most intensely, they might have a grandfather, an uncle, or a great-uncle who participated in some way, on one side or another.

Also, there have been a lot of silences about the Cristero Revolt. It's not because of some sort of conspiracy of the Mexican State to keep the story silent, but also because, in many ways, historians and popular figures in Mexican

culture aren't entirely clear on what it means. The Cristero period occurred at the end of the Mexican Revolution; in some ways it was a part of the violence of that Revolution, but in other ways it was somewhat different. There have been some wonderful books published, but I think the final judgment of what the conflict really meant has not been reached. There are many Mexican-Americans who, despite their ties to Mexico, aren't really aware, and others who, because they are religious and very culturally Catholic [are unsure how to address it]. I didn't speak with many people from Mexican-American communities about their reaction, but I imagine they would probably leave the movie feeling an emotional response as Catholics, a sense of wonder that Catholics in Mexico had been willing to die for their faith, and, maybe, a new critical perspective on the changes in the Mexican government. Among younger Mexican-Americans seeing this movie, its biggest contribution would be to find out this happened.

PJC: Well, hopefully those who saw it will respond to your book [upon publication], and consider the historical version beyond the Hollywood version.

JGY: I hope so. I mostly hope that seeing a movie like this will create questions in people's minds, and will inspire them to find out more, and read. We'll see.

RELIGIOUS REFUGEES VS. LABOR MIGRANTS

PJC: Let me turn now to your own research, because it's on this very topic. In your dissertation, you mentioned that there are many fine studies of Mexican migration; you focus on Los Angeles, San Antonio, and, to some, degree on Chicago. But you say that there hasn't been enough attention paid to the role of the Cristero Revolt as a cause, even a context, for migration in the 1920s. Why do you think that's the case and how did you reach that point of realization?

JGY: I think there are two reasons why that is the case. One is that there's a strong presumption within migration studies that when migrants come from a less developed country to an industrialized, "modern, Western" country, they tend to undergo a process of secularization. The idea is that people leave behind their villages where their family lives were stable, where they went to church and participated in particular cultural rituals, to become detached from these rhythms of peasant life, and become citizens of the

“Certainly there were plenty of immigrants who did not support the Cristero Revolt, or who probably didn’t think about it.”

modern world, where the governing rhythms are less church bells and more factory whistles. I think this may be one of the reasons why fewer scholars of migration have really investigated the role of religion. But they are beginning to confront this. More and more scholarship is beginning to contradict that [earlier] narrative.

There have been interesting studies during the last fifty years where religion has played a role within the historiography of Mexican migration to the U.S., but the number of works that have been produced that focus on religion is relatively small. Also, the historiography of the Cristero Revolt itself was treated for many years by historians as a regional conflict, [one] that occurred in the west-central region of Mexico. If you drew a circle around the area northwest of Mexico City, encompassing the states of Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Aguascalientes, and a little bit of Zacatecas—a colonial region of traditional towns and regions—that is where the Cristero Revolt was most intensely fought. Historians tended to think it was a regional conflict with national implications, that it occurred in this specific region, and that migration tended to [result in] secularization. What prompted me to seek a connection between migration and the Cristero conflict was actually that same geographic question: I noticed that more and more migrants during the 1920s came from the same geographical region where the war was fought. In fact, the primary sending states were Michoacán, Jalisco, and Guanajuato.

So I started looking into the archives, and found that not only were migrants from this region, they remained connected to what was going on in Mexico, reading newspapers about the Cristero conflict. Therefore, this geographical connection was very much alive in the minds of Mexican migrants. I also found that Mexican immigrants throughout the U.S., not from the Cristero region, from other states or Mexico City, were also showing up at meetings discussing what was happening in Mexico. That led me to question assumptions about secularization. Certainly there were plenty of immigrants who did not support the Cristero Revolt, or who probably didn’t think about it, even who [may have] stopped participating in religious rituals, but this picture of secularization and disconnection left out the

possibility that [some] people would have remained religious and very involved or concerned about this religious conflict.

PJC: How would you explain to someone who is not an expert in the field, such as myself, the relative importance—at least for the people from the west-central region of Mexico—of religious persecution vis-à-vis labor markets? I mean, you’re not denying that, for example in Chicago, the steel industry was a big factor in migration, are you?

JGY: I think the important thing to say here is that there isn’t always a neat distinction between somebody who comes as a refugee of a political situation, and someone who arrives as a labor-migrant. Some of the people might not have come if their fields hadn’t been burned the previous year during the armed conflict; others might have come as labor-migrants, and then became politically involved from the U.S. I think there is this tendency in migration studies to want to categorize everybody as either a political refugee and/or religious exile, or a labor-migrant. But I think there is a lot of overlap between these categories, and definitely when we are talking about Mexican migrants, who at the time, could arrive seasonally, leaving any number of reasons for leaving Mexico. It seems to me, from my research, that some people were forced to leave the country because they were in danger of political persecution or assassination, also, that many people who we as historians would classify as labor-migrants became politically involved in this conflict from the U.S.

PJC: What were the reasons that some Mexicans in the U.S. had for siding with the anti-clerical reforms? You state that those opposed to [President] Plutarco Calles, like the Cristero immigrants, were not necessarily a majority of Mexicans in the U.S.

JGY: The question of numbers has always been a difficult one because of the nature of the records. It wasn’t a time period when we had, either Mexico or the U.S., a really rigorous system of border control. We just don’t know exactly how many people crossed the border and settled

in certain places and where they were all from: wonderful statistical pieces of information that would be so helpful. Based on some really rough calculations—and remember that these are mathematical calculations by a historian, so take them with a large grain of salt—I would say that in some places, like El Paso and San Antonio, it's probably safe to say that maybe ten or twenty percent of those populations supported the Cristero cause. Maybe it was a lot more, but I'd like to cautiously estimate on the lower side. I've tried to use estimates of people participating in mass events like public protest[s] and religious parades and things like that. You asked about numbers and now I forget what the broader point of your question was.

PJC: Well, just to understand the two sides of the argument that was going on in the United States.

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE REVOLT

JGY: The Mexican government, headed by President Plutarco Elías Calles [his administration lasting from 1924-1928], who remained as *Jefe Máximo*, and selected puppet presidents, attempted to limit the political influence and role of the Catholic Church in Mexico, based on new statutes enacted in the 1917 Constitution. These statutes basically limited the

anticlerical politicians in Mexico. In a way, what happened in the 1920s represents a new swing of this pendulum of restrictions on the Church and relaxation of those restrictions, then returning to restrictions once again. Those restrictions were most widely enforced in the 1920s, but they didn't come out of nowhere; it wasn't President Calles out of nowhere saying, "I'm going to place these restrictions on the Catholic Church." This is a debate that had been ongoing.

Because the [laws] of the late 1920s were so widespread and more rigorously enforced, they prompted a widespread Catholic grassroots resistance. While they had been enshrined in the 1917 Mexican Constitution, the Calles government announced that these laws would go into effect in July of 1926. And the Mexican Episcopacy responded that "these laws make it impossible to live as Catholics in Mexico; impossible to conduct religious services." So the Episcopacy suspended all religious sacraments across Mexico and shuttered the doors of its churches, ceasing to provide for daily Catholic life. The suspension of the sacraments was actually the thing that probably prompted the grassroots resistance and eventual revolt by Mexican Catholics and devout believers. We should also remember that almost everyone we're talking about in this drama is a Mexican Catholic. Some of the people who were the most

“Should Catholicism be a national religion? Should clergy have any kind of political authority, or should they be completely out of politics?”

ability of priests and clergy to participate in Mexican politics. Some [of Calles'] laws were extremely strict, like forbidding clerical garb, forbidding priests from expressing any political opinion in any public place in Mexico, forbidding nuns and monks from wearing their habits in public, and finally outlawing religious education. The reason that they did this was to create a true separation of church and state. Some of these were ideas that came from the French Revolution, from the Enlightenment.

But this conflict didn't erupt out of nowhere. The entire 19th century following Mexican independence from Spain was a struggle between different political factions and in the public, about what the role of the Catholic Church should be. Should Catholicism be a national religion? Should clergy have any kind of political authority, or should they be completely out of politics? The Mexican Revolution, from 1910 to 1920, brought to power a group of politicians who were more radically anticlerical. But they weren't the first

anticlerical were Protestant, and there were also Masons (many of them had been baptized Catholic because Mexico, then and now, is a predominantly Catholic country). So this was a debate within a Catholic country. There were Mexican Catholics who took the anticlerical position because they believed that the Catholic Church should not play such a big role in politics, and that it should be relegated to a much smaller role in the people's lives. I hope that answers and gives you a backdrop.

PJC: That is an important context for asking a little about how the news of the war and positions taken by Mexican Catholics during the Cristero conflict were received in the U.S. You recently gave a presentation at the American Historical Association about something called the *Unión Nacionalista Mexicana*, which was kind of a propaganda machine in the U.S. for the war, wasn't it?

JGY: There were many reactions in the U.S., and it's important to talk about both the reaction of Mexican immigrants and exiles, and American Catholics, because the latter were also closely following the conflict and trying to generate public sympathy and support from the broader American Catholic population. I study the Mexican migrant response, but by necessity I also look at the larger American Catholic response. Of course, the two happened at the same time and were really linked to each other. My research deals with how

little later. Initially started in the Midwest, its headquarters moved to Texas and then to California.

PJC: Thank you. You suggest in your dissertation that the Cristero immigrants in Chicago might have had a little more freedom compared to those closer to the border, or at least that there were less pertinent concerns about border security and spying. Did I get that right?

“One of those groups . . . , the *Unión Nacionalista Mexicana* . . . , was started by a Mexican immigrant in Chicago named Carlos Fernández.”

Mexican migrants responded to the Cristero War in Mexico, especially those supporting the Cristero cause. To express their support, they participated in a number of activities, as simple as going to Mass, hearing homilies about the cause in Mexico, or a special prayer or collection taken up for their brothers on the battlefield. Others participated in public protests. In San Antonio, there were protests in front of the Mexican consulate, and Mexican citizens signed a petition requesting the Mexican government to stop persecuting the Catholic Church. I'm really interested in the spontaneous responses, but also, in the more organized responses. What I found was that, very quickly after the onset of the conflict, Mexicans in the U.S. began organizing associations and groups to respond to the conflict and publicize the conflict in the U.S. They had the idea that if they could generate enough support from the broader American public, as well as the Mexican immigrant public, they could do something about the conflict.

One exiled bishop expressed the view—and I paraphrase here—that the United States could be another battlefield, a place to organize and fight the war, but instead of militarily, by raising funds or producing propaganda. One of those groups (they existed throughout the country, wherever there were Mexican immigrants) was the *Unión Nacionalista Mexicana*, aimed to become a kind of umbrella organization. It was started by a Mexican immigrant in Chicago named Carlos Fernández. The jury is out on how successful it was, but it tried to unite all of the different Mexican associations from around the country in order to undertake a better organized effort that incorporated as many Mexican immigrants as possible into their registry, and [to launch] a propaganda campaign in the U.S. That organization survived from 1928 until 1932, and perhaps a

THE WORK OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS

JGY: That's an idea I'm still exploring in a separate article, that is, the Mexican government and its role in monitoring the activities of Mexican Cristero supporters in the U.S. Like any other government, the [new] Mexican government was concerned about political dissidents, especially in the immediate years after the Mexican Revolution. In the late 1920s, certain organizations connected to the Mexican government, particularly the Center for Public Security, a sort of Mexican FBI, became concerned about the number of Mexicans going to the U.S. and organizing politically. That organization began sending agents and investigators across the border to follow the people they suspected of organizing events or raising money to bring down the Mexican government. One quote, for example, and again I'm paraphrasing, was that San Antonio was a nest of spies. They were sent to infiltrate the Mexican immigrant community in San Antonio and see if any kind of anti-government activities were being organized. I have found evidence that a couple of Mexican government agents traveled to Chicago, but these were short trips. In the border areas of Texas, New Mexico, and even Southern California, it was much easier for the Mexican government to send people into communities.

PJC: I want to come back to Chicago but, before I do that, can I ask a question about something you mentioned earlier, the dissident bishops? A letter sent by the Mexican bishops early in 1926, called [the] *Carta Pastoral a México*, is very interesting and in some ways a strange document— what do you make of that?

JGY: It is interesting to me that the bishops may have had,

“In San Antonio, there were protests in front of the Mexican consulate, and Mexican citizens signed a petition [asking] to stop persecuting the Catholic Church.”

initially, a united response to the Mexican government and their restrictions. The Episcopacy very quickly fragmented into a couple different parties. Specifically, you had the more conciliatory bishops, who were very interested in ending the conflict, in negotiating with the government to try to find the way to get Mexicans in Mexico to lay down their arms. And the Mexican government wanted to allow the Catholic Church to function, at least to some degree as it had before. Then you had a couple of bishops—maybe we can call them radicals—who were opposed to any kind of compromise. They believed that Catholics in Mexico should fight to the end and not be willing to lay down their arms until they had achieved complete freedom to be Catholic in the public sphere in Mexico.

In the end, the conciliatory bishops sort of won (if anyone can be seen to have won), because it was they who compromised with the Mexican government and got Mexicans to lay down their arms. But some of the radical bishops, one in particular that I studied is José de Jesús Manríquez y Zárate, were very disillusioned about what the other bishops had done and the way the conflict had been settled, and they kept the war going in their own minds and in their writings. In the case of Manríquez y Zárate [with comments like], “Well, Mexicans may have stopped fighting but we are still going to continue fighting for the cause.” There was a bit of dissent between the more conciliatory, practical bishops and the others, who believed this was a moment of heroism and martyrdom for the Catholic Church in Mexico.

PJC: And it seems to me that the debate about religious freedom in Mexico continues up to this day and has not been fully resolved.

I want to turn back to Chicago, to be parochial, another area where the debate about nationalism comes to the fore with Cardinal George Mundelein, who is associated rightly or wrongly with a strong nationalism drive toward assimilation for ethnic minorities, for example, the Irish and German nationals in the city of Chicago. But he made an exception when he found out about the Cristero War, didn't he?

THE FOUNDING OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH

JGY: One of the interesting things going on with Mexican migrants during the Cristero years is that many of them—not a significant portion of the total number, but probably a couple of thousand—were actually clerical exiles. They were members of religious orders, priests, and the Episcopacy, who came to the U.S. from Mexico in April 1927. So the conflict in Mexico that caused these priests and nuns, monks and bishops to relocate was a real problem for the U.S. Catholic Church, which had to deal with the question of how to resettle these religious exiles. At the same time, because there had been this surge of Mexican-origin population, there was an ongoing debate about how to minister to them: they were poorer, didn't speak English, and were coming to areas where the Catholic Church had not been particularly strong before, [such as] Los Angeles, and border towns. They had two problems that [found a solution together]: send these refugee priests and nuns to communities in need of pastoral care. So the U.S. Catholic Church basically had a relocation program.

I think this did end up being an exception to the ongoing trend towards Americanization of the ethnic Catholic Churches, because there was this debate going on about letting people have Masses in their own languages or have Masses in English. Should we be an ethnic church, a church of different nationalities, or an American church? I think the Church was moving towards becoming more Americanized, one where English was the common language, but because of the clergy arriving from Mexico, it provided some creative solutions, allowing the U.S. Catholic Church to provide for the pastoral needs of this immigrant community in a way it hadn't been able to. A lot of these clerical exiles would go back to Mexico, but some actually ended up staying in the U.S. Some founded parishes during the Cristero years; many of those parishes still exist. In fact, coincidentally, I have a cousin who is a nun in a convent in California that was founded by a Mexican Mother Superior and the rest of her order who fled Mexico during the Cristero period. This war in Mexico ended up providing a revitalization, or perhaps, a vitalization of the Catholic Church [in the U.S.]. It provided personnel, [and] service

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for the Church. Since the exiled Mexican religious usually came penniless, the U.S. Catholic Church provided the needed material and financial support.

In Chicago, one of the most important religious groups that came were the Claretians; they had actually come just before the Cristero Revolt years, and were instrumental in founding the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish—important to this day. The Claretian Archives are in Chicago and managed by Malachy McCarthy, who wrote his dissertation on Mexican Catholics in Chicago. I know he would be happy to see people come and do research on this topic. He has a wonderful collection of documents about Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, and the Claretians, as well as the role of these exiles in the Chicago community.

PJC: Malachy McCarthy’s dissertation title, a question, “Which Christ Came to Chicago?,” is an imitation, or repetition, of the title of a famous evangelical broadside from the late 19th century.² In telling the story about the Claretians founding Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, he says that being charged with the pastoral care of the Mexican immigrants, they adopted some of the techniques of Protestants. How does your research on the Cristeros in the Midwest and Chicago add nuance to that story?

JGY: I think that nationally, then as now, the U.S. Catholic Church was very concerned with the encroachment of Protestant evangelization on the Mexican community and saw this community as being particularly vulnerable. I’ve seen some documents from the National Catholic Welfare Conference with comments like, “...the arrival of these exiles may present an opportunity for us because this allows us to minister better to the Catholic community and maybe to prevent some of the Protestant evangelizing.” So one way to see it is that the arrival of the exiles, and the concern about what was going on in Mexico with the Cristero conflict, may have served in some ways to arrest the outward migration of Catholic Mexicans to the Protestant religions. I haven’t dealt much with the Protestant side of the story, but I did see some interesting documents in the archives in Mexico, where you have Protestant Mexicans writing to the Mexican government and saying, “... we really

support what you are doing. We think that the powers of the Catholic Church should be limited.”

I think Malachy’s work is really interesting and valuable, but I don’t really write on that kind of battle between the groups, I guess, for the soul of the Mexican community. My speculation is that the arrival of the clerical exiles provided a kind of a revitalization that not only got people to think more about their Catholicism and Catholic identity, but also gave people a reason to remain Catholic in a patriotic way. But I can’t say that the conflict actually stopped people from converting or changed the process.

PJC: It’s hard to make definitive judgments without having real documents in front of you.

JGY: I think this story probably tells us more about Catholics than it does about conversion or about Protestant evangelization. I think it tells us that the Catholic Church was in perhaps a stronger position than it would have been a few years earlier, due to the arrival of these religious exiles and their role in the community. I think this is true in Chicago and also in other parts of the U.S. The Cristero Revolt caused American Catholics to become more interested in Mexican Catholics than they might have been otherwise. American Catholics were disturbed by the Mexican government’s restriction on the Catholic Church, and some would pay visits to the Mexican communities and participate in Mexican Catholic activities as a way of publicly supporting the Catholic side of the conflict. You saw this with Cardinal Mundelein, and you also saw this in San Antonio with Bishop Arthur Drossaerts, and then in Los Angeles with Bishop John Cantwell.³ What you had was the Episcopacy in the U.S. becoming involved with Mexican communities in a way that I don’t think they had really done in the decade before.

PJC: That gets me to my last question. You use the term “community organizing” in your dissertation, and that’s obviously a very topical theme in Mexican Catholicism in the U.S., even today. Timothy Matovina has a chapter on public Catholicism in his new book,⁴ and Karen Mary Davalos has an article in *Diálogo 16:1* on a community

organizing project in Pilsen. I don't want to be anachronistic, but is there some connection, whether positively or negatively, between Cristero immigrants, or the Cristero War, on the one hand, and the emergence in the 20th century of community organizing in these Mexican Catholic communities?

JGY: That's really interesting and something that I plan on investigating for the last chapter of this book I am working on. I would like to find and talk to people about their memories, family memories, of this conflict. Chicago is a place where there have been several generations of Mexican migrants, although there have also been new arrivals. Therefore, people who are defenders of the Cristero-era migrants may have different memories of the period, and their family's involvement, than those whose families arrived in the 1970s and 80s. Numerically, the vast majority of Mexicans [who] came to the U.S. came after the 1960s. So really, it's a smaller minority of Mexicans that have a direct connection to that 1920s wave of migration.⁵

In the general population, I don't find that many Mexican Americans [who] know about the Cristero Revolt or have an opinion about it, by any means. But when I talk to people who are devout, people in convents (a limited number of people), or those who had grandparents or parents that migrated as a result of the Cristero War, they have a specific memory and narrative about the fact [that] they came to the U.S. to seek freedom from religious persecution. And this is really different from the common story of Mexican migration, which is more around economics: labor migration. When you hear people [addressing] migration, using words like "exile" or "exodus", or "religious persecution", that tells me that there is another interesting narrative going on. But it's a smaller narrative within the larger narrative about Mexican migration. I'm interested in talking to more people and then teasing it all out, but not sure at this point how definite those connections or lines can be drawn.

PJC: Well, I'm glad there is still more work for you to do.

JGY: Yes, I guess I'm glad (laughs).

PJC: Dr. Young, I want to thank you for sharing your expertise and research with the readers of *Diálogo*. Is there anything else you would like to add?

JGY: I hope that if your readers are interested in this subject, and in particular, if they have family memories and are Mexican American, I'd be very interested in hearing from them and talking to them. I'm always interested in talking to [new] people about the history of this conflict, so they can reach out to me at the Catholic University of America. Thank you so much for talking to me.

PJC: Thank you. This has been a great opportunity to learn about not just Mexican history, but also some of the history of Catholics here in Chicago, and a great contribution to our DePaul academic journal. Thank you again.

ENDNOTES

- 1 June 2012, director Dean Wright (*Chronicles of Narnia*), starring Andy García, Eva Longoria, and Rubén Blades, among others.
- 2 Malachy McCarthy, "Which Christ came to Chicago? Catholic and Protestant Programs to Evangelize, Socialize, and Americanize the Mexican Immigrant, 1900-1940," Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 2002.
- 3 For more details, see Julia G. Young, "Cristero Diaspora: Mexican Immigrants, The U.S. Catholic Church, and Mexico's Cristero War, 1926-29," *Catholic Historical Review* 98:2 (April 2012); 271-300; on the bishops at page 284.
- 4 See Timothy Matovina, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 190-218.
- 5 See report by Pew Research Hispanic Center: <<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/04/15/mexican-immigrants-in-the-united-states-2008>>.