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ALL FOR CATHOLICISM AND FAMILY: THE DE LA TORRE FAMILY DURING THE CRISTERO MOVEMENT 1900-1980

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ALL FOR CATHOLICISM AND FAMILY: THE DE LA TORRE FAMILY DURING THE CRISTERO MOVEMENT 1900-1980

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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For my grandfather, Francisco Ballesteros; my parents, Ruben and Leticia Rodriguez; and my aunt, Elena Laura Ballesteros

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Abstract

My thesis focuses on the De la Torre family, an extraordinary family, who participated in the Cristero War in the Sonora Arizona border region. The Cristero War (1926-1929) was a conflict between the Mexican government and the Catholic Church in Mexico. The family was frustrated with the Mexican government's enforcement of anti-clerical laws in the Constitution of 1917, the deportation of Catholic clergy, and shutting churches down. They were involved in Cristero organizations such as the Asociación Católica de la Juventud (ACJM) and the Liga Nacional de la Libertad Religiosa. The De la Torre family part took in, rallied, and took part a Cristero combat group in hopes to restore celebrating Catholicism in Mexico.

The thesis argues that Catholic parents like the De la Torre parents nurtured the value of martyrdom in their children. When those children became adults, they were willing to risk their lives for the Catholic faith. This study expands the narrative of the Cristero War by including the family perspective in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. The thesis spans three chapters, each focusing on one member of the De la Torre family. The first chapter focuses on the eldest daughter, Maria de la Torre, and argues that women like Maria were representatives for their families in the Catholic communities. Her martyrdom shows her sacrifice of social life by never marrying or having children. The second chapter centers on Alfonso de la Torre and how he highlighted Catholic masculinity. His martyrdom falls within the traditional view of giving up one's life for the Catholic faith. The last chapter analyzes Ignacio de la Torre's life and highlights the relationship between the Church and state. His martyrdom reflects traditional martyrdom and a loss of personal autonomy to fulfill the Church's needs. The thesis relies on oral histories, family correspondence, family portraits, and political cartoons to narrate how Catholic families endured during the Cristero War.

Introduction:

Family and Catholicism in the Borderlands

Manuel Ballesteros Leal was baptized, in secret, in 1928 at the Chapel of *Los Dulces Jesus Jose y Maria* in Monterrey, Nuevo León. During this year, the Mexican President, Álvaro Obregón Salido, issued a presidential decree that Roman Catholic Churches were to be closed. The Ballesteros family managed to baptize Manuel through their connections and legal loopholes. According to Elena Laura Ballesteros, Manuel's niece, the chapel was on private property, which did not fall under the federal government's authority; this allowed the Ballesteros family to baptize Manuel, regardless of the law. Manuel Ballesteros Leal was my maternal great uncle. This story shows the risks family members took to pass on their culture and faith to their children.[1]

The De la Torre family, from the Sonoran border region, was another family that risked their safety, comfort, and lives for the chance to pass their Catholic faith to their children and future generations. This family, which had seven sons and one daughter, joined the Cristiada by getting involved with Catholic activism and/or the Catholic clergy. Their main motivation to participate in the religious conflict was to preserve the Catholic faith in Mexico, but other motivations played a role such as fulfilling gender roles and resentment towards the Mexican Revolutionary government. Similar to the Ballesteros family, the De la Torre's strong alliance to Catholicism was due to parental influence. This was an extraordinary family that thanks, to their connections, social standing, and sources left behind gives scholars a glimpse of how families functioned in a time of conflict between the state and the church.

[1] This information came from my family history with the conversations with my aunt, Elena Laura Ballesteros. February 12, 2024.

These stories spark questions about the role of family members in forming children's Catholic faith and perception of what constitutes a good society during the Cristero War. Two questions fueled this thesis: why Cristeros were willing to sacrifice their lives for Catholicism and what role did parental influence have on children's understanding of Catholicism during the Cristero War? My pursuit to understand how families valued Catholicism led me to discover many families in Mexico willing to break the law to practice their faith. The De la Torre family, who spent most of their lives in the Sonora-Arizona border region, was one of many families who partook in the Cristero Movement.

This thesis argues that Catholic parents such as the De la Torres instilled the value of martyrdom for Catholicism in their children. Martyrdom, in this thesis, consisted of any level of sacrifice for the love of Catholicism. As a result, the children, as adults, were inclined to risk their lives for Catholicism during the Cristero War. In other words, Catholic parents made sure their children had a deep love for Catholicism that they would be willing to protect their faith in the same way they would protect their family and friends. I argue that the idea of martyrdom was a significant factor to motivate people to join the Cristero movement. The motivation for martyrdom extends beyond spiritual accomplishment. As this thesis will show, martyrdom was encouraged through gender expectation, status of holiness, and positive legacies for living family members. Each family member contributed significantly either to sustain the family finances or the Cristero movement. The De la Torre family advocated for vision of a Mexican nation after the revolution that heavily aligned with their morals and values to Catholic doctrine. This was made evident by their letters, images, newsletters, and actions.

This thesis attempts to understand how the motivations, aspirations, and perspectives of the children were affected by the De la Torre's parenting. The thesis will trace the lives of the De

la Torre children and their environment shaped by the bitter conflict between the Church and Mexican state. Understanding the children's environment provides a glimpse into understanding how these children made decisions once they became adults. This thesis aims to understand the factors explaining why six of the eight De la Torre children were heavily involved in the Cristero Movement. While my thesis will acknowledge the various reasons for joining the movement, I contribute to the historiography of Catholic families during the Cristero War by examining the role of spirituality within Catholic families in post-revolutionary Mexico. This thesis demonstrates how far many families were willing to go to establish a Catholic foundation in children, using the De la Torre family's story as a case study. The thesis will also discuss other families that showed similar values of martyrdom and Catholicism to the De la Torre family to demonstrate commonality between different families. While this thesis will reference other people and their experiences, this thesis will primarily focus on the De la Torre experience.

This thesis details the multigenerational contributions to the Cristero War within the De la Torre family. The parents, Don Ignacio and Doña Maria, supported the Cristero movement in 1927, where they had homes in both Tampico and San Luis Potosí. The family fled to Nogales, Arizona after Mexican federal soldiers discovered their involvement with the Cristeros and stationed soldiers to observe both of their homes.[2]When the Sonoran governor, Rodolfo Calles, enforced the anti-religious laws, the De la Torre children stepped up with other Cristeros to stand up for the preservation of Catholicism in Mexico.

While there were many families, like the De la Torres, who engaged in the Cristero War, it is important to recognize the complexity of Cristero motivations. This thesis does not argue

[2] "De la Torre Family Online Exhibit Life along the Borderlands,", *La Vida Fronteriza: Church, Economy and Daily Life- Excerpts from the De la Torre Papers*, Accessed September 12, 2024. https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/exhibits/show/delatorre/intro

that the De la Torre family was representative of all Catholic families in Mexico post-revolution. The battle cry for the Cristero movement was "Long Live Christ the King! Long Live the Virgin of Guadalupe!"[3] However, not every Cristero fought for religious reasons, as the De la Torre family did. As this thesis will show, there were several reasons for a Mexican Catholic to join the Cristero movement, including political, economic, and social advantages.

Martyrdom served as hope for Cristeros to take a stand for Catholicism in Mexico. A martyr gained respect, memorialization, and sainthood within the Catholic Church. This honor bestowed after death motivated Catholics during the Cristero War to endure through the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Mexican state. Martyrdom gave courage and hope to push back against the growing secularization in Mexico. However, I do not suggests that Catholic families were raising their children to prepare to be slaughtered by the Mexican government. Many of the sources that described parents talking to their children about martyrdom are clear that the parents use the phrase 'if the time comes' or 'if God wills it'.[4] These phrases showed that parents told their children that if the moment came, where they had to choose between renouncing their faith or death, they should choose death if they love their faith. In this case parents made it clear that children should not look for death.

Scholar's conversations about martyrdom open the discussion on martyrdom's political influences. Marisol Lopez-Mendez's definition of martyrdom clarifies the role of martyrdom for Catholic activism. She writes, "A martyr is defined in most traditions as 'one who knows that to profess their faith may result in death, but chooses to profess faith through their life...'"[5] In this

[3] Spanish Translation:¡Viva Cristo Rey! ¡Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!
[4] The stories will be elaborated in further chapters, but these stories came from the Cristero Rebellion Martyrs Photo Album, MSH/LAT 0086, 1926-1929, University of Notre Dame Hesburgh Library Archives.
[5] Marisol Lopez-Menéndez, *Miguel Pro: Martyrdom, Politics, and Society in Twentieth Century Mexico*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016), xviii.

context, Catholic activists used martyrdom to emphasize the importance of a Catholic-centered society. The glory and honor bestowed onto a martyr is a secondary motivation for groups like the Acción Juventud Católica Mexicana (ACJM) that viewed sacrificing their lives for the Catholic faith as an honorable action.

The U.S.-Mexican border made the Cristero War more complicated because it gave room for the United States to involve themselves in the conflict, which placed pressure on the Mexican government to resolve the Cristiada quickly. Historian Erick Meeks has written, "Historians have often suggested that immigrants to the United States were uprooted or pushed out of their home country by poverty and/or political oppression, while being pulled by economic and/or political opportunity in the United States."[6] Meeks's statement fits the De la Torre family's narrative because they used the border to escape federal authorities when they were being watched by spies due to their involvement of the Cristeros. Catholic families during the periods of the Mexican Revolution and the Cristero War used the border to access education, economic opportunities, and safety. On the U.S. side, there were concerns about the influx of immigrants coming in from Mexico for the second time, the first being the Mexican revolution. The family's reliance on the U.S. border did not mean they felt at home at the United States. People used the border for opportunity without aiming for U.S. citizenship. In the case of the De la Torre family, they relied on the United States for education and safety.

The De la Torre's did not identify themselves racially or socially. However, the sources can give scholars insight to how others might perceive the family. The De la Torre's immigration papers revealed racial biases within the United States, which favored White Americans. Based

[6] Eric V. Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona*, (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2007), 73.

on their U.S. immigration papers, which described their noses and mouths as 'Regular', people would perceive the De la Torres around them as white-passing Mexican citizens.[7] Two cases within the family archive mentioned race. One De la Torre family member, Francisco, mentioned his surprise to see black servers at a train station in Arizona.[8] The other comes from Alfonso de la Torre, who drew a political cartoon of a Black man, and a man labeled as Mexicans in Texas which was meant to highlight their similar experiences in the United States.[9] I bring this up to acknowledge the fact that race influenced a person's view, thoughts, and actions in the Cristero War narrative; however, most sources indicated that the De la Torre's main identity was Catholic while showing loyalty to Mexico. For the sake of portraying this moment of history from the eyes of the De la Torre's, this thesis does not dive into the history of class, race, or ethnicity. Other scholars of the Cristero War and Mexican revolution discuss race and ethnicity in depth, but this thesis will primarily focus on the De la Torre family's religious perspective.

The De la Torre family had a history book about their family titled *Estampas Cristeras,* this narrative showed the history of the Cristero War from their perspective. The family were financially stable with Don Ingancio de la Torre working and Doña Maria staying at home to raise the children. However, when the Mexican Revolution occurred, the family faced financial hardship.[10] Their son Ignacio mentioned in his letter to his sister, Maria, about the lack of a

[7] Principal: Servicio de Migración Tarjeta de identificación expedía por La Delegación de Migración de C.Juarez, Chih. A Torre, Uibarren María de la, Dec-1928, from De la Torre Family papers-ms420 biographical files: Immigration documents 1927-1942 1/18, University of Arizona Special Collections library.
[8] Francisco de la Torre, *Carta de Francisco de la Torre a su hermana Maria*, 1921-02-04, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library), 1.
[9] *Tercer trabajo hecho en 1/7 y 8/29*, 1929, Ms cartoons- Alfonso de la Torre nd, 1928-1930, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library)
[10] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", 13, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections).

maid.[11] Despite the financial hardships they faced due to the Mexican Revolution and the Great Depression, the family still had means to support the Cristero War and have the women stay at home. Considering these factors, it can be speculated that the family was a middle-class family that had more resources to contribute to the Cristero movement as opposed to other Catholic families.

Finally, it is important to recognize that many sources I rely on to narrate the story of the De la Torre family come from the family. Their writings were intended either for themselves or other people who aligned with their views of the Cristiada. This is to say that it is important to recognize the biases prevalent in these sources that paint the family and beliefs in a positive manner. Their devotion to Catholicism, love of their family, and loyalty towards the Cristero movement make their letters and point of view hagiographic.[12] I do not aim to judge nor dispute the family's sources or perspective, but I bring it up to recognize the role of their love for each other and Catholicism influences their view of the world.

Historiography:

This study shows how parents can imprint their goals on their children. This thesis builds on and contributes to scholarship on the Cristero War, Mexican education and families, Catholicism, and the U.S.-Mexico border. My work on the De la Torre family provides a micro history of family structure in the border region during the Cristero War. I agree with historians' argument that Mexican and Catholic Church leaders wanted to cement authority over children's upbringing, education, and families. Mexican families had a choice to make their alliance with

[11] Ignacio de la Torre, *Carta de Ignacio de la Torre a su hermana Maria de la Torre, sin fecha (a)*, Special Collection Online Exhibits, De la Torre Family papers from University of Arizona Special Collections Library.
[12] The Cambridge Dictionary defines hagiography as a method of writing about a person or event in an admiring view making the subject appear perfect or better than they were realistically. Dictionary.cambridge.org-Haigographic

either the Mexican government or the Catholic Church. My thesis will show the importance of considering experiences and motivations of people to participate in a political, social, or religious conflict.

Martrydom is important to the De la Torre family's stories and the stories of other Cristero families. Historians, sociologists, and other scholars have contributed to our understanding of martyrdom by dissecting martyrdom from fanaticism and extremism. For example, Robert Weis, a historian, separates Catholic activists' motivations from the generalization of fanaticism, or an extreme take on a subject. For instance, Weis described Jose Leon Toral's motivations for assassinating Álvaro Obregón. He wrote, "Assassination is what a historical subject does. Fanaticism is an imposed label that delegitimizes."[13] This same method of isolating motivations from generalization and stereotypes provides a clearer vision of Cristero motivations to get involved in the Cristiada. Historian, Jean Meyer, has reflected on the role of martyrdom in his Cristero narrative, "…the spilling of blood is not a proof of deep conviction; it does not automatically transform the hero into a martyr….One must consider it as a manifestation of the desire for Heaven when one learns that after the rising on Sunday, 27, November 1926, at Totatiche, the oldest people who were unarmed, joined the crowd saying: 'We are going, we old ones who are good for nothing, to give our lives for God.' Remarks such as these were common: 'We must win Heaven now that it is cheap,'…"[14] Meyer shows the complexity of martyrdom and highlights the role of religion in sacrificing life for God. However, he only focused on men who died or groups of people. He did not highlight the relationship of women and martyrdom; rather he portrayed women in a grieving role.

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[13] Robert Weis, *For Christ and Country: Militant Catholic Youth in Post-Revoluitonary Mexico*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 4-5.
[14] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State 1926-1929*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), 190.

While Jean Meyer emphasized the role of religion in the ideas of martyrdom, sociologist, Marisol Lopez Menéndez highlighted social and political motivations for martyrdom. She wrote, "Martyrdom is often featured in struggles for democracy or other causes related to social and political transformations. Thus, transitions to democracy have created icons of people who have died while acting to promote a political cause, to transform relations between civil society on one side and State on the other, or to modify some of the characteristics of the status quo." [15] Lopez-Menéndez, expanded the definition of a martyr to include political and social movements as well as Cristero War participants. Her contribution to our understanding of the Cristero War is to offer a distinct perspective of martyrdom separated from religiosity. Finally, Mark Lawerence, a historian, also contributed to conversations about martyrdom by analyzing martyrdom outside of a religious perspective. He wrote, "Amidst this new research, the military history of the Cristero War remains somewhat underdeveloped. This shortcoming can partly be explained by the halo effect of sacred history which, along with an overall tendency for veterans writing memoirs to downplay the horrors of war for the sake of their readers, had clad Cristero military history in the ill-fitting clothes of political, social, and cultural history."[16] While Lopez focused on one man's story of martyrdom, Lawrence focuses on the broader narrative and follows the tendency to separate religion from motivations. I agree to an extent with all scholars that discuss martyrdom. Religion was a crucial factor in martyrdom in a religious conflict like the Cristero War. But social and political issues factor into the narrative as well because motivations are a combination of different elements. My thesis considers martyrdom in the aspects previously mentioned, but I emphasize the role of spirituality in martyrdom.

[15] Marisol López-Menéndez, *Miguel Pro: Martyrdom, Politics, and Society in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, xxi.
[16] Mark Lawrence, "Popular violence and 'lay religion' in centre-west Mexico during Mexico's Cristero War (1926-29)" *Historical Encounters Journal*,10(2), December 21, 2023, pp. 86.

The works of Marisol Lopez-Menendez and Stephen J.C. Andes provide perspectives on Catholicism in Mexico and martyrdom. This thesis relies on the theory of martyrdom to emphasize one of the motivations to involve themselves in the Cristero War. The Roman Catholic Church alludes to martyrdom in its doctrine when the topic of saints occurs. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reads, "Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death."[17] This definition embodies the perspective of many people involved in the Cristero War. The Cristero conflict created martyrs that were on the path to sainthood such as Anacleto Gonzales Flores and Miguel Pro. This thesis adds the role of martyrdom to the story of the Cristero War to include other ways people sacrificed for the Catholic Church in twentieth-century Mexico.

The Cristero War was a moment in Mexico's history that has drawn scholarly attention ever since. One lingering question is how such a religious conflict could occur in Mexico, where Catholicism is the dominant religion. Cristero War historians, such as Jean Meyer and Julia G. Young, contribute to historians' understanding about the conflict between the Catholic Church and the revolutionary government.[18] One of the earliest works about the Cristero War was Jean Meyer's *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State 1926-1929.* This book offers an overview of the Cristero War using the perspectives of the Mexican government and the Cristeros on the causes of the Cristero War. Meyer argues that the tensions between the Church and state during the Cristero war stemmed from tensions that were many centuries old.[19] Meyer provides a foundation for Cristero War history including the motivations

[17] The Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church (second edition)*, (NE: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) CCC:1808 section 2473. Accessed, November 25, 2024. https://usccb.cld.bz/Catechism-of-the-Catholic-Church/6/,

[18] In this thesis, when I mention the Catholic Church, it usually refers to both Mexican clergy and laypeople. I will specify when I talk about the Vatican or if I am only talking about one portion of the Mexican Catholic community.

[19] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican people between Church and State 1926-1929*,13.

of the Church and the state. She also highlights social class in the narrative by showing how in this narrative, social class determined the experiences of Cristeros. The Cristero War relied on the labor of peasants and the leadership of educated Catholic leaders. While there were leaders who were not peasants, including Anacleto Gonzales Flores, General Enrique Gorostieta Velarde, and Luis Segura Vilchis, the Cristero movement's main supporters were the Mexican peasantry.[20]

However, because he covers a grand narrative dating to the colonial era, she misses the motivations of people who made up the Cristero soldiers in his book. Jean Meyer also recorded oral histories from surviving Cristeros between the 1960s and the 1990s. He examined spirituality on foundational level, meaning he interacts with the role of spirituality, but he could have examined spirituality on a deeper level. The oral histories Meyer collected allowed me to further incorporate some of these Cristeros' experiences to paint a complex picture of why Cristeros participated in the first place.

Recently, Cristero War historiography has included narratives that explain how the Cristero conflict impacted different aspects of Mexican society. For example, Julia G. Young's book, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War*, expands the Cristero War narrative to include the United States and the deportation of Catholic people from Mexico due to Mexican political climate that sparked the war. My research contributes to this historiographic trend, by providing a glimpse of how Mexican Catholic families adapted during the Cristero War in the U.S.-Mexican border region.

Scholars interested in the Cristero War must deal with Cristero participants' spirituality. Recent work by scholars such Jean Meyer, Julia G. Young, Marisol Lopez-Menéndez, and other scholars regarding spirituality falls on a spectrum. On one hand, scholars appear to accept

[20] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People between Church and State 1926-1929*, 23-24.

Cristero spiritual claims without critically analyzing how spirituality shaped their social, political, and cultural views. On the other hand, other scholars take a critical stance on spirituality, by setting spirituality aside and focusing on the Cristero movement through a secular lens, that they risk delegitimizing spirituality. This thesis aligns with Jean Meyer's approach that takes Cristero participants' spirituality seriously as a motive for joining the Cristero War. At the same time, I consider how childhood, political beliefs, and the cultural environment influenced the Cristeros' religious beliefs. Overall, this thesis addresses the role of spirituality, political, cultural, and childhood experiences to provide a different approach to understand Cristero motivations.

Children in twentieth-century Mexico witnessed the strained relationship between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government. The questions regarding Mexican childhood experiences boil down to: what role have children played in Mexican history. The historiography of Mexican childhood has answered this question by arguing that children had an active role in Mexican society in the twentieth century. The perception of children and childhood vary from country to country. In Mexico, childhood after the Mexican Revolution symbolized the future of Mexico, so the role of children expanded from being a member of a family to an active role in Mexican society through government led programs.[21] Eileen Mary Ford, Elena Jackson Albarrán, and Anne Shelby Blum's work are foundational to my approach to Mexican childhood history. Eileen Mary Ford's book, *Children of the Mexican Miracle: Childhood and Modernity in Mexico City, 1940-1968*, shows how children were political and social tools for parents, the state, and the church to organize Mexico City according to individual visions. Albarrán contributes to Mexican children's history by analyzing children's responses to various revolutionary government

[21] Elena Jackson Albarrán, *Seen and Heard in Mexico: Children and Revolutionary Cultural Nationalism,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 7.

programs. While Albarrán shows children's reactions to government policies, Anne Blum looks at social and political programs aimed at children affected by the revolution.

These authors reflect on the important roles children play in society and how the Catholic priests, secular educators, and government leaders interacted with these children. The De la Torre's valuable letters and records from their childhood provides another vision of childhood post-revolution. Elena Albarrán, Oscar Lewis, Anne Shelby Blum, and Mary Kay Vaughan discuss the history of childhood in Mexico with snippets of children's experiences from interviews and stories. These books focus on the attempts of the government and the Church to control Mexican childhood. The De la Torre's story is important because there are letters and poems written by the De la Torre's when they were children. These letters show how influential Catholicism could be in children's lives. Of course, not all children had the same experience, but for historians who are interested in the history of Catholic children, the De la Torre's narrative can help these historians. Due to the limited sources that come from children, many historians rely on people's memory of their childhood and adults' perspectives about children. My thesis contains primary sources that the De la Torre children made when they were children, including letters they wrote to Catholic religious figures. This thesis will show the rich possibilities of working with sources created by children themselves and hopefully inspire other historians to make more efforts to find such sources. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the history of children's spirituality by sharing these valuable sources that describe children's faith in their words.

Children's history requires examination of the educational environment these children experienced. Education is a powerful tool that serves to mold children to be a certain kind of thinker based on who controls the environment. When talking about Mexico in the twentieth

century, historians ask, why did the Catholic Church and the Mexican government fight over children's education? Historians of Mexican education, including Mary Kay Vahn, David Espinosa, and Patience A. Schell, argue that these institutions sought control over education because controlling education meant asserting authority over Mexican society. Furthermore, these authors highlight the church and state's recognition of the youth's potential. Patience A. Schell's *Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City* reveals the municipal Catholic and public educational institutions' concern with the quality of education for the people of Mexico City than the competition between the church and the state.[22] Controlling education in Mexico allowed the institution to form children to either be supporters of the Catholic Church or the secular Mexican government. However, educational experiences were different based on gender, race, and class. The De la Torre children had different experiences of education because of gender, interests, and their family's financial situation. This thesis shows that the eldest two siblings, Maria and Ignacio De la Torre, were homeschooled, while the other siblings went to Catholic institutions. Even within the same family, children's educational experiences were different and factors that play into this were the Mexican Revolution and the Cristero War. My thesis will show how the Cristero war formed the De la Torre's activism for children's education using their family records.

My thesis will honor and acknowledge the labor and efforts of Catholic Mexican women during the Mexican revolution and the Cristero War. I argue that Catholic women were powerhouses of the Cristiada and Catholic communities after the revolution. Discussion of the role of women in the Cristero War relies on the scholarship of Stephanie Mitchell, Patience Schell, Miguel Montiel, and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel to explore the role of Mexican women

[22] Patience A. Schell, "*Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City*," (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2003), pg.x

in their families and society. Miguel and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel's book, *World of our Mothers: Mexican Revolution-Era Immigration*, brings to life stories of Mexican women during the Mexican Revolution. These women's experiences provide an understanding of what women went through during the revolution to migrate to the United States. Stephanie Mitchell, and Patience Schell's *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953* also highlights the role of women in Mexico during and after the Revolution. This book consists of chapters written by various scholars to describes women's effort to show their voice and authority in Mexico.

These works succeed in showing the efforts of Mexican women in Mexican society and show women's motivations for taking part in activism. Women's spirituality in the Cristero War was a major factor that motivated them to take part in the Cristero War. Maria's story further emphasizes the role of spiritualism and sacrifice in women's life and their families. Her letters, membership cards, and family connections provides historians an opportunity to understand women's spirituality during the Cristiada. Through Maria's experiences, the chapter will show how Catholic parents' methods of raising daughters influenced women's role in the Cristero War and Catholic activism. When it comes to martyrdom, there were women who gave their lives for the Cristero movement, however their stories were not memorialized as much as men's martyr story. This thesis contributes to acknowledging women's sacrifice in the Cristero movement by showing Maria's experiences. Maria's role in the family was intricately connected with her role as a daughter. Maria, as the the only daughter of the family, took responsibility of nurturing the family spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

The border plays a role in the De la Torre's story since they used it to avoid Mexican authorities, receive education, and to sustain themselves economically. Historians of the U.S.-Mexico border ask questions about the evolving boundaries set in the region by both Mexico and

the United States. Scholar Gloria E. Anzaldúa, writes, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them… [They are] in a constant state of transition…."[23] While this thesis is set in the border region of the United States and Mexico, this thesis will primarily focus on the Mexican side of the border. As this thesis will show, people like the De la Torre family used the United States side of the border as a place of refuge, in times when the Mexican federal government was watching them. Like Cristero motivations, the De la Torres' use of the border does not represent all families in the border. Eric Meeks, a borderlands historian wrote, "Many border crossers followed a different path…"[24] Some people made the border region their homes while other people crossed borders to gain citizenship. My thesis will show that the De la Torres used the border as a place to call their home and a refuge, further revealing the complexity of the border.

This narrative heavily relies on historians' work on the Mexican Revolution. The Mexican Revolution is important to this thesis because the revolution changed the culture, political, and social atmosphere of Mexico. The historiography of the Mexican Revolution has gone through phases. The first works about the revolution, around the 1920s and 1930s, formed the revolutionary myths of the conflict being a "…unified event, a virtually spontaneous agrarian revolution that swept up the entire nation in a clean break..."[25] The second phase was the revisionist phase, where authors challenged the glorifications of the revolution and its leaders that earlier authors emphasized. Revisionist writers discussed the shortcomings and flaws of the

[23] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza" from chapter 3 of Aragón, Cecilia Josephine, *Borderlands Children's Theatre: Historical Developments and Emergence of Chicana/o/Mexican-American Youth Theatre,* London and New York: Routledge- Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

[24] Eric Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona*,73.

[25] Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, *Popular Culture and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, (Dunham, NC, Duke University Press, 1994), 4.

leadership of the Mexican Revolution. The third phase of the historiography of the Mexican Revolution is the post-revisionist phase or the mature-revisionist movement. In this recent phase, scholars pay attention to the relationships between the state, the revolution, and the general population.[26] Recent scholarship on the Mexican revolution shows the important changes it brought to society, and how it impacted children.

This historiography of Mexican society post-revolution and the Cristero War portrays a complicated situation resulting from years of political conflict between the revolutionary government and the Catholic Church. The revolutionary government's goal was to build a strong nation, different from the Porfirian period, with the promised democracy and expanded land rights for the peasants. The Catholic Church's goal varied based on the Vatican, Mexican clergy, and the laypeople; Rome wanted to make peace with the Mexican government while also allowing for the Catholic Church as an institution to continue flourishing in the nation.[27] The clergy was concerned with the number of restrictions placed on them. Laypeople such as a Cristero veteran named Aurelio Acevedo felt that this conflict was to defend the religious liberties of Mexican citizens. [28] Historians, such as David Espinosa, Patience A. Schell, and Stephen J.C. Andes, have shown that these groups have the same motive, yet the livelihoods and demographics of these activists provides further context to the motivations to take part in the Cristero War.

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[26] The books that reflect this phase includes Stephanie J. Smith's *Gender and the Mexican Revolution: Yucatán Women and the Realities of Patriarchy,* Arnoldo De León's *War along the border: the Mexican Revolution and Tejano communities,* and Heather Fowler-Salamini's *Working Women, Entrepreneurs, and the Mexican Revolution: The Coffee Culture of Córdoba, Veracruz.*

[27] Stephen J.C. Andes, *The Vatican and Catholic Activism in Mexico and Chile: The Politics of Transnational Catholicism, 1920-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78

[28] Jean Meyers, *Aurelio Acevedo_reel 1_side1, MSH/LAT 0089*, Jean Meyer Cristero Rebellion Oral History Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame.

Chapter Outline:

This project cannot do adequate justice to the narratives of all 10 members of the De la Torre family. For this reason, I will focus on the perspectives of three family members: Maria, Alfonso, and Ignacio de la Torre. This thesis relies on the De la Torre's experiences to explore the history of Mexico before, during, and after the Cristero War. The first chapter profiles the only daughter, Maria de la Torre, an activist and the central communicator among the De la Torre siblings. The second chapter examines one of the brothers, Alfonso, who was involved in the Cristero War combat. The third chapter inspects Ignacio de la Torre's life and his experiences as a clergy member. The chapters move chronologically from when the family member was born through their lives as much as available sources allow me to. The chapters will begin by laying out the national events that occurred in each person's life. Each chapter interrogates specific events in the family member's life, drawing on sources such as family photos and letters, and explains their choices and philosophies.

Maria de la Torre's chapter will cover the end of the Porfiriato period through the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) and ends before the Cristero War began. Her experience as a child before the revolution shaped her opinion about the newly established revolutionary government. Alfonso de la Torre's chapter covers the decades between 1920 and 1940 highlighting the Cristero War on a national level until his death in the Sonoran Cristero War. Alfonso's experience as a Cristero soldier acknowledges the reasons that Cristeros joined the conflict. The third chapter will dive into Ignacio de la Torre's life and his path to the priesthood. This chapter will cover the aftermath of the Cristero conflict and the tensions between the revolutionary state and the Catholic Church. The tense political relationship between the Church and state involved both compromises and conflicts over children's education, and the Catholic

Church's role in the Mexican state. This chapter argues that the family's work as clergy members was a third way the family defended the Catholic faith. The conclusion will discuss Catholic families in Mexico in recent history and how the De la Torre family's story contributes to scholarship on education, family roles, and Catholicism in the Mexican border region.



(From top left to bottom right: Carlos, Alfonso, Luis, Benjamin, Maria Doña Maria, Don Ignacio, and Ignacio de la Torre)

Chapter 1

La llave de la familia: Maria de la Torre and Her Central Role in the Family

Maria de la Torre was a Catholic woman devoted to her faith and family. Maria never doubted God's plan despite her hardships she endured. Maria de la Torre's boyfriend, Fidel Muro, was executed in 1928 for his participation as a Cristero soldier. Her reflection on his death showed her strength in her faith as she wrote, "God gives, God takes. My God, I offer you, my pain. It is all that I can offer. You gave me one love, one love, one great love! And I have nothing left but my pain. Accept it, Lord; it is all I have left to offer."[29] Maria never got married nor had her own children. Instead, Maria spent her time in various Catholic organizations and tended to her family's needs. Maria's role as the eldest daughter gave her an advantage to encourage her family's participation in the Catholic Church on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

This chapter aims to answer questions about the role of gender, family, martyrdom, and Catholic influence from 1900 to 1926. The chapter will examine the early history of the De la Torre family from 1900 to the brink of the Cristero War through the eyes of Maria de la Torre. Being the eldest child, María had the most understanding of the family structure and knew the family's affairs. Since Maria never married, her priorities were her faith and her family of origin. Maria's letters from her siblings show that her family placed her as the main communicator. Maria's identity as a Catholic Mexican woman influenced her roles as a daughter, sister, girlfriend, and friend within her Catholic community. Maria's life experience was different from

[29] Maria de la Torre, *Ofertorio*, Fidel Muro 1928-1953, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, (Tuscon: University of Arizona Special Collections), Spanish translation: "Ofertorio: Deus dedit, Deus abstulit Dios mío, yo te ofrezco mi dolor; Es todo lo que puedo ya ofrecerte; Tu me diste un amor, un solo amor, un gran amor! … y no me queda más que mi dolor. Acéptalo, Señor; Es todo lo que puedo ya ofrecerte!"

her brothers' experiences due to her gender. Maria's life reflected women's significant roles in their nuclear families and Catholic communities in twentieth-century Mexico.

Using Maria's story, this chapter argues that women were representatives of their families in the Catholic community after the Mexican revolution. Women showed leadership within their families by encouraging family participation in the Catholic Church's communities on both sides of the border. Maria's role in her family and Catholic organizations unveils her essential role in keeping the family together through hardships. Her experiences proved useful through the Cristero conflict as she took roles in different organizations and tactfully hid herself and her family in plain sight in letters by using pseudonyms.[30] Maria's upbringing reflected her parents' influence on Maria's value of martyrdom and Catholicism.

The family unit was foundational for the De la Torres to pursue their goals in the Cristero Movement. Maria's priorities in life were family and the Catholic Church. A traditional Mexican Catholic family, between 1890 and 1930, had a paternalistic structure. These families had men leading the household. Women took charge of the nurturing role in the family and household. Scholars have discussed the roles of women in Mexico, portraying them as active contributors to society outside the home.[31] This chapter highlights women's contribution to the family and Catholic communities in Mexico. As historians, Miguel Montiel and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel, explain, "Familism, in which the family was considered more important than the

[30] Maria de la Torre's pseudo name was "Margarita Sofia", Ignacio de la Torre went by the names of Jose, Ysidro, Ismael Gomez, and Ismael Tizacareño, and Alfonso did no have a pseudo name.
[31] See Miguel Montiel and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel's *World of our Mothers: Mexican Revolution-Era Immigration*, Stephanie Mitchell, and Patience Schell's *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, and Sonia Hernandez's *For a Just and Better World: Engendering Anarchism in the Mexican Borderlands, 1900-1938*, to explore the role of Mexican women in their families and society.

individual, was common, as were multigenerational living arrangements."[32] Maria's actions reflect her values of Catholic faith and family above her desires willingly.

This chapter will highlight moments in Maria's life that demonstrate her leadership within her family and community. The chapter will provide context of the Mexican Revolution and the Cristero War starting with the rule of President Porfirio Diaz. I provide context on Maria's parents to show how their values of faith and country were shaped under Diaz's social and political environment and how the parents instilled their values unto their children. This chapter relies on selected family members' government certificates and family letters to show Maria's life with her family and her faith. This section will analyze other families that show similar values of martyrdom and Catholicism to the De la Torre family to demonstrate commonality between different families. Whereas the scholarship on Mexican women shows women's labor, child rearing, and activism, this chapter relies on sources from Maria's childhood to explain Maria's choices and beliefs. It concludes by emphasizing Maria's familial role and introducing one of her siblings, whom she was close to.

The De la Torre Family's Environment:

Before the Mexican Revolution, authoritarian leader Porfirio Diaz ruled from 1884 to 1911. Under Diaz's authority, Mexico underwent several technological transformations with the increasing presence of railways, telegraphs, and industrial factories. Diaz also influenced children's education in public schools. The Mexican Ministry of Public Education discussed the best way to instruct Mexican students that fit the Porfirio government's standards. According to

[32] Miguel Montiel and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel, *World of our Mothers: Mexican Revolution-Era Immigrants and Their Stories*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2022), 110.

historian Martha Eva Rocha, "…educational expansion was an important project to Diaz's administration…these new schools made possible the entry of women to levels beyond primary education."[33] Porfirio Diaz's reforms of women's higher education took a long time to evenly apply throughout Mexico due to lack of resources and support. Women's education were bound within the roles that were considered feminine. As Miguel and Yvonne de la Torre Montiel write, "…schools prepared women for clerical work, home economics, and domestic-related industries, sewing, soap making, artificial flower making, cooking, and toy and shoe making."[34] While the Mexican government under Diaz advanced women's education, it was still bound by traditional gender roles.

Diaz prioritized his close supporters and foreign alliances over Mexican citizens in both rural and urban areas. As historian Teresa Meade writes, "He appointed state governors and gave them free rein to rule over the local population and enrich themselves, so long as they did not interfere with his own authority."[35] By the time elections came around in 1910, Porfirio Diaz was unpopular throughout Mexico due to his favoritism towards foreign investors. The laborers showed their disapproval of Diaz through labor strikes like the miners' strike at the Cananea Copper Company in Sonora in 1906.[36] The final straw was when election season arrived, Diaz ordered the arrest of Francisco I. Madero, a political competitor, after promising open elections. The people revolted against Diaz and his regime, and after a decade of guerrilla warfare from

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[33] Martha Eva Rocha, "The Faces of Rebellion from Revolutionaries to Veterans in Nationalist Mexico," in *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, ed. Stephanie Mitchell and Patience A. Schell, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2007), 18.
[34] Montiel and Montiel, *World of Our Mothers: Mexican Revolution-Era Immigrants and Their Stories*, 29.
[35] Teresa Meade, *A History of Modern Latin America: 1800 to the Present*, (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 316-341.
[36] Jurgen Buchenau and Gilbert M. Joseph, *Mexico's Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Dunham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1.

1910 to 1920, the Institutional Revolutionary government-controlled Mexico for the next seven decades.

The Mexican Revolution transformed Mexico socially, politically, and culturally. The revolutionaries fought for land reform, prioritizing the needs of Mexican citizens over foreign investors, and democracy. The revolution was possible through the support of Mexico's rural peasants, but it came at a price for the peasants. Meade explains, "…for the mass of rural Mexicans, the Revolution was a time of hardship, widespread hunger, dislocation, and arbitrary violence."[37] For these revolutionaries, obtaining equality in land and representation outweighed the hardships the revolution brought. The Mexican Revolution aimed to change Mexican society to a democratic society to separate itself from the legacies of the Diaz Regime. By the end of the Mexican Revolution, the new government dedicated itself to reform society and establish a stable government. Revolutionary leaders, such as Plutarco Elias Calles, thought the best way to set up the government was to gain control of the cultural, social, and political aspects of Mexico. Calles, Obregón, and other revolutionary leaders viewed the Catholic Church, as a competitor for influence over Mexican society. The 1917 Constitution was set up to lay out the expectations of how Mexican society, post-revolution, would look under this government.

Catholic clergy, such as Bishop Juan Navarrete from Sonora, believed the 1917 Constitution clauses about religion infringed on religious freedoms. The main concern for Catholic clergy and laypersons was the status of religious institutions' ownership of property, as outlined in Clause 27, section 2, which states:

[37] Teresa Meade, *A History of Modern Latin America: 1800 to the Present*, 316-341.

> Religious institutions known as churches, regardless of creed, may in no case acquire, hold, or administer real property or hold mortgages thereon; such property held at present either directly or through an intermediary shall revert to the Nation… Places of public worship are the property of the nation, as represented by the federal government, which shall determine which of them may continue being devoted to their present purposes. Bishoprics, rectories, seminaries, asylums, and schools belonging to religious orders, convents, or any other building built or intended for the administration, propagation, or teaching of a religious creed shall at once become property of the Nation by inherent right, to be used exclusively for the public services of the Federal or State governments, within their respective jurisdictions.[38]

This clause was an important aspect of the Mexican government's plan to gain control of Mexico. By obtaining ownership over the church's property, the government shook the foundation of the Catholic Church's authority.

Catholic activists, such as Maria de la Torre and other members of the Mexican Catholic Youth Association (A.C.J.M), criticized revolutionary government leaders, such as Calles and Obregón, for targeting the Catholic Church's authority. The 1917 Constitution also restricted public religious ceremonies and outlawed clergy from wearing liturgical garments out in public. These clauses only confirmed Cristero beliefs of the revolutionary government's hatred for

[38] Carranza, *1917 Constitution of Mexico*, Chapter 1 article 27. Accessed online at Latinamericanstudies.org

Catholicism.[39] By 1921, six years before the conflict began, the De la Torre family was one of many families that took part in Catholic activism against the constitution's clauses.[40]

The De la Torre family was extremely loyal to Catholicism. More specifically, the De la Torre family was loyal to Catholicism's theological doctrines. This means that the De la Torre family was loyal to what Catholicism teaches. A stereotype about Catholics through the twentieth century was Catholics' ability to be only loyal to the pope and Vatican. Maria de la Torre and her family showed more concern about defending Catholicism in the spiritual sense as opposed to legitimizing the pope's authority over Mexico from Rome. This does not mean the De la Torre family rejected the pope's authority. Rather the family prioritized Catholic doctrine over the Vatican's authority in Mexico. While other Cristeros, such the writers for the *Juventud Católica. Boletín de la Asociación Católica de Juventud Meixcana,* made the conflict between the Church and state a political conflict, the De la Torre's prioritized rejuvenating Catholic morals into Mexican society.[41] Understanding Maria's values and actions requires exploring Maria's parents who raised her and formed Maria's environment.

The De la Torre Family's Origins:

Maria's parents, Don Ignacio de la Torre Berumen and Maria de la Torre Uribarren Velasco, were both born in 1878. Don Ignacio was born in Guadalupe, Zacatecas, and raised by his parents, Francisco de la Torre and Martina Berumen. Doña Maria was born in Guanajuato and raised by her parents, Luis Urribarren and Margarita Velazco. Ignacio de la Torre and Maria

[39] Jean Meyer, *Francisco_Campos Reel 1 Side 1 Track 1, Cristero Rebellion Oral History Collection, MSH/LAT 0089*, (South Bend, Indiana: Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame).
[40] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: the Mexican people between Church and State, 1926-1929*, x.
[41] Robert Weis, *For Christ and Country: Militant Catholic Youth in Post-Revolutionary Mexico*, 64.

Uribarren Velasco married at the age of twenty-one in Guadalupe, Zacatecas, on November 9, 1899.[42] Don Ignacio and Doña Maria grew up in a time where the Catholic Church had a prominent role during the Porfiriato period. Historian Jean Meyer describes the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government during the Porfiriato period by writing, "…during this period [the church] achieved a real reconquest: internal reform, administrative reorganization, improved training of the clergy and increase in their number, the mobilization of the laity, expansion of Catholic press and education, and the renewal of the strength of the Church in rural areas that had been abandoned since the decline and secularization [sic] of the Regular Orders."[43] Don and Doña De la Torre grew up in an environment where Catholic influence was flowing through the veins of Mexican society. As the parents began building a family, they wanted to instill the same upbringing and faith in the children. Maria de la Torre was born on January 15, 1900, in Guadalupe, Zacatecas.[44]

Due to the lack of sources about Maria compared to her brothers, one can only assume that Maria de la Torre was homeschooled. As Patience Schell writes, "In 1902, (Justo) Sierra (an appointed minister of public instruction) outlined the educational reforms that he believed would forge regional and ethnic differences into a single Mexican identity."[45] While this statement refers to the integration of Mexico's Indigenous population, it applies to all Mexican children. Maria's neat handwriting shows that she earned her education but the lack of certification from a school strongly suggests that Maria's teacher was her mother. Despite this, these technological

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[42] *Estado de Zacatecas, Registro Civil de Guadalupe, 1899*, L. Ortega, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, 1877-1962, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collection Library).
[43] Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State 1926-1929*, 8
[44] *Estado de Zacatecas, Registro Civil De Guadalupe, 1901*, L. Ortega, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, Biographical Files, Certificates, 1877-1962, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collection Library).
[44] *Estado de Zacatecas, Registro Civil de Guadalupe, 1899,* De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, 1877-1962, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collection Library).
[45] Patience A. Schell, *Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City*, 7.

and social transformations attracted the attention of many foreign investors. If Maria had gone to public school, her identity would have been neutral between her loyalty to Catholicism and Mexican nationality. However, her identity strongly aligned with Catholicism, as seen in her writings. Her skills as an organizer and her involvement in financial matters reveals her educational history. Maria's curriculum would have been influenced by her mother's view of life and her family affairs that formed Maria's opinion on organization and finances.

Maria's parents taught her to appreciate and utilize activism, education, and faith. She spent her childhood in the last decade of the Diaz regime. Her years as a young child were in a time when the Catholic Church had privileges allowed by Diaz. Considering her childhood years, the privileges of the Catholic Church, and her Catholic faith being nurtured by her parents, one can conclude that Maria was surrounded by an environment where the Catholic Church was associated with goodness. Maria and her siblings learned about their Catholic faith from their family members or the church community. Feminine role models taught women to be healers and nurturers for Mexican Society. Historian, Patience A. Schell, describes women as active campaigners for social reform, political rights, and responding to problems of urban poverty, ignorance, and industrialization.[46] Even as a young woman, she helped her mother with the household chores while also integrating Catholic values within the rest of the family.

As a child, Maria had strong attachments to Catholicism. When she was nine years old, she wrote a letter in celebration of the Day of the Three Wise Men. In this letter, she asked for the Three Wise Men to bring gifts. The tradition of gift giving on this day is meant to commemorate when the three wise men gave the gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh to Baby

[46] Patience A. Schell, "An Honorable Avocation for the Ladies: The Work of Mexico Unión de Damas Católicas Mexicanas, 1912-1926," *Journal of Women's History*, 10, (Winter 1999),79.

Jesus. For example, she wrote, "To their majesty, the Three Wise Men, please bring me a ball and a [illegible] that says Dad and Mom and land the leaves and a box that has cinnamon and some tuayas [sic] and their silk."[47] Maria's letter suggests that she had a safe and happy childhood based on her requests and hopeful tone throughout the letter.

In addition to the Day of the Three Wise Men, the De la Torre parents associated positive virtues with Catholicism. Maria was trained in the domestic arts, learning how to be a homemaker and to care for a family. Maria's connection with the Virgin Mary not only strengthened her faith as a Catholic but also served as a role model of how Catholic women should be. Furthermore, she was raised in a Catholic community and had her parents as role models for how to be an honorable Catholic men and women. Virtues such as trust, faith, and strength were also intertwined with Catholicism. The De la Torre family had a third-grade level catechist lesson plan that taught which virtues were natural to people and which virtues were divine.[48] The parents combining good virtues with Catholicism taught the child that the Catholic doctrine is a good thing to follow and formed part of their identity.

The De la Torre parents, being devout Catholics, participated in this religious tradition so as their children would remember the story of the wise men. The tradition of this holiday serves as an incentive to appreciate this religious holiday. Dr. Zakia Tasmin Rahman, a childhood psychologist, display the functions of folklore and children's literature in positive ways. She writes, "Classic stories are not only highly entertaining but they also play an important role in

[47] Maria de la Torre, *Untitled Letter*, Aguascalientes December 22 de 1909, Maria de la Torre Correspondences, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library). Spanish original: A su magestad los reyes magos aganme el falor de traeme una pelota y una rorra que diga Papá y mama y tierre lo hojos y una caja que tiene canela y unas tuayas y su seda.
[48] Unknown, "Leccion No.6.-Tercer grado," Special Collections Online Exhibits, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library), 1.

instilling fundamental values…they emphasize cultural values or focus on important traditions."[49] This method of using the holiday proved successful through Maria's prayers expressed in the same letter. Maria wrote, "Holy Kings, pray to the Virgin to enlighten my memory so that I can learn everything she teaches me and to pray for me to God our Lord."[50]

Maria used the skills she learned as a child to help her family and the Catholic Church community.[51] Don Ignacio was involved in a tannery business. When Maria's brothers were old enough to enter the workforce, they joined the oil business or pursued education in science-related fields such as chemistry. Considering the occupation of the De la Torre men, the women did not need to work outside the home out of necessity. Maria's occupation labeled as "home" tells more than what the word shows. Even if she did not have that type of occupation, her labor benefited the family by pushing them to be involved in the Catholic Church on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border.

Maria's role as a communicator was effective, indicated by the trust shown from her brothers. On January 2, 1923, Francisco wrote to Maria to reflect the new year they celebrated. In this letter, he requested for her to send love to the family and ensure the gifts were given to the right person. Additionally, Francisco shared his desire to become a priest with Maria. He wrote, "Last week I went to Magdalena to do exercises and from there I made the decision to become a

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[49] Dr. Zakia Tasmin Rahman, Dr. Ruhr Lal, Dr. Rajnish Ratna, "An Analytical Study on the Significance of Folk and Fairytales on the Psychology of Young Children" *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 14, no.5, (2022): 6508-6509.

[50] Maria de la Torre, *Untitled Letter*, December 22, 1909, Spanish Translation: Santos Reyes ruegenle ala Santísima Virgen que me ilumine mi memoria para que pueda aprender todo lo que me enseñe y que ledigne [sic] rogar por mi a Dios nuestro Señor.

[51] The De la Torre family moved to various places through Maria's childhood from Zacatecas to San Luis Potosí. Maria had certifications that tracked her involvement in various organization within the Catholic Church and its community. Organizations include La Juventud Femenil Católica a Poto Sina, The Thrid Order of St. Francis, and the Hermandad del Santo Sepulcro. These certificates are found in the De la torre family papers MS420 Biographical files:certificates nd,1877-1962 1/1.

priest and stay here in Sonora."[52] While he wrote similar letters to his parents, he confided with Maria first. The role of an older sister invited Francisco to open up to her. Since Francisco made no request for Maria's confidence in his vocation, there was a chance that she was expected to share the news with the rest of the family.

By 1926, Maria, her mother, and younger siblings were in Aguascalientes. The older members of the family, including her father and brothers, Ignacio and Alfonso, were in different parts of Mexico to work. In the same year Cristero conflicts occurred between the Catholic Church and the government with events such as the bomb explosion at Our Lady of Guadalupe sanctuary in 1921.[53] Catholic organizations, *la Accion Católica Juventud Mexicana* (ACJM) and *la Liga Nacional Defensora de la Libertad Religiosa* (LNDLR)*,* led protests against President Calles's enforcement of the anti-clerical laws from the 1917 Constitution. Since the beginning of the Cristero conflict in 1927, the De la Torre family were involved with organizations such as the ACJM and LNDLR. The family noticed the tensions between Calles's government and the Catholic Church. Between 1926 and 1929, Maria was involved in multiple organizations that either politically advocated for religious liberty, spiritually organized prayer commitment for peace and religious freedom, or raised funds for Catholic Churches and Cristeros. Maria joined the *Juventud Feminil Católica Poto Sina* in August 1926.[54] Maria De la Torre also joined other organizations, throughout her life, such as: *Vela Perpetua en la Parroquia Del Sagrando Corazón, Apostolad de la Oración,* and *Alianza del Corrazon de Jesus.* These organizations

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[52] Francisco de la Torre, *Carta de Francisco de la Torre a su hermana María de la Torre, 1923-01-02*, De La Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Online Exhibits), https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/exhibits/show/delatorre/intro#top. Spanish Translation: 'La semana pasada fui a magdalena a hacer ejercicios y de ahi saque la resolución de hacerme sacerdote y quedarme aquí en Sonora.
[53] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between church and State 1926-1929*, x.
[54] Maria de la Torre, *Juventud Femenil Católica Poto Sina. Consejo Diocesano de San Luis Potosí*, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, Biographical files: certificates, 1877-1962. (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library).

centered on Catholic activism through prayers for the Cristero movement such as novenas and rosaries for a certain amount of time.[55] Maria De la Torre was also involved in fundraising projects and activism in addition to spiritual activism.

The De la Torre family's involvement with the Cristeros brought attention to the Mexican federal soldiers. During the 1920s, the De la Torre family had two homes, one in Aguascalientes and the other in San Luis Potosí. In 1927, the De la Torre family noticed that their home in San Luis Potosí was under surveillance by the Mexican authorities. Maria, along with the rest of her family, fled to the U.S. Border to evade potential arrests. Maria crossed the border in 1927 near El Paso, Texas with her mother and her younger siblings. Her father and the older brothers crossed over on their own earlier due to work or educational opportunities. The family eventually settled in Nogales, Arizona. It is around 1927 when Maria's letters, both received and sent, referred to Maria as 'Margarita Sophia', her pseudonym, to defer any unwanted attention.

During the Cristero conflict, Maria was a stable point of contact because she was the one who was geographically stable, since the brothers traveled to different places sporadically. An example is when Francisco De la Torre was in Nicaragua and feared for their brother Carlos's safety. He gave Maria instructions on how Carlos should flee to a sanctuary place in Arizona to one of their connections.[56] This interaction reveals the family's trust in Maria, and it went beyond being a good sister. Maria was also a point of communication between her parents when her father was out of town. In one instance, Maria wrote to her father explaining why her mother could not write to him. Maria explains that her brother, Carlos, was ill in bed and her mother

[55] Traditionally, novenas last nine days, and rosaries were flexible in commitment. During the Cristero movement, people like Maria would pledge to do a series of these prayers that ranged from a month to a year.
[56] Francisco de la Torre, *Carta de Francisco De la Torre a su hermana María de la Torre, 1923-01-02*, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).

cared for him until she got sick herself.[57] Like other women in Mexico, the De la Torre women took part in the Cristero movement and supported the men in the family to do the same. Maria was also a point of communication due to her knowledge and location in the Arizona-Sonora border region. Her position in life gave her the ability to keep track of the family movements and the Cristero conflict.

Maria also faced many heartbreaks in her life that only strengthened her faith in Catholicism. Her boyfriend, Fidel Muro, was a Cristero soldier who was executed, along with other Cristeros in 1928 for his involvement in the conflict. Maria was devastated and, to cope with her grief, created memorials for him to honor his memory. When the state of Sonora implemented anti-clerical laws in 1935, she lost her brother, Alfonso, to the conflict. Furthermore, her other younger brother, Carlos, was in prison for conspiring with the Cristeros around the same time as Alfonso's death. Despite these hardships, she never thought of giving up or leaving the faith because of her childhood foundation and support from people who memorialized her family members as martyrs. The written records and images show that she had the hope Catholicism offered.

Maria's attachment to Catholicism may have been for many reasons including familiarity. She would not want to leave the faith that was familiar to her and presented heavily in her life by her family when she was a child. However, young adults leave the faith they were raised in, so the argument that she stayed in the faith because that is all she knew is not strong enough. Maria took control of her spirituality and nourished her faith beyond what was taught by the clergy or

[57] Maria de la Torre, *Untitled Letter, San Luis Potosí, January 3, 1927*, Maria de la Torre Correspondence, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).

her parents. After her boyfriend passed away, she willingly devoted herself to the Virgin Mary to always keep faith in mind and primary in her life.



Maria de la Torre in her youth. Courtesy of the University of Arizona's special collections

Women and Families like Maria De la Torre:

Women were a major force to the Cristero Movement. Women took part in organizations such as the ACJM and the Union Damas Católicas. They encouraged their men in their lives to act by taking part in organizations, joining the Cristero War, or both. Jean Meyer's collection of oral history of Cristeros portrays the role of women during the conflict. Newspapers and other sources show how Mexican Catholic women expected their sons and husbands to fight for the Catholic cause. Catholic women encouraged and sustained Catholicism in Mexico when the government was against religious services. Maria's connections with priests, her brother's Ignacio, Francisco, and Carlos, and Cristeros, her brother Alfonso, her partner Fidel, and a family friend General Luis Ibarra, made her a potential target for the Mexican federal soldiers.

Anacleto Gonzalez Flores and is family are some of the most notable figures in the Cristero War. Anacleto's sacrifice for the Cristero movement spread throughout the Mexican Catholic communities, including the De la Torre family. These stories were spread through word of mouth and publications of what was called the book of martyrs, which intended to share lives

of people who gave their lives for Catholicism.The book shows the Flores family as a devout Catholic family. The book discussed Anacleto Gonzalez Flores and shared how Anacleto told his eldest son, "Pray that you may have a martyred father,"[58] On April 1, 1927, Anacleto was executed by the federal soldiers for his involvement with the ACJM during the Cristero War. At Anacleto's funeral, his widow, Maria Concepcion Guerrero, looked at her eldest son and told him, "Look at your father's body, swear on his body that if God permits it, you will give your life in the same way."[59]



Anacleto Gonzalez Flores's funeral with family. Courtesy of the University of Notre Dame Special Libraries Collection.

The Flores family's story is similar to the De la Torre's story through the role of parents nurturing the value of martyrdom in their children. Anacleto, as a father, requested his son to do this prayer, so it taught his son what it meant to be a Catholic man. For Anacleto, giving up his life for this movement was what it meant to be a genuine Catholic man. His widow reaffirmed this by requesting her son to do the same. The actions of Anacleto's wife, María Concepción Guerrero, reflected the vital role of mothers and wives in the Cristero War.

Catholic women in Mexico pushed the boundaries of their traditional roles. Patience A. Schell explains that women in the Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies group called for Catholic

[58] *MSH/LAT 0086, The Book of Martyrs, Cristero Rebellion Martyrs Photo Album*, (South Bend, Indiana: Rare Books & Special Collections, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame).
[59] *MSH/LAT 0086, The Book of Martyrs*.

women to take part in 'reasonable feminism.' According to Schell, these women viewed 'reasonable feminism' as preserving the proper role of women in the domestic sphere while seeking solutions for societal problems.[60] Catholic women were comfortable in their assigned gender roles set by Catholic tradition. Regardless, the tensions between the Catholic Church and the Mexican state created a critical juncture for women to push their roles. Based on Maria's actions, choices, and beliefs it can safely be assumed that Maria would have agreed end with these Catholic women. In the Cristero War, Catholic women believed that they had a societal duty to restore Mexican morality that met Catholic standards. Catholic mothers in the time of the Cristero War intensified the value of Catholicism in their children.

The *Book of Martyrs*, a series published by Catholic activist groups such as the LNDR to distribute to the public, provided a story of Anacleto's cousins that supports women's role in nurturing martyrdom. Jorge and Salvador Gonzalez, and one unnamed brother, were set to be executed along with Anacleto. The youngest brother was pardoned due to a mistake made by the federal soldiers. That brother returned to the house with his brothers' bodies. The mother allegedly said, "Oh, my son, the crown was close to you, and you couldn't reach it. You need to do better to deserve it."[61] In this context, the crown, the mother was referencing, was receiving grace in heaven for his sacrifice for the Catholic faith.

Women used their domestic skills to aid the Cristero soldiers. The Cristero War, like the Mexican Revolution, heavily relied on women to keep the movements and their meanings alive politically, spiritually, and physically. Aurelio Acevedo, a Cristero, described how groups of

[60] Patience A. Schell, "An Honorable Avocation for Ladies: The Work of Mexico City Unión de Damas Católicas Mexicanas, 1912-1926," 81.
[61] *MSH/LAT 0086, The Book of Martyrs*

women went to the Cristero camps throughout Mexico to help the medical team or kitchen team to contribute to the cause through their labor.[62] These women proved their resilience, adaptability, and faith through their relationships, labor, and goals.

Cristero propaganda that had stories of Cristero martyrs rarely had women in their publications. Women in these photographs were shown as the grieving figure. The book of martyrs and other martyred postcards showed women's lost of their husbands, sons, fathers, and other male relatives or friends. Yet there were women who gave their lives in the Cristero movement and fought in the Cristero Army. Women in the Cristero War were part of group called the Feminine Brigades of St. Joan of Arc. This group not only cook and nursed the wounded in the camps, but they also delivered ammunition, acted as spies, and participated in combat. For example, Guadalupe Chaires, led a group of armed women to the municipal palace in Victoria, Guanajuato to try to release the Catholic prisoners. She was eventually caught and tortured by the federal soldiers until she died.[63] Guadalupe was not the only woman who experienced the violence of Mexican federal soldiers, yet the presence of Mexican women as martyrs are scarce when compared to Cristero men. While Maria de la Torre may not have joined the Cristero conflict, her sacrifices played a role in how the family participated in the Cristero War.

Conclusion:

Maria's story reflects women's role in Catholic communities after the Mexican Revolution. If Catholic women had similar experiences as Maria, it becomes clear why these

[62] *JM_17_Aurelio_Acevedo_Reel3_Side1*, University of Notre Dame Special Collections Library.
[63] Barbara Ann Miller, "The Role of Women in the Mexican Cristero Rebellion: A New Chapter", (PhD diss.,) University of Notre Dame, December 1980, 102

women risked everything to preserve the Catholic faith. Catholic women conquered stereotypes of a submissive wife through their leadership roles within their families. Women found autonomy in their lives through their roles of mothers, wives, and sisters. Maria's upbringing shows her mother's influence in appreciating the Catholic faith, and as an older sister encouraged her brothers to pursue the faith as well. However, Maria's life did not share similarities with other Mexican Catholic women. She did not get married, nor did she have children; additionally, she did not join a religious convent. Instead, her life was a mix of both; she stayed a layperson, meaning she was not part of a convent, but she stayed celibate and devoted to the Catholic Church. Her sources showed that after her boyfriend died, she did not have a desire for marriage, and she decided instead to spend her time with her church and family.

Maria's involvement in the Cristero movement and her connections to Catholic fugitives such as Bishop Navarro put her at risk of incarceration. Maria not only used the U.S.-Mexico border to escape the federal soldiers, but she also used a fake name "Margarita Sophia" inspired by her grandmother. Using 'Margarita' instead of Maria created more distance from the government's surveillance for Maria and her family members. Additionally, Maria's life depicts one form of martyrdom. She did not physically give her life to Catholicism like her brothers, but she gave up her life in spirit. Maria's spiritual martyrdom exemplifies the many ways in which one could live out their life practicing the theological virtues of Catholicism. Despite the pain and loss, she experienced with her partner and her brothers, her faith carried her on with hope and perseverance.

Maria used her time to aid the Catholic Church on both the U.S. and Mexico side of the border. Maria de la Torre took advantage of the circumstances of her life and made it beneficial to the Catholic Churches in the borderland region. Her actions on both sides of the border

reflected Maria's apathetic towards both Mexico and the United States. Rather, her priority was the Catholic Church. Maria proved to be adaptable to any environment she met and continued her mission in to serve the Catholic Church through prayers and activism.

Maria's upbringing included expected gender roles, math, home economics, and Catholicism. Based on the resources, Maria was taught by her mother that her role as a Catholic woman was to nurture the faith among her family and community. Mexican Catholic women had different experiences based on class and race; yet their approach to faith was similar. Most Catholic women were expected to nurture Catholicism within their families, particularly in raising their children. The matter of how Mexican women preserve the faith was based on their experiences. Mexican Catholic women were at the forefront of Catholic activism and political participation. Women's roles as sisters, mothers, and wives were tools that allowed these women to gain political and social autonomy outside the domestic sphere. Catholic mothers and families influenced the youth to take part in Catholic activism

Female authors such as St. Therese of Lisieux, a nineteenth-century Catholic nun who became a doctor of the Catholic Church, had autobiographies that contemplated their childhood.[64] The difference between Maria de la Torre and these authors was that Maria's letters came from when she was a child. St. Therese's recollections of her childhood came from when she was an adult, meaning that there was the possibility of biases from nostalgia. This is to say, Maria's childhood provides historians a glimpse in how children internalize Catholicism.

[64] The autobiographies I mentioned are: St. Therese of Lisieux's "The Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux" Translated by Robert J. Edmonson, (Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, Inc, 2009).

The De la Torre family was well-connected and aware of the dangers of taking part in the Cristero War. However, Maria and the rest of the siblings did not back down. As this chapter has shown, Maria was not the only sibling to take part in Catholic activism through organizations. She encouraged her siblings to take part in the Catholic Church as she did. Her brother, Alfonso de la Torre, also took part in Catholic organizations and eventually joined the Cristero militia. While Maria de la Torre's story shows spiritual martyrdom, Alfonso's story stands for the usual narrative of martyrdom, giving up his life for the Cristero Movement.

Chapter 2

El Soldado de Cristo:

Alfonso de la Torre during the Second Cristero War

The De la Torre family lost one of their family members, Alfonso de la Torre, on November 13, 1935, during a state-wide battle against anticlericalism. The family had in their collections a chorus made in the honor and memory of Alfonso. The chorus states:

> Worthy Alfonso … I offer the sacrifice of his life
> Giving God and the Country service and more glory to the tricolor banner.
> Out of duty to fight he launches himself and faces tremendous danger
> He fought serenely and smiling, his great heart undaunted.
> And in defense of the faithful combatant
> And in defense of the good companion Challenge with his warrior chest the push of black betrayal…. And on his temples the beautiful Archangel will place a crown of the country and will say his glorious epitaph: FOR FAITH AND FOR THE COUNTRY HE DIED![65]

This chorus portrayed Cristero's perspective of spirituality in the Cristiada. The first perspective affirmed the Cristeros' belief in defending Mexican Catholic culture. The chorus's depiction of Alfonso's death as a sacrifice for God and country challenges negative portrayal in the Mexican

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[65] *"Himno Cristero: En honor del heroico joven Alfonso de la Torre, que dio su vida por salvar la de sus compañeros, victimias de infame traición en Agua Fría, Sonora,"* Sonora, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420 Box 1 Folder 22, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections). Spanish Translation: Digno Alfonso…De su vida ofrendo el sacrificio Dando a Dios y al la Patria servicio Y mas gloria al pendón tricolor.
Por deber a la lucha se lanza Y afrontando el peligro tremendo. El peleaba sereno y sonriendo Impertérrito el gran corazón. Y en defensa del fiel combatiente Y en defensa del buen compañero Desafío con su pecho guerrero El empuje de negra traición. Y en sus sienes pondrá una corona De la patria el Arcángel hermoso Y dirá su epitafio glorioso: POR LA FE Y POR LA PATRIA MURIÓ!

Press that questioned the national loyalty of Mexican Catholics. The Cristeros believed they were not rebelling against the government but fighting for a Mexico that could be. Alfonso's death is one of many examples of how the stories of Cristero martyrs like Anacleto Gonzalez Flores, St. Jose Sanchez del Rio, and Father Miguel Pro were publicized throughout Mexico's border region to portray these men as honorable. This chorus reveals traits that considered Alfonso as an honorable man and what traits did not make a true man.

Alfonso's life reflects Catholic masculinity in twentieth-century Mexico. Alfonso's writings, actions, and memory symbolizes a life of seeking honor and Catholic Mexican manhood. His inspiration for what consisted of an honorable man came from his brothers and father. In difficult times, the older De la Torre male relatives stepped up to provide for the family and the Cristero movement. Alfonso, inspired by these male role models, was motivated to take part in the Cristero movement to fulfill his duties as an honorable Catholic man. Alfonso de la Torre took part in Catholic organizations and joined the Cristero War as a soldier. He chose to serve the Cristero army when he felt that his services were not enough for the Cristero movement. His devotion to his faith and family was his motivation for his choices and actions in his life. This chapter reflects on Alfonso's life from his childhood to his death in Agua Fría in 1935. Alfonso's view on manliness was influenced by his male family members, including his father and older brothers. On a broader scale, Cristero propaganda was built on establishing manliness to align being a true Catholic man with supporting the Cristeros. While historians have shown the motivations for joining the Cristero War was for political, social, and economic reasons, Alfonso's story shows the significant role of spirituality and gender in motivating participation in the movement, which aligned with his family's political beliefs.

Alfonso used the border between Mexico and the United States to further his education, career, and Catholic activism like the rest of his family. He spent a part of his childhood in Aguascalientes and the rest of his adulthood in the borderland region of Arizona and Sonora. His work experience included working in oil industry and his father's tannery business. Alfonso worked on both sides of the border and created political cartoons that involve the United States. He with his militia relied on the wilderness of Sonora to fight the soldiers until his death. Alfonso's family, friends, and loved ones memorialized Alfonso's death as martyrdom. Alfonso's stories reflect the process of publicizing his martyrdom. His reliance on the border was not strong compared to his other siblings, but nonetheless, his interactions in the border region influenced his actions, beliefs and legacies.

The chapter will provide a layout of the Cristero War from the laypeople's perspective.[66] This section features two perspectives from both the Catholic Church and government supporters and their view of the Cristero Movement. The chapter's narrative will then focus on Alfonso's story using snippets of his life to serve as evidence of what contributed to Alfonso's upbringing and views on Catholic masculinity. The chapter will end by exploring the memorialization of Alfonso's death and his martyrdom and connect it to the meaning, expectations, and qualities of manhood in the layperson's Catholic community post-Revolutionary Mexico.

Cristero War on National Scale:

The Cristero War was between the Catholic Church and the Mexican Government due to different perspectives. Cristero leaders, who were laypeople, such as Anacleto Flores believed that the 1917 Constitution invaded Catholic rights in Mexico. Aurelio Acevedo told historian

[66] Laypeople, in this narrative, are Catholic people who are not part of the clergy. This category of Catholics includes men, women, and children.

Jean Meyer, "we did not go to war… but we were defending liberty…. Calles had started the fight not the Cristeros." Acevedo was from Zacatecas and claimed that the people in Zacatecas initially supported the revolutionary government for the government's take on land rights. According to Acevedo, Zacatecas did not want to fight the government but the Calles laws on anti-clericalism pushed him.[67] This perspective shows some Cristeros' initial support for the new revolutionary government until the anti-clerical sentiments surfaced. Jean Meyer confirms Aurelio Acevedo's sentiments when he wrote, "…the Constitution of 1917 also gave the state the right to administer the 'clerical profession'. The Catholics were identified with the Church, and as a result became second-class citizens, without any place in civic life."[68] This perspective shows Cristero leaders perceived the Revolutionary government as this tyrannical regime.

Since Mexican independence, tensions between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government existed. However, the Constitution of 1917 substantially fed into the feud. The constitution targeted religious institution's landownership, religious education, and holy practices in Mexico. For example, Article 24 of the Constitution states,

> Everyone is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practice all ceremonies, devotions, or observances of his respective faith, either in places of public worship or at home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law. Every religious act of public worship must be performed strictly inside places of public worship, which shall at all times be under governmental supervision.[69]

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[67] Jean Meyer, "*JM_17_Aurelio_Acevedo_Reel3_interview with Aurelio Acevedo*" Hesburgh libraries, (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame)
[68] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State- 1926-1929*, 14,52, & 72
[69] *Article 24, 1917 Constitution*, LatinAmericanStudies.org/ Accessed: December 17, 2024.

For the De la Torres and ACJM, this clause was another contradiction of the Revolutionary government's leadership. Political conflicts and violent out lashes against Catholic Churches began in the 1920's. In February and June of 1921, there were bomb explosions in Mexico City and Guadalajara at the Archbishops palace. In May of the same year, someone had placed a red flag, associated with socialism, at the Cathedral in Morelia which led to violent clashes between Catholics, socialists, and the police. These violent actions, combined with political tensions rooted in debates over ideology and control, resulted in the Cristero War.[70]

Violence began in the Cristero War when a bomb exploded at the Virgin of Guadalupe's Basilica in 1921. Fortunately, the beloved image of Virgin of Guadalupe survived the explosion, but that bomb started Cristero protest when the Mexican government did no pursue the bombers. This explosion was a deliberate attack on Mexican Catholicism because of the loyalty people showed for the Virgin of Guadalupe. The attack on the Virgin of Guadalupe became one of the many reasons Catholic men joined the Cristero War. Violence increased when the Mexican government pushed the boundaries between the Church and Mexican State. In July of 1923, a violent outbreak took place in Chihuahua after the government limited the number of priests to seventy-five for the whole state.[71]

Beside the explosions and violence, there were other triggers that started the conflict in 1927-1929. One was the Calles Laws, which was the enforcement of the 1917 Constitution. Calles used Article 130 of the 1917 Constitution to deport foreign-born religious sisters and priests. He further pushed his goal by systematically deporting Mexican citizens which broke the citizen's constitutional rights. The deportation of Catholic priests and sisters, the emphasis on

[70] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State- 1926-1929,* pp.x-xi.
[71] ibid

anti-clerical laws, and increased surveillance at the Catholic Churches boiled over into conflict and great tensions between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government.[72]

Plutarco Calles was a public servant for Sonoran people before he became a president of Mexico during the Cristero War. He was a revolutionary general in Sonora, a teacher, and a governor of Sonora. From that point throughout the rest of Calles's life, he viewed Catholic priests and Rome as 'bad elements' for Mexico. He viewed the Catholic Church as a symbolism of the past mistakes of the old Regime through its clerical hierarchy. Calles's disdain towards the Catholic Church was supported by the fact that several clergy members had worked with the Huerta dictatorship, which occurred between 1913-1914, after Madero's rule.[73] As a governor, Calles expelled Catholic priests from Sonora and wanted to have his appointed priests take on the role of leaders of his new church, the Mexican National Church.

The Cristero War battles centered in Central and Western Mexico ranging from: Jalisco, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Hidalgo. Cristeros, such as Aurelio and Francisco Campos, had different experiences due to their class, geography, and livelihoods. These people were united under the goal of defending religious freedom. Francisco Campos joined the conflict after the federal government posted a set of laws on their cathedral's door in Durango. The laws that infuriated Campos were:

Article 1: All persons in violation will pay a fee of fifty pesos.

[72] Julia G. Young, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 24.
[73] Jürgon Buchanau, *The Sonoran Dynasty in Mexico: Revolution, Reform, and Repression*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023), 80.

Article 2: All people with saints in their homes will pay a fee of fifty pesos or will be placed in prison for up to a year.

Article 3: All people who teach their children to pray may face prison time.[74]

Campos emphasized the law's strictness in enforcements and repercussions. The Cristero's sentiments centered the conflict on defending religious liberty for Catholic families throughout Mexico. Alfonso De la Torre's motives in Cristero activism and conflicts was also meant to defend Catholicism's presence in Mexican society.

The end of the Cristero conflict, in 1929, resulted in high casualties with 60,000 federal soldiers and 40,000 Cristero soldiers.[75] The legacy of the Cristero War led to similar conflicts in smaller versions. The documents, letters, and other materials belonging to the De La Torre Family show that the conflict between Cristeros and the Federal government occurred in the 1930s in Sonora. The De la Torre family brought the Cristero movement north towards the U.S. border.[76] To do this, the De la Torre relied on their connections such as Father Juan Navarrete, who was the bishop in Sonora, and members of the ACJM and the Liga Nacional Defensora de la Libertad (LNDL).

The Cristero War impacted the U.S.-Mexico border in significant ways. The Cristero War pushed Mexican people to flee to the United States to avoid the conflict. Americans grew concerned for the increased immigration of Mexicans and the violence of the Cristero War. Historian Julia G. Young writes, "…the Cristero diaspora was more geographically widespread

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[74] Jean Meyer, *Francisco_Campos_Reel1_side1_track_1*, Hesburgh Libraries, South Bend, Indiana.
[75] Consuelo S. Moreno, *The Movement that Sinned Twice: The Cristero War and Mexican Collective Memory,* (History in the Making: Vol.13, Article 5, January 2020), 5.
[76] "Sonoran Diocese", *La Vida Fronteriza: Church, Economy, and Daily Life- Excerpts from the De la Torre Family Papers*, University of Arizona's Special Collections show page, Accessed August 15, 2024.

than many of these earlier movements, which had been largely limited to the border states (particularly Texas). In fact, Cristero activity in the United States was fueled by thousands of religious emigrants, exiles, and refugees in multiple locations around the Southwest and Midwest."[77] The Catholic clergy, politicians, and devout Cristeros used the border to continue the Cristero War. The U.S.-Mexican border was a perfect area to sustain the Cristero War, due to the nature of the border and blurred lines of national authority. For the De la Torre family, the United States was a place of refuge from the pursuit of the Mexican federal soldiers. Family members like Alfonso and Ignacio de la Torre crossed the U.S.-Mexico border frequently on behalf of the Catholic Church or the Cristero movement.

The De la Torre's recorded the Cristero War through letters as well as preserving newspapers and Cristero propaganda materials. This extensive knowledge of the Cristero War emphasizes the level of the De la Torre's involvement in the Cristero movement both on a federal and state level. Jose de la Torre Diaz, a distant family member of the De la Torre family, emphasized Articles: 3, 24, 27, and 130.[78] Diaz wrote, "By October 3, 1917, all churches were closed, bringing the total number of churches throughout the country to 6,845. On November 25, 14 priest were exiled from the country.… July 31, 1926, all religious services in Mexico are suspended forever…the terrible rebellion of the Cristeros begins: Long Live Christ the King!"[79] The De la Torres were involved in the Mexican Cristero War between 1927-1929. When Sonora implemented the same anti-clerical laws on the state, the De la Torres joined a small militia of Cristeros.

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[77] Julia G. Young, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristeras War*, 9.
[78] The clauses Jose de la Torre highlights the restrictions of Church involvement in education, land ownership, and reducing citizen privileges for clergy.
[79] Jose de la Torre Diaz, "*Estampas Cristeras*" De la Torre family Papers (MS420) Box:1, Folder 13, University of Arizona's Special Collections, 2&3.

The aftermath of the Cristero War, after 1929, is not emphasized by scholars as much as it should be. According to Diaz, in 1937, the governor of Sonora, who was Plutaco Calles's nephew, Rodolfo Calles, began religious persecution in the state of Sonora. This narrative of the Cristero War in Sonora is where Jose emphasizes the role of his cousins. He wrote, "This is where our story begins and the tales of the adventures of a special group protecting the bishop and giving their lives to God, in the Second Cristero War."[80] The experiences of Alfonso de la Torre highlight the continuous fight the Cristeros made in Sonora to defend religious freedom. Alfonso's story and his experience with the Cristeros highlights the role of Catholic masculinity in Mexico in the twentieth century. Alfonso's story shows that whereas good Catholic women were virtuous and encouraged their families to take part in the Cristero War, good Catholic men were not only leaders of their families but also needed to stand up for the Catholic faith by joining the Cristero War, either through activism or combat.

Alfonso de la Torre Story:

Alfonso de la Torre was born on February 10, 1908, in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Alfonso, as a child, contemplated what it meant to be a man. His childhood views and thoughts about manhood remained with him into adulthood. He wrote, "How to be a true man. To become a true man this is needed to fulfill one's duty, to work, and to suffer for the work…to tell the truth even if it costs him his life."[81] Alfonso's thoughts about masculinity reflect ideas about Catholic masculinity that resonated with Cristero men. Catholic masculinity contained several elements that persisted through the twentieth century including honor, bravery, and faith. Reid Eric

[80] Jose de la Torre Diaz, *Estampas Cristeras*, 4.
[81] De la Torre, Alfonso "*Cómo Se Desarrolla Un Verdadero Hombre.*" (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections). Accessed December 24, 2024. Spanish Translation: Como se Forma Berdadero Hombre. Para formarse berdadero hombre, se necesita esto, cunplir[sic] con el deber trabajar y sufrir por el trabajo,…ser formal y decir la berdad [sic] aunque le cueste la vida…"

Gustafson writes, "Men continued to value honor, fighting prowess, and the masculine privileges bestowed by patriarchy."[82] The gender roles for Catholic men in post-Revolution influenced Alfonso's actions, thoughts, and motivations. Alfonso learned about Catholic masculinity through the examples of his male family members such as his father and elder brother, Ignacio De la Torre.

Alfonso De la Torre attended a school called *Escuela Partícula Para Niños*.[83] The training and education of the brothers was different from Maria's because of the gender expectations placed on the siblings. The men learned subjects such as economics, agriculture, and history to prepare them to be loyal Mexican citizens who contributed to Mexican society. Alfonso went to a private Catholic school, shown through certificates and recipes, unlike his sister, Maria. Alfonso's school was called *Escuela Parituclar Para Niños,* and while we do not know how long his time there was, available evidence shows he was at least there in 1916 and 1917. This school taught multiple subjects, including math, reading, and Catholicism.[84] On September 17, 1920, Alfonso, as a twelve-year-old boy, earned his diploma from *Colegio Alcalá*. This school was a higher education institution, and like *Escuela Particular Para Niños*, *Colegio Alcalá* instructed students, like Alfonso, with a full curriculum along with Catholicism. Alfonso and his brothers' education serves as an example of a well-rounded curriculum led by the Ministry of Education by the Revolutionary Government. The exclusion of Catholic education by the Minister of education would have bothered Alfonso due to his upbringing. The value of Catholic education influenced Alfonso through his loved ones.

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[82] Reid Eric Gustafson, "'*He loves the Little Ones and Doesn't Beat them': Working Class Masculinity in Mexico City, 1917-1929*, (College Park: University of Maryland College Park, 2014), 39-40.
[83] *Escuela Particular Para Niños*, Aguascalientes, December 1916, De la Torre Family Papers MS 420 (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections Library).
[84] De la Torre, "*Escuela particular para niños*, 1916&1917, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).

After Alfonso's school years, he joined the workforce in the oil industry. When Alfonso was eighteen years old, in 1926, he worked at the Mexican Atlas Petroleum Co. S.A in Tampico, Mexico.[85] This is clear through the letters he sent to his family using papers with the company's logo. Alfonso de la Torre worked closely enough with the manager, James C. McIntyre, which was evident through Alfonso's letters to his father, Ignacio. While he was away in Tampico, Alfonso still involved himself with the family by helping when he could. For example, Alfonso wrote to his mother, "We are doing very wrong by not sending the newspapers [about the A.C.J.M]. Let's get you a subscription to *La Época de Guadalajara*, which is the best newspaper in the republic so you can find, so they can get information."[86] Alfonso cared for his mother by making sure that she was informed about Mexico's political and social climate. It also showed the loyalty the De la Torre family members showed each other, despite the geographic distance. Alfonso applied the importance of being informed to himself which explains his eagerness to get involve with the Cristero movement through activism and the military.

Cristero Soldier- Alfonso de la Torre During the Cristero War:

Alfonso began his involvement in the Cristero movement through activism. In 1918, Alfonso joined the Accion Católico Juventud Mexicano as a vanguard. A vanguard was a member of the group according to the A.C.J.M. group. The A.C.J.M. led protests for the anti-clerical Constitution of 1917, formed study groups that studied Mexican history with a pro-

[85] Alfonso De la Torre, "*Carta de Alfonso a Maria Uribarren, March 5, 1926*" (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections). Spanish Translation: Antes debo de dar gracias a Dios de que no tengo una Madre y una hermana como las pinten en el Articulo de la Época que en estos días les mando llamado La Falsa Purdencia Femnina. Si algo tengo de valor civil no lo debo a nadie mas que a Ud."
[86] Alfonso de la Torre, *Carta de Alfonso De la Torre a María Uribarren*, 1926-03-05, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections),1. Spanish Translation: Hacemos muy mal con no mandarles periódicos. Vamos a pedirles una suscripción de la Época de Guadalajara, que es el mejor periódico de la república para que se enteren.

Catholic bias, and were involved in the Cristero War militia.[87] Alfonso believed in the A.C.J.M.'s strategy combating against Calles's restrictive anticlerical policies. In two years, he became its secretary. Although the document does not show the year, Alfonso would eventually run for president of the Magdalena chapter in Sonora. The A.C.J.M.'s activism and fundraising inspired his involvement with the group, that he founded the A.C.J.M. chapter in Nogales under the name of Augustine Cabora in 1929.[88] Despite the things he did for the A.C.J.M., he felt that he had not done enough for the Cristero cause.

Alfonso decided to participate in the movement by drawing political cartoons that reflected the sentiments of the Cristeros. On October 11, 1929, Alfonso received his diploma from the Washington School of Cartooning, located in Washington D.C. This course taught him the background of cartooning, noted some famous cartoonist such as George McManus, R.L. ("Rube") Goldberg, and Windsor McCay, and how to create cartoons.[89] Alfonso used this talent of drawing cartoons to support the Cristero movement. His cartoons emphasize the U.S. involvement and insulting President Calles.

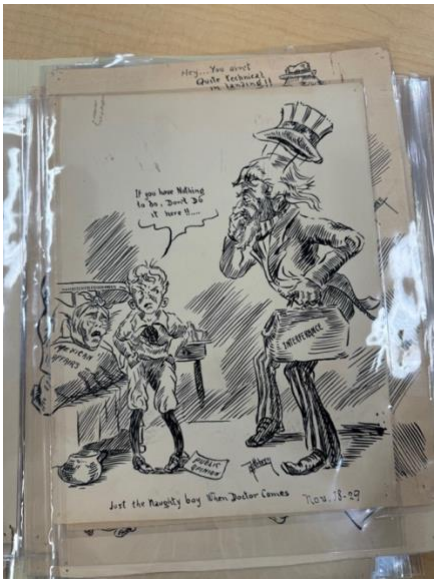


Alfonso De la Torre's, "First work Pintado en Deciembre" 27 de 1928- El Paso, Tex Publicado en 3/29/29. Courtesy of the University of Arizona's Special Collections library.

This sketch shows President Gil as a dog listening to a radio with Calles in the radio. Alfonso was showing in this picture that Gil is merely obeying orders from the former president Calles. This picture was his

[87] David Espinosa, *Jesuit Student groups the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014), 38.
[88] Diccionario Porrúa, *Historia, biografía y geografía de Mexico Editorial Porrúa, S.A.*, Alfonso de la Torre Bibliographical files (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).
[89] *How TO BECOME A CARTOONIST, a booklet from the Washington School of Cartooning,* Washington, DC. Copyright 1923 by same. Accessed through: http://mikelynchcartoons.blogspot.com/2009/12/how-to-become-cartoonist-washington.html December 11, 2009, Accessed January 10, 2025.

first drawing and clearly shows his disdain for both presidents of Mexico. This cartoon also show Alfonso's belief that the Revolutionary leaders were working together against the Catholic Church and the Cristeros.



Alfonso De la Torre's, "Just the Naughty boy when Doctor comes" Nov. 18, 1929. Courtesy of the University of Arizona's Special Collections library.

Another cartoon shows a boy getting after the 'Dr. Uncle Sam' for their lack of help with the affairs of Mexico, "the sick patient". Alfonso in this drawing reveals his sentiment regarding U.S. involvement. Alfonso believed that all U.S. intervention in Mexico sets the country back instead of helping Mexican affairs, a belief he shared with most Cristeros. Thus, Alfonso de la Torre was indicating that the U.S. involvement in the Cristero War was not helping Cristeros.

On a federal level, the U.S. ambassador in Mexico, Dwight Marrow, took a major role in ending the Cristero War by acting as a mediator between the Mexican government and the Vatican. The pressure of U.S. presence led to Calles and the Vatican ending the conflict with a truce. On a local level, the Knights of Columbus councils, a Catholic fraternity organization, in the United States involved themselves in aiding the Cristero movement. The Knights of Columbus raised money and created councils on the American side of the border to accommodate the refugee Catholic men.[90] However, according to historian Julia G. Young, moments of division within the Knights of Columbus arose around how to confront the issue with the Cristero War. Young describes how the Knights of Columbus Supreme Court

[90] Julia G. Young, "Knights and Caballeros: Cross-border Catholic Activism During Mexico's Cristero War", *Mexican Studies*, Vol. 33 Issue 2 Summer 2017. 259.

denied a plan called the Million Dollar Funds. This fund was to be open for all the Knights of Columbus councils in the United States to donate to this project to fund the Cristero movement. The reason the Supreme Court denied it was because they were worried about confusing Americans about the funds.[91] Alfonso's view of American intervention through his cartoon becomes more understandable in light of the actions of the U.S. government and the division in the Knights of Columbus.

Alfonso still felt that his involvement in the Cristero movement was not enough. In 1930, Alfonso joined the Knights of Columbus Council #1784, in Nogales Arizona.[92] Alfonso's sentiments about American's lack of support for the Cristero movement led him to join Knights of Columbus in the United States to persuade Americans to intervene on behalf of the Cristeros. Young illustrates the collaboration between Mexican and U.S. Knights of Columbus councils during the Cristero War. She wrote, "The KoC had already flourished along the U.S.-Mexico border region, thanks to the Order's initiative to build recreation halls for soldiers stationed at military camps along the border during the Mexican Revolution."[93] The Knights of Columbus not only provided fraternal bonds for Alfonso, but it allowed him to further aid the Cristero cause through the Knights of Columbus's activities.

He eventually joined the Cristero War in 1929. He sought the permission of his father and his boss to join the army and while both gave their consent, his Father, Ignacio said he did not

[91] Julia G. Young, "Knights and Caballeros: Cross-border Catholic Activism During Mexico's Cristero War", 256-257
[92] *Knights of Columbus Council no. 1784 Membership Card*, Alfonso de la Torre, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library).
[93] Julia G. Young, "Knights and Caballeros: Cross-border Catholic Activism During Mexico's Cristero War", 260.

need his permission since he was a man.[94] In his letter to his mother, he explains his reason for joining the war. According to Alfonso, God called him to join the militia. He wrote,

> "Yes, it's true, I feel unworthy of the work. But it is my duty, and if there are dangers in my duty, how much more should there be on a path that God does not show me…to fulfill ones duty, no kind of danger can deter anyone…That doesn't scare me then; because the intension is good…I despise life, comforts, the love of my home, everything, everything for the fight of God and Country. What can I therefore fear? I am unworthy, I am incapable, But God calls me, and He will know what He is doing…I had always lacked courage and zest for life, life did not appeal to me, the military had always been my dream but there was no chance. Would God have me reserved for this? I think so. Now I feel that life is beautifully I am not afraid of death, for me it is nothing more than the bad luck of not being able to continue fighting. Now I do love life, now I do feel that I live for something, that my life has purpose…. At least by spilling blood, God will forgive my sins, and the blood will be of some use. It is what God wants right now. [95]

[94] Alfonso de la Torre, *Carta de Alfonso de la Torre a Maria Uribarren, 1927-05-12*, MS420 Box 1 Folder 22, De la Torre Family papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections), 1.

[95] Alfonso de la Torre, *Carta de Alfonso de Maria Uribbaren, May 12, 1927, Nogales Arizona*, (Tucson: University of Arizona special collections). Spanish Translation: Sí, es verdad, me siento indigno del trabajo. Pero es mi deber, y si hay peligros en mi deber, cuánto más debe haberlos en un camino que Dios no me muestra…para cumplir con el deber, ningún tipo de peligro puede disuadir a nadie…Eso no me asusta entonces; porque la intención es buena…Desprecio la vida, las comodidades, el amor a mi hogar, todo, todo por la lucha de Dios y la Patria. ¿Qué puedo entonces temer? Soy indigno, soy incapaz, pero Dios me llama, y Él sabrá lo que hace... Siempre me había faltado coraje y ganas de vivir, la vida no me atraía, el ejército siempre había sido mi sueño, pero no había oportunidad. ¿Dios me habría reservado para esto? Creo que sí. Ahora siento que la vida es bella no le tengo miedo a la muerte, para mi no es más que la mala suerte de no poder seguir luchando. Ahora sí amo la vida, ahora sí siento que vivo para algo, que mi vida tiene un propósito… Al menos derramando sangre, Dios perdonará mis pecados y la sangre será de alguna utilidad. Es lo que Dios quiere ahora mismo.

This statement shows that he did not feel happiness or a purpose for living until he felt that his life was meant to serve God by protecting Catholicism in Mexico. His belief that God called him into the army gave him encouragement to risk his life for the Cristero movement.

There is little to no direct evidence about Alfonso's experience as a Cristero soldier from 1926-1929. While the time constriction of this project was a partial reason, there was also a possibility that Alfonso's letters were destroyed in fear of repercussion from the government. However, we can infer from the accounts of other Cristero soldiers can infer what his time in the camps may have been like. Aurelio Acevedo ate mole and saw children playing around the camp. Acevedo also saw the children at the camp also watched the animals in the camps.[96] Francisco Campos, the soldier who saw the flyers of rules against religion, formed a group named Santa Cruz that stole horses from federal soldiers and killed soldiers with knives. The Santa Cruz group went to different haciendas to ask people for tortillas, cheese, and/or meat. Campos claimed that the women would give the group supplies and Campos's group would head off.[97] Eugenio Hernandez, another Cristero soldier, saw at a Cristero camp, women making breakfast while children prepared for baptism and couples that prepared for matrimony. When Eugenio was out on missions, he described how the nighttime made combat difficult to differentiate a Mexican federal soldier or a Cristero. Eugenio's experiences expose the environment that Cristero endured. He described his worry about coyotes, spikes on cacti, and the weather. In one moment, Eugenio said that a man questioned him about the whereabouts of another Cristero. Afterwards

[96] Jean Meyer, *JM_17_Aurelio_Acevedo_Reel3_Side1*, (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Special collections).
[97] Jean Meyer, *Francisco Campos Reel one, side 1, tracks 1& 3*. (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Special Collections).

the man gave Eugenio supplies such as tortillas, carne asada, tobacco, and beans and a blessing for well wishes.[98] This experience shows the support cristeros had ordinary Mexicans.

These experiences paint an overall picture of Cristero soldiers' day-to-day routine during the war. Furthermore, the combination of these soldiers' memories builds the historical understanding of individual roles needed to sustain the Cristero camps. The women who provided food gave strength to these soldiers to continue with the war. When Catholic sacraments such as Holy Communion and confessions were outlawed in Mexico, the Cristero camps became a sanctuary for Catholic traditions. Understanding the preparations of sacraments and performances of Masses underscores the importance of preserving religious traditions for the Cristeros. Regardless of women's contributions, the military side of Cristeros and camps was a difficult environment to endure. The Cristero soldiers had to worry about environmental factors, federal soldiers' ambushes, and obtain supplies. Alfonso had similar experiences as these Cristero soldiers.[99]

In 1929, the Mexican state and the Catholic Church entered a strained truce to end the Cristero War. Yet, conflicts over the role of Catholicism in Mexico occurred on a smaller scale in the 1930s. After the truce, Alfonso returned to his family and carried on with his life. By 1934, Alfonso worked at his father's, Ignacio's, tannery business. During this phase, Alfonso experienced the trials of the Great Depression and prejudice against Catholics in the business world. Alfonso described to his father, in a letter, his trouble with obtaining business from some shepherds because they believed that the tannery business really belonged to the Bishop of Sonora. Alfonso explained the shepherds' beliefs when he wrote, "As there are many details that

[98] Jean Meyer, *Oral History Inverview, Eugenio Hernández,* Box 2, Folder: 23, (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Special Collections).
[99] Ibid

seem to help this belief, that is, the fact that we would have started in the Rancho del Churi, which is already public and well-known that it was the Bishop's business, the one that was later in our hands, the one that we lived in at school and now we eat with the ones, and we are brothers of priests, etc. etc."[100] This sentence reveals the origins of the tannery business, but further examination showed the struggles of being associated with Catholic clergy after the Cristero War. This conflict with the shepherds supported Alfonso's concerns anti-Catholic retaliation from the customers. No matter the hardships Alfonso faced to keep the business stable, he showed his unwavering faith describing God's support and will.

While Alfonso kept the family business running, the Governor of Sonora, the nephew of Plutarco Calles, Rodolfo Elias Calles, implemented the anti-religious laws that his uncle enforced nationally. Sonora's significance in this narrative is evident, as it was the home state of the De la Torres and Calles families. In Jürgen Buchenau's perspective, Sonora leaders tried to push way from the Indigenous and Catholic past to appear as a 'modern and secular' society like the United States.[101]

Rodolfo Calles implemented laws that expelled clergy and introduce socialist education. Cristeros, like Alfonso, felt that this was history being repeated. Sonoran events led by Rodolfo Calles were reasons why Cristeros were not happy about the 1929 truce. To Cristeros, the truce felt like a procrastination rather than a solution. The general and leader of the military operations in Sonora, Luis Ibarra, reached out to the people of Sonora to join the Liberating Popular Army

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[100] De la Torre, Alfonso, *Carta de Alfonso De la Torre a su padre Ignacio De la Torre, 1934-09-03*, (Tucson: Special Collections Online Exhibits), accessed January 13, 2025, 1. In this time there was a common belief that Catholic had blind allegiance towards Catholic clergy, especially the Pope. For more information refer to Margaret M. McGuinness's *Roman Catholicism in the United States: A Thematic History*. Spanish Translation: Como hay muchos detalles que parecen ayudar esta creencia, o sea el que hubieramos empezado en el Rancho del Churi que ya es publico y notoria que era negocio del Obispo, el que despues estuviera en nuestras manos troquecito, el que viviamos en el colegio y ahora comemos con las beatas, y el que somos hermanos de cura, etc. etc.
[101] Jürgen Buchenau, *The Sonoran Dynasty in Mexico: Revolution, Reform, and Repression*, 2.

or "*Ejercito Popular Libertador*." In 1935. Luis Ibarra wrote, "I'm not more interested or moved by more ambition than reconquering the essential and absolute freedoms and respect for the three fundamental institution of society: Religion, Family and property."[102] His experience as a soldier in the Cristero War and loyalty to the state of Sonora inspired groups of men, including Alfonso, to join Ibarra in the fight for religious liberty.

These Cristeros relied on Sonoran wilderness to keep their movement alive. An account by American hunters provides a glimpse of Sonoran Cristero camps. The American hunters went to Sonora to steel catch animals such as bears and deer. When they went through Huachinera, the men were stopped by Cristero soldiers and taken to see General Ibarra. Ibarra asked questions to know the hunter's intentions. The Cristero soldiers checked the hunters' vehicles and let them through without any more hassle.[103] This encounter serves as valuable information due to the interactions between the Americans and the Cristeros.

The Cristeros approached the Americans cautiously because of the threat of foreign intervention if the Americans were injured. Additionally, the Sonoran Cristeros were probably distrustful towards Americans due to the American intervention in the Cristero truce. Despite the reluctance, General Ibarra was nice to the Americans even allowing photographs to be taken of the group. The reason for this could be for publicity reasons. Firstly, by letting the Americans go unharmed and with their arms it would increase the chance of a positive narrative on the Cristeros. As a result, there would be more positive publicity as opposed to being labeled as mere

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[102] General Luis Ibarra, *Manifesto Al Pueblo de Sonora, September 30, 1935*. (Tucson: University of Arizona, Special collections library) De la Torre Family Papers. Spanish translation: No me lleva más interés ni me mueve más ambición que el reconquistar las Libertades esenciales y el absoluto
respeto a las tres instituciones fundamentales de la Sociedad: Religión, Familia y Propiedad

[103] J.H. Durrell, "Game Trails Through a Rebel Army" *Outdoor Life,* February 1936, 12, From the University of Arizona Special Collections Library De la Torre Family papers.

rebels. Secondly, their approach to the Americans stems from the idea of men being gentlemanly in times of conflict. These Cristero men, were fighting for society to protect religion, education, and family, so Cristeros needed to act accordingly by the standards made by General Ibarra. This account demonstrates the Cristero's alliance on the wilderness to take cover, stationed themselves as a military camp, and were under the leadership of General Ibarra.

Alfonso joined the Hibernian Popular Army in Sonora and served as a Colonel under the command of General Luis Ibarra.[104] Alfonso's death came on November 13, 1935, in Agua Fría. At two in the afternoon, Alfonso and several other Cristeros went with Captain M. Noriega, a cousin of Alfonso de la Torre, to set up a camp. At one point, Alfonso went down the stream to get more dry wood for the fire. Alfonso noticed that there were Mexican soldiers hiding to ambush Alfonso's group. General Luis Ibarra later found out the the federal soldiers knew where to look due to the betrayal of one cristero soldier labeled the "Judas Soldier."[105] In a quick moment, Alfonso drew out his gun and fired at the federal soldiers, simultaneously warning his company of the enemy's presence. Alfonso was immediately killed by the federal soldiers while the rest of the company was scattered.[106]

Alfonso de la Torre's death affected the family. Alfonso's sacrifice was memorialized by his loved ones and organizations he took part in. His positive memory is seen through letters from loved ones to Alfonso's immediate family. A niece wrote to Alfonso's sister, Maria, writing,

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[104] Luis Ibarra, *Escrito de Certifiacion de Luis Ibarra, November 2, 1945*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library).
[105] The translation for this title is "El soldado 'Judas'"
[106] Unknown, 'V.C.R.' *La tragedia de 'Agua Fría'*, Hermosillo. A 12 de October de 1947, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections), De la Torre Family papers.

"I am very sorry that they cut off such a young life so full of cold for the works of God."[107] The niece also expressed her belief that her uncle, Alfonso, has done God's work which highlights the family's faith.

Distant family members expressed sympathy to the De la Torre family for their loss and offered hope using their Catholic faith. The De la Torres received many cards that offered God, Heaven, and the hope to see Alfonso in the afterlife. Manuel Noriega's letter to Don Ignacio de la Torre presents these elements previously mentioned when he wrote, "As an indisputable fact, we know that the blood of martyrs is always fertile; Therefore, we sincerely ask God that Alfonso's will bring its benefits in a special way to you and that we may have some small participation so that we learn to serve the Creator, as we should."[108] Manuel's portrayal of Alfonso's death as martyrdom did multiple things for both the family and the Cristero cause. For the De la Torre family, Alfonso's death gave the family hope that his life served God's will in the Cristero War. For the Second Cristero movement, it created another martyr that serve as a role model for the other young men in Sonora.

Alfonso's experiences echo the values of Catholic manhood; his goal of participating in the Cristero War to defend the faith embodied Catholic masculinity during the Cristiada. On the other hand, Miguel Dormame, a Cristero soldier that was part of the same group as Alfonso, represented traits not considered masculine within the Catholic community. He earned the

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[107] Ma. Guadalupe, *Carta Ma. Guadalupe para Margarita Velasco, November 28,1935*, Aguascalientes, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections), De la Torre family collections. Spanish translation: Yo siento mucho que hayan segado una vida tan joven y tan llena de frio para las obras de Dios.

[108] Manuel Noriega, *Carta de condolencia de Manuel Noriega a la familia de la Torre, 1935-12-04*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collection). Spanish Translation: "Como hecho indiscutible, sabemos que la sangre de los mártires es siempre fecunda; por lo que, sinceramente pedimos a Dios que la de Alfonso traiga sus beneficios de manera especial sobre ustedes y que a nosotros nos toque alguna pequeña participación para que aprendamos a servir al Creador, como debemos."

nickname “Judas soldier” and was held responsible for the tragedy of Alfonso’s death by the Cristeros and De la Torres. According to Maria De la Torre, Dormame surrendered himself and turned other Cristeros to the federal authorities. This action earned him the title Judas because of his betrayal to the Cristero movement. The word “Judas” refers to the disciple of Jesus who betrayed Jesus to the Pharisees. Comparing Domame to Judas was an insult to Domame’s character because of Judas’s legacy of betrayal. This is clear when Maria de la Torre wrote, “My only regret is that he [Domame] does not have the good sense of Judas to hang himself, after his infamy.” [109] Domame’s memory in the Catholic community compared to Alfonso de la Torre and Anacleto Flores’ memory portrays the necessity to defend the Cristero movement for their families as part of being an honorable man in post-revolutionary Catholic Mexico. Catholic Mexican masculinity during the Cristero War meant bravely defending the faith even in the face of death.

While the De la Torre family received condolences and sympathy, the family still had worries for the safety of the remaining family members. At the same time, Alfonso was killed, the younger brother, Carlos de la Torre, was captured and imprisoned in the capital. A news source also spoke of the whereabouts of the family, claiming the De la Torre parents and Maria lived in Nogales.[110] The knowledge of Alfonso’s death and Carlos’s capture put the family in high alert to protect the other family members. Maria’s letter from her niece contained Maria’s pseudonym, Margarita Velasco, which may have been due to the high tensions the family felt after Alfonso’s death, as a Cristero soldier. Despite the losses the family felt with Alfonso, Fidel

[109] Maria de la Torre, *Carta de Maria de la Torre a su hermano, January 19, 1936, Nogales Arizona*, De la Torre Family papers (Tucson: University of Arizona Press).
[110] *Fue Alcanzado por una Qequend Fuerza Federal el Rebelde Luis Ibarra*, Newspaper source, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).

Muro, Maria's partner, and the uncertainty of Carlos's condition, the De la Torre's saw the bigger picture of defending Catholicism against Rodolfo's anticlerical laws. The De la Torre's extended family and community made the goal of defending Catholicism easier through their support and memorializing Alfonso as a martyr. The thought of Alfonso as a martyr and hero became the motivation for the family to carry on.

Conclusion:

As a young man, Alfonso proved true to the values of a man he wrote as a child. Alfonso showed respect towards people and Catholicism. In a letter to his mother, he wrote, "I received your letter that filled me with pride for having such a mother that I don't deserve. It also filled me with courage and made me feel more determined and more motivated than ever." [111] The context of this letter was that he told his mother that he joined the Cristero army. The words to his mother reflected appreciation towards his mother's support for his decision to join the Cristero Army.



Alfonso de la Torre during his youth, undated, Courtesy of the University of Arizona Special Collections Library

Alfonso's interpretation of manhood was sparked by the men around him. Alfonso's letter considering manhood does not contain a date, however, the source is known to have been created during his childhood. This letter shows the process of

[111] Alfonso de la Torre, *Carta de Alfonso De la Torre a María Uribarren, 1927-05-12*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Online Exhibits), accessed January 8,2025, https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/items/show/77. Spanish Translation: Recibí su carta que me lleno de orgullo por tener tal mama que no merezco. Me lleno también de valor y me hizo sentirme con mas ganas y mas resolución que nunca.

understanding the world around them, which leads readers to believe he wrote this letter sometime during his adolescent years. Alexander Schneiders, a psychologist, defines adolescence as, "…a period of transition, a time when the individual is no longer a child, nor yet an adult. It is also a period of continuous development, marked by changes and growths in all aspects of personality."[112] Alfonso's transitional period from childhood to adulthood likedly involved contemplating what it meant to be an honorable man. As the third chapter will show, Ignacio, Alfonso's older brother, had to leave the home to provide for the family. Alfonso's experience with this event may have formed his understanding of manhood, since he saw his brother's childhood end abruptly.

Despite Alfonso's distance from his family, he made sure to contribute to his family in many ways, such as being a role model to his younger brothers. In a letter to his brother, Carlos, Alfonso told him to behave well, be respectful to the priest, help their mother in the house with chores, and try not to cry. In this same letter, Alfonso shares with Carlos the meaning of manhood, when he wrote, "And finally, don't go crying for anything, when men go through difficulties, they don't cry but rather they start looking for a way to get out of them without going back." [113] Referencing back to Alfonso's experience, his opinion on crying stemmed from how his father and older brothers handled difficult issues. Alfonso believed these values and followed them to the best of his ability. He, as an older brother, felt obligated to guide his younger brother to Catholic manhood as his father and brothers showed him. Alfonso defended the women in his family by appreciating their contributions to Alfonso's upbringing. By telling Carlos to help his

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[112] Alexander A. Schneiders, "The Psychology of Adolescence: A factual and Interpretive study of the Conduct and Personality of Youth", *Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company*, 1951, 8.
[113] Alfonso de la Torre, *Carta de Alfonso De la Torre a su hermano Carlos De la Torre, August 10, 1925*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Online, Page 2). Spanish translation: Y en fin no andes llorando por nada, los hombres cuando se van con dificultades no lloran sino que se ponen a buscar la manera de salir de ellas sin retroceder.

mother in household chores reveals that the De la Torre men were not completely a traditional family, regarding gender roles.

Alfonso's upbringing reflected devotion to Catholicism through the Cristero movement and his sacrifice to warn the other Cristeros. He joined the A.C.J.M. at an early age to participate in the Cristero movement diplomatically. Alfonso's passion to defend the Catholic faith against the Mexican government fueled his pursuit towards leadership within the organization and established chapters along the U.S.-Mexico border. In 1929, he created cartoons that shared his critiques towards the United States' intervention in the Cristero War. Alfonso used his skills in cartoonery to criticize Mexican politicians, such as Plutarco Elias Calles, and their take on religion in Mexico. Alfonso's frustrations with the U.S. led him to join the Knights of Columbus council in Arizona to aid the Cristeros on the United States side. The years between 1925 and 1935 clearly show Alfonso's passion and protection for his faith and family when the Mexican government threatened it.

Alfonso's experience as a Cristero soldier reveals the complicated history of the aftermath of the Cristero War. While the Cristero War ended in a truce, tensions between the Catholic Church and the Mexican state remained. Cristero soldiers felt the truce did not resolve the conflict, and to an extent, they were right considering there were continued smaller conflicts, including that which resulted in Alfonso's death. The unresolved tension led to smaller conflicts between state and Cristeros, such as in Sonora. Sonora became an important setting Cristero conflict because Plutarco Elías Calles was from Sonora, where he also served as governor. Calles's nephew, Rodolfo Calles, became the Sonoran governor and implemented anti-clerical laws. A small-scale band of Cristeros banded together to fight against the state anticlerical laws. Alfonso's experiences and death shows that there is more to the Cristero War then what occurred

between 1927 and 1929. A newspaper editor labeled Alfonso's group as "rebels." The segment never mentions the word 'Cristeros', which may have been a strategic move from writers to hide their presence from public knowledge, either to downplay the conflict in hopes of a quick resolution or to avoid public outrage.[114]

During the Cristero War, Alfonso was one of many people whose death became a symbol to emphasize the honor of martyrdom for the Catholic faith. The Liga and A.C.J.M emphasized Alfonso's sacrifice for his fellow Cristeros by making his bravery, honor, and youth a model for Catholic manhood. A newsletter from *La Liga Nacional Defensora de la Libertad Religiosa* memorialized Alfonso when they wrote, "And in the supreme hour, Alfonso made the offering of the only thing he had: his life; and presenting his chest and invoking Christ the King, he fell, shedding his generous blood at a point near Agua Fría."[115] The description of Alfonso's last moments portrays him as a hero for Catholicism and the Cristero movement. Alfonso's martyrdom came through the sacrifice of his life for the movement. Alfonso's memorialization as a martyr was similar to other Cristero martyrs such as Luis Segura Vilchis, Father Miguel Pro, and Humberto Pro.[116]

Catholic leaders and activists used the death of priests to memorialize their martyrdom, such as Miguel Pro.As the next chapter will show, clerical members of the Catholic Church such as Ignacio de la Torre were crucial members of the Cristero movement. Priests did more than set

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[114] *Fue Alcanzado por una pequeña fuerza federal el Rebelde Luis Ibarra*, Newspaper from the De la Torre Family papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library).
[115] *Reconquista, Órgano oficial de la Liga Nacional Defensora de la Libertad, Galería heroica, November 1941*, De la Torre family papers. (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library, 1). Spanish translation: Y en aquella hora suprema Alfonso hizo la oblacion de lo único que poesía; su vida; y presentado el pecho e invocando a Cristo Rey, cayo derramando su sangre generosa en un punto cercano a Agua Fría.
[116] Their stories can be found in the Hesburgh Library's special collection archives held at the University of Notre Dame. The title of the collection is called Post Card Collection.

up organizations such as the *Liga Nacional Defensora de la Libertad* and the A.C.J.M. The priests also kept the morality up for Cristeros in the camps. Finally, clerical members risked their safety and lives to continue providing sacraments for the Mexican people despite it being against the law. Yet, the faith of many people, such as Alfonso and Ignacio De la Torre, was stronger than their fear of breaking the law of the secular Mexican government.

Chapter 3

Todo Para Dios- Ignacio de la Torre and the Path to Religious Life-

Father Ignacio De la Torre wrote in a sermon, "Every priest, from the moment he accepts and receives ordination is a soldier in the army of Jesus Christ. He is at the disposal of his legitimate superiors and must go where they send him. A bad soldier would be the one who did not want to fight in the trench that is assigned to him."[117] This sermon mirrors Father Ignacio's priority to obey church orders despite personal preferences or legal repercussions. Father Ignacio de la Torre served the Sonoran/Arizonian border region throughout his career as a priest by offering sacraments and running Church parishes. The tensions between the government and the Catholic Church affected the clergy the most due to their position with the Mexican people and the Church.

This chapter argues that Catholic priests during the Cristero War contributed to children's love of Catholicism and emphasized martyrdom to Cristero children. The chapter argues that while Father Ignacio's death falls under traditional martyrdom, his martyrdom reflects the sacrifice of personal choice. Father Ignacio remained obedient to the orders of the Sonoran bishop and changed the lives of many people in his parishes, as evident by Father Ignacio's funeral, cards and letters from parishioners. Ignacio de la Torre's story tells the relationship between the Mexican state and the Catholic Church from the 1910s, during the Mexican Revolution, to the 1980s. Ignacio's perspective clarifies the role of clerical members during and

[117] Ignacio de la Torre, *A los Fieles de Nogales*, Nogales, Sonora, March 26, 1970, De la Torre Family papers (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Library). Spanish Translation: Todo Sacerdote, desde el momento que acepta y recibe la ordenación, es un soldado del ejercito de Jesucristo. Está a la disponibilidad de sus legítimos superiores y debe ir a donde lo manden. Mal soldado seria el que no quisiera ir a luchar en la trinchera que le designen.

after the Cristero conflict. These religious men relied on Cristero supporters to hide from Mexican authorities and in return priests provided religious services throughout Mexico.

Ignacio's role, as the eldest brother of the eight children, meant that he had responsibilities and duties that were different from his siblings. As the eldest son, Ignacio naturally grew close to his sister, Maria, because she was the oldest of them all. For this reason, there are more letters between these two siblings compared to the others. Ignacio's experiences as a child, with his upbringing and experiences, formed who he became as a man. To portray Ignacio's story accurately, I rely on the works of Ignacio's friend, the Mother Superior in Sonora, who recorded the history of his life from birth to death. The chapter titled *"Semblanza Guadalupana"* comes from the family history book, *Estampas Cristeras*. This chapter provides detailed accounts of Ignacio's life including poetry he relied on, his ordination, and his work as a priest. However, it is important to note that this source was written by a family friend specifically for the family, and thus, there is a significant bias in favor of Father Ignacio. As a remedy, I will balance the perspective by including sources that present a critical view of him. The chapter lays the foundation of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Mexican state. The chapter then narrows to Ignacio's life chronologically showing moments of his vocation. The chapter will end with Ignacio's unsolved murder and reflect Ignacio's role as a priest in the border region of Sonora and Arizona as well as the Catholic faith in Mexico.

Father Ignacio's story is indicative of the state of the Catholic Church after the Cristero War. Father Ignacio spread Catholicism in Mexico despite the laws of the government. His perspective uncovers Sonora's political, social, and economic nature and the Church's need to adapt to maintain control. Similar to Ignacio, the Catholic Church had to adjust to the new

realities of Mexico after the Cristero War. The role of the Catholic Church was an integral part in Mexican history.

National Perspective: The Mexican State, Catholic Church, and Mexican Supporters

The clerical involvement in Mexican affairs was a longstanding feature of Mexican society. Miguel Hidalgo, a Catholic priest, had rung the church bells on September 16, 1810, in Dolores to encourage the parishioners to revolt against Spain."[118] His role in the Mexican War of Independence earned him the title, "Father of Mexican Independence". In February 1913, during the Mexican Revolution, the Huerta Rebellion was supported by Catholic clergy over Madero's rule.[119] Author wrote, "The Church and the bishops made no official reaction to the new government [Huerta's government]. Yet there is little doubt that the clerics preferred Huerta to Madero…But Huerta in the spring of 1913 seemed to promise the restoration of order and stability, an end to the many revolts throughout the Republic."[120] The Catholic Church clergy found Huerta's government more appealing due to his commitment to restoring order, which they believed would benefit them. This context provides clarity on the reason the federal and state governments took measures to restrict the Catholic Churches power.

Tensions between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government began long before the Cristero Rebellion. Leaders of the Catholic Church and the Mexican government competed for influence over Mexican society. Conflicting visions about post-revolutionary Mexico between leading revolutionary politicians such as Calles and Obregón and the Catholic Church,

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[118] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Miguel-Hidalgo-y-Costilla accessed February 5, 2025
[119] Christopher Ohan, "The Role of the Catholic Church in the Mexican Revolution," http://www.revistascisan.unam.mx/Voices/pdfs/5410.pdf UNAM page 56
[120] Robert E. Quirk, *The Mexican Revolution and the Catholic Church, 1910-1929,* (Blooming: Indiana University Press, 1973), 37-38.

further heightened the conflict. The tactics from both institutions consisted of undermining each other's authority. One of the main conflicts between the Catholic Church and state centered on education. The most prevalent question about children's education was who had the authority to nurture the minds of children. Father Ignacio's projects regarding education unveiled the Church's view of education as a tool for control. Education is a powerful tool that forms children to be supporters of either the revolutionary government or Catholic ideologies. The church-state relations was a central theme of this narrative and affected the De la Torre children's understanding of their environment.

The Revolutionary government aimed to control education and, as a result, revealed the tensions between the Mexican government and the Catholic Church. Since the Mexican War for Independence, the Catholic Church and the Mexican government have clashed over controlling Mexico's political, social, and cultural environments. The Catholic Church, on the local level in twentieth-century Mexico, was concerned with the growing secularization in the revolutionary government. Historian, Robert Weis, wrote, "Anticlericalism sought to foment secularization, the process of strengthening civil institutions independent of religious dogma and institutions."[121] The conflict about the role of religion in government spaces continued through the Mexican revolution. Catholic organizations for laypeople, created by priests, were intended to preserve clerical authority and advocate for Catholic influence on Mexico.

The Mexican government's concern about Catholic authority led to regulations on clergy to control church affairs in Mexico. During the Cristero War, the Mexican state, under Calles's rule, placed limitations on where priest could perform their religious practices. While this map is

[121] Robert Weis, *For Christ and Country: Militant Catholic Youth in Post-Revolutionary Mexico*, 30.

undated, it serves as an example of how the clerical restrictions were implemented throughout Mexico. This map shows that Sonora was one of the states that did not allow any priests in the area. This map explains why priests, like Father Ignacio, chose to stay in this region, regardless of repercussions. [122]



Unknown, “La Iglesia en Mexico,” Special collections online exhibits, undated. Courtesy of the University of Arizona special collection library.

Peter Reich, a historian, highlighted the tense environment in Mexico because of the Mexican government and the Catholic Church. The Cristero War left Mexico in a stressful

[122] Unknown, *La iglesia en México*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections Online Exhibits), accessed June 3, 2024, https://exhibits.lib.arizona.edu/items/show/99.

atmosphere. The Cristero compromises included the Mexican government not interfering with "spiritual functions" of the Catholic Church. This meant the Mexican government could not control spiritual events such as masses or sacraments. In return, the clergy had to register with local authorities according to the Constitution of 1917.[123] His account shows the compromises between Mexican government and Catholic leaders, describing the lengthy process securing peace by limiting the influence of radicals on both sides. Both institutions had to set aside lesser issues to resolve the conflict; although they continued to disagree over education, they manage to maintain peace. By the 1950's, the government and the church had reached a mutual understanding of the other's power over Mexico.

On the other hand, the Mexican government strived to engage with the youth to raise them under its ideology. Historian Elena Jackson Albarrán writes, "Organizations for youth…provided the child with a 'better interpretation of revolutionary nationalism and initiation in true citizenship.'"[124] Despite the government's attempt to revolutionize students, exclusion still occurred that made government youth groups unwelcoming to children with diverse backgrounds. For example, Indigenous children were excluded from joining the Mexican Boy Scouts. The reason for this was for the Mexican Boy Scouts group leaders felt the need to compete with the United States and other nations.[125] Beyond ethnic exclusion, Catholic parents were hesitant to place children in these types of organizations due to the fear of anti-Catholic feelings left over from the Cristero War.

[123] Peter Lester Reich, *Mexico's Hidden Revolution: The Catholic Church in Law and Politics since 1929*, (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press), 1995.
[124] Elena Jackson Albarrán, *Seen and Heard in Mexico: Children and Revolutionary Cultural Nationalism*, 272.
[125] Elena Jackson Albarrán, *Seen and Heard in Mexico: Children and Revolutionary Cultural Nationalism*, 273.

The Catholic clergy organized groups, such as the Acción Católica Juventud Mexicana which was founded between 1912-1913, rallied Catholic laypeople to advocate for a Catholic Mexico. The clergy's strategy to unite laypeople for Catholicism was meant to use their legal protection as Mexican citizens. Throughout Ignacio's life, he was surrounded by clergy, friars, bishops, and priests, who influenced his decision to join the priesthood. Father Ignacio's services included providing sacraments to people in Sonora in 1929, during the Cristero Rebellion.[126] The priests' decision to perform Catholic sacraments, regardless of the law, created a strong bond between the priest and his parishioners. When we consider the role of priests in this narrative, it becomes clear why the clergy was targeted by the Mexican government. This was because the priests worked closely with Catholic communities, organized groups, protests, and provided religious services to Mexican Catholic families. The youth's enthusiasm and adaptability gave the clergy an advantage to bring positive changes to Mexico.

The organizations that priests, such as Father Ignacio, created and led were important to the Cristero movement. For example, one organization that was involved with the Cristero Movement was the Knights of Columbus. The Knights of Columbus began in New Haven, Connecticut by a priest named, Father Michael J. McGivney. The organization aimed to gather Catholic men under their faith to support each other and their families in a time where anti-Catholic sentiments was prominent in the United States.[127] Knights of Columbus councils spread rapidly throughout the United States and eventually went into Mexico. Julia G. Young, a

[126] The Catholic Church had responded to the enforcement of Anti-clerical laws by the Mexican government by restricting the allowance of sacraments throughout Mexico. This was a sign of protest, but it was meant to rile Mexican Catholics to stand up against the anti-clerical laws.
[127] "Knights of Columbus Founded" Knights of Columbus home page. Accessed January 20, 2025. https://www.kofc.org/en/who-we-are/our-history/founding-and-early-acts.html This group originally started in the United State but by the twentieth century, Knights of Columbus councils were set up throughout Mexico.

historian, shares an estimate that by 1923, Mexico had 45 Knights of Columbus Councils and approximately 5,102 members.[128] The story of how the Knights of Columbus were founded by a priest allowed historians to see why the organization was invested in the Cristero movement. In another example, the Jesuits created the organization, A.C.J.M., meant for Catholic activism for upper and middle-class families. Historian, David Espinosa wrote, "…the Jesuits considered [the upper and middle-class youth] to be the 'living forces' of Mexican society."[129] These organizations showed the legacies of clerical intervention for Catholicism. The groups founded by priests varied based on Catholic laypeople's needs. While the priests focused on different demographics of people, they all had the same goal of uniting people to advocate for Catholicism against a government that was pushing back on Catholic authority in Mexican affairs.

While Catholic priests accommodated for men, women, and children, the priests placed special focus on women and children. Women were the powerhouses of a properly functioned Catholic community and families. Women's support in a priest's cause made the process of re-Christianizing Mexico smoother. Archbishop José Mora y del Río approved the Unión de Damas Católicas Mexicanas' statutes which states, "to protect and strengthen the religious, moral, and economic interests of the Mexican women. To exercise social action in is fullness, founding, impelling, and protecting feminine work of all kinds."[130] The organizations gave the laypeople opportunities to share their voices and formed Mexican society to Catholic standards.

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[128] Julia G. Young, "Knights and Caballeros: Cross-border Catholic Activism During Mexico's Cristero War", 251.
[129] David Espinosa, *Jesuit Student Groups the Universidad Iberoamericana and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014), 35.
[130] Patience A. Schell, "Of Sublime Mission of Mothers of Families: the Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies in Revolutionary Mexico" from *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, edited by Stephanie Mitchell and Patience A. Schell, (Lanham: Rodman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007),100.

The Catholic priests also targeted the youth because of their passion and dedication showed to Catholicism and national politics. The Catholic clergy, like the Jesuits, organized activist groups such as the A.C.J.M, the Union National de Estudiantes Católicos, and the LNDR, to use the organizations to push for Catholic authority for society. The clergy's use of youth groups reveals the strategy to push back against secularization in the social and political life of Mexico. The Jesuits recognized potential power in organizing Catholic young adults to take part politically in Mexico.[131] For this reason, the Mexican government targeted Catholic clergy through detainment, deportation, or executions.

The role of priests in post-revolutionary Mexico was crucial to organizing the Mexican laypeople. The clergy's purpose in creating these grassroots movements was to keep Catholicism central in Mexico. The tension with the anticlerical laws in the 1917 Constitution led to a bloody civil war in Mexico between the Mexican government and the Cristero soldiers to defend their Catholic faith. Historian, Stephen J.C. Andes, showed the Vatican's political and diplomatic role in the early twentieth century. The Vatican could not sponsor nor support grassroots organizations to sustain diplomacy with Mexico.[132] Despite the tensions between the Vatican and the Mexican government, the priests in Mexico continued their services in secret and supported the Cristeros. Father Ignacio de la Torre's contribution during the the Cristero movement and afterwards was through his work as a priest. As this next section will show, his experiences during his youth formed his goals as a priest.

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[131] David Espinosa, *Jesuit Student Groups the Universidad Iberoamericana and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979*, 6

[132] Stephen J.C. Andes, *The Vatican and Catholic Activism in Mexico and Chile: The Politics of Transnational Catholicism, 1920-1940*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 43.

Ignacio De la Torre's story:

Ignacio was born on December 17, 1901, in Guadalupe, Zacatecas. He was the second born of the De la Torre parents right after Maria. The Mother Superior described Ignacio's childhood environment as a "…tropical climate of …its green fields and feverish activity of a typical mining village." [133] Ignacio was baptized on December 26, 1901, by his Godfather, Diego de la Conception Rangel O.P.M. His upbringing as the eldest son contained strict rules of Christian morality with Ignacio's father dedicated to his work and his mother raising the children. Despite Ignacio being born in Zacatecas, Ignacio was educated in Aguascalientes when the family moved there for economic reasons related to Don Ignacio's work. Ignacio, just like Maria, was homeschooled and taught by Doña Maria de la Torre, their mother. The eldest children of the De la Torre family, Maria and Ignacio were homeschooled, while the other children have received education from an institution. The reason that the siblings had different educational experiences was because parents faced financial issues during Ignacio and Maria's childhood, which made their mother responsible for two oldest children's education. The financial stress could have been reduced by the time the younger siblings were born, explaining why the younger siblings received formal education.

Ignacio's devotion to Catholicism began in childhood. Like Maria, Ignacio wrote a letter to the three wise men, in honor of the day of the three kings. Both Maria and Ignacio asked for sweets; however, while Maria also asked for a ball, Ignacio asked for a sword.[134] The difference in toys show the role of boys and girls in playing. The sword was a boy's toy that would have

[133] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", chapter from *Estampas Cristeros,* 12, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections).
[134] Ignacio de la Torre, *Untitled Letter, December 22, 1909*, Biographical file Ignacio De la Torre 1909-1972, (Tucson, Arizona, University of Arizona Special Collections Library).

encouraged Ignacio to embrace masculinity by pretending to be a warrior. In adulthood, Ignacio embraced the spirit of a warrior by protecting the Catholic faith and preserving the sacraments as a priest.

The Mexican Revolution changed Ignacio's life and served as a transitional period from child to man. The Mexican Revolution's violence and societal transition caused Don Ignacio to lose his fortune. As the eldest son in the family, his parents expected Ignacio to stand up and help the family to sustain themselves after a devastating loss. Soccoro Martinez Ochoa, the author of Father Ignacio de la Torre's chapter in the book *Estampas Cristeras* wrote, "As a consequence of this social movement, Mr. De la Torre lost his entire fortune, and his son Ignacio, as the eldest of the family, although still a child was forced to help his father in supporting the family…"[135] Despite being the second eldest, his parents wanted Ignacio to step up because he was the eldest son. As the first chapter mentioned, Maria's upbringing and training was in the domestic sphere. The De la Torre parents did not want Maria to work outside the home so she could help their mother instead. Considering the De la Torre family faced financial hardships due to the revolution, this experience could have formed the family's opinion that the current revolutionary leaders were not good for the Mexican state. Ignacio worked in Piedras Negras in Coahuila but returned to Aguascalientes due to being sick. After recovering, Ignacio went to Tampico, Tamaulipas to support the family, where Alfonso also worked in Tampico in the oil wells. [136]

[135] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", 13. Spanish Translation: "Como consecuencia de dicho movimiento social, el Señor De la Torre perdió toda su fortuna, y su hijo Ignacio, como mallor de la familia que era, aunque todavía un niño, se vio precisado an ayudar a su padre en el sostenimiento de la familia…"

[136] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", 13, De la Torre Family Papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections).

Despite the struggles he faced to support the family, Ignacio experienced positive moments through this tough phase that led him to the priesthood. While in Tampico, Ignacio associated with the Tampico A.C.J.M chapter. His time with the group included working with the youth which allowed him to study Catholic apologetics and Catholic doctrine.[137] If his interest in the religious life was strong as a child, then his experience here tipped him over to actively pursue the priesthood. Despite these desires, Ignacio felt a responsibility to his family during the challenging economic times. [138]

In 1921, Ignacio finally felt it was time to pursue his dream of becoming a priest. In Ignacio's letter to his sister, Maria, he revealed his connections to his faith and his call to the priesthood. Similarly to Alfonso, Ignacio expressed feelings of idleness before he felt the call to the priesthood. Additionally, Ignacio, like Alfonso, showed humility, by expressing his feelings of inadequacy to the calling when he wrote,

> "I devoted all the energies of my being to playing that role that the infinite wisdom of God wanted to give me by removing me from the unfathomable arcanum of nothing. That role, which for so long was obscure to me and which I sought for myself and I searched for in vain in the changing world, God wanted to make known to me it was Priesthood. Role of which I am not worthy…"[139]

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[137] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras,* 13
[138] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras,*
[139] Ignacio de la Torre, *Carta de Ignacio De la Torre a Maria de la Torre, Aguascalientes, October 8, 1921*, Tampico Tamp, Mexico, 1, De la Torre Family Papers (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections). Spanish translation: "delia con sagrario las energías todas de mi ser en desempeñar el papel que la sabida ría infinita de Dios quiso darme al sacarme del insondable arcano de la nada. Ese papel, que por tanto tiempo estuvo obscuro para mi y que yo buscaba para mi y que yo búscala inútilmente en el vaiben del mundo, Dios quiso darme a conocer: es el Sacerdocio. Papel de que no soy digno…"

His confidence in Maria showed their close bond as eldest siblings. Ignacio was away due to work to support the family when his father's business was struggling because of the revolution. He chose to share his desires for the priesthood once he felt that his family would sustain itself. During his training as a priest, he met Reverend Dr. Juan Navarrete y Guerro, who took Ignacio under his wing.

Ignacio's letters showed his views on the spiritual role of his priesthood. In the same letter mentioned earlier, Ignacio emphasized his reliance on God. He wrote, "…I need for His [God] glory; may He allow me to realize that dream I once had out of selfishness, and now I surrender everything to the greater glory of God, to be eloquent."[140] This statement further demonstrates his relationship with his faith. In another letter, he wrote, "I believe that's what makes a whole life miserable. God creates each person to fulfill his mission, and when the mistake is made, he finds himself off-center and constantly thwarted." [141] Ignacio's upbringing, along with these letters confirms the key role Catholic spirituality had on Ignacio's perception of the world around him.

Ignacio began his training at the Apostolic College of San Francisco Javier in Magdalena, which was founded by Bishop Juan Navarrete. Ignacio training as a priest was peaceful considering the high tensions between the Church and state. In 1926, Bishop Navarrete was deported from Mexico and fled to Nogales, Arizona due to the anti-clericalism. Bishop Navarrete

[140] Ignacio de la Torre, *Carta de Ignacio De la Torre a Maria de la Torre, Aguascalientes, October 8, 1921*, Tampico Tamp, Mexico, 1, De la Torre Family Papers (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections), 2 Spanish Translate: …que para su gloria necesito; que me permita realizar ese sueño que antes tenia por egoísmo y ahora lo cuido todo ala mayor gloria de Dios, de ser elocuento.

[141] Father Ignacio de la Torre a Maria de la Torre, Magdalena, Sonora, De la Torre Family Papers, University of Arizona's Special Collections. Spanish translation: yo creo que eso en lo que hace descraciada toda una vida porque Dios crea a cada quien para desempeñar su mision y cuando la yerra se encuentra fuera de su centro y contrariado contantermento.

hid under the name of Don Fortino to continue his ministry in Sonora until 1937. When Bishop Navarrete got to Arizona, he used a worn-down building left behind by the U.S. military and converted it to a seminary. In this humble building, Ignacio finished the rest of his training to his ordination as a priest. On August 19, 1928, Ignacio earned the title of Deacon, which was a step closer to his priestly ordination. A month later, on September 30, 1928, Ignacio was ordained as a priest under the order of Melchizedek.[142]

At the same time as Ignacio's ordination, the Cristero War was in full force, which meant that Catholic masses, services, or sacraments were outlawed. This did not deter Ignacio from his duties as a new priest. Father Ignacio's first mass was on St. Therese the Child of Jesus's feast day.[143] On December 3, 1929, Ignacio broke the law when he held mass in secret for his family and friends in Sonora.[144] This occurrence showed Father Ignacio's loyalty to Catholicism and his priestly vows to spread Catholicism in Sonora despite the law. After years of studying, Father Ignacio was assigned to teach seminaries at the school, *Colegio Apostólico*, where he trained as a student. He taught at the school for a year, until he moved to Sahuaripa, Sonora, in 1931. He then moved to Nacozari to work as a Vicar Cooperator, which meant he was helping another priest in a Catholic parish with services.[145]

As a priest, Father Ignacio had goals to spread Catholicism to the remote Sonoran region and encourage young people to Catholicism.[146] The 1930's was the period when the Sonoran government implemented the anti-clerical laws, including the government's right to restrict

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[142] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", De la Torre Family Papers (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections, 14).
[143] Igancio had deep admiration for Saint Therese the child of Jesus. Her feast day falls on October 1st, so his first mass was on her feast day.
[144] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras,* 15.
[145] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras,* 15-16.
[146] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras,* 20.

Catholic services. These laws did not slow Father Ignacio's work for the Sonoran people. Instead, Father Ignacio avoided legal repercussions relying on strategies such as wearing disguises and hiding in people's homes, stores, or inns. Father De la Torre would dress up like a worker, rancher, and other professions to avoid detection.[147] While in hiding, he continued helping people around him and teaching Catholic doctrine. Eventually, Father Ignacio was found by law enforcement and was deported to the United States. Father Ignacio's deportation was one result of ongoing tension between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government.

Mother Superior did not provide information on when Father Ignacio's return to Mexico. However, she confirmed that Father Ignacio's perseverance to fulfill his priestly vows brought him back to the Mexican side of the border. Since Father Ignacio's time in the seminary, he had support from his family, especially his sister Maria. Maria de la Torre decorated the chapel for his ordination Mass and helped her brother in the projects he planned for his parishioners. For example, Father Ignacio ended up ill due to his lack of self-care. To continue with his mission, he went back to Nogales Arizona, to receive care from his mother and sister.[148]

In 1937, Bishop Navarrete called Father Ignacio de la Torre to serve as a Parish priest for the Church called *Purísima Concepcion* founded in Nogales, Sonora.[149] While at the parish, he organized the youth to create a community and provided sacraments. He also established a group called the Catholic Circle that was intended for the parish women. He also created other women's organizations such as the *Damas de Isabel la Católica, Guadalupano Youth Circle No. 1*, there were multiple groups called the *Guadalupano* circle, which is why there were numbers

[147] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "*Semblanza Guadalupana*", from *Estampas Cristeras, 16*
[148] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "Semblanza Guadalupana", De la Torre Family Papers (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections, 14).
[149] Madre Superiora Socorro Martinez Ochoa, "Semblanza Guadalupana", De la Torre Family Papers (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collections, 15).

at the end of the organization. These groups had a common goal of uniting the youth under Catholicism and to encourage moralizing the young Catholic girls. Father Ignacio de la Torre also revived the A.C.J.M chapter in Nogales, Sonora, which he named after his deceased brother, Alfonso de la Torre.[150] In these ways, Father De la Torre's worked for the Nogales community.

The creation of these groups, especially the youth, helped the Catholic community in Nogales, Sonora. Father Ignacio organized the groups to create community and give the youth a space to express their concerns and opinions. Father Ignacio's dedication to the youth highlights the prominent role the Catholic youth had in forming a Mexican society with Catholic morals. A year after the Nogales A.C.J.M. chapter began, the organization began a publication called *La Juventud*. In the beginning, *La Juventud* was distributed to the parishioners for free, but as its popularity grew, subscriptions were implemented. Father Ignacio made sure the subscriptions for *La Juventud* were set at a moderate price for Nogales residents. This publication was one of the many ways that Father Ignacio de la Torre focused on the youth.[151] Father Ignacio created organizations that Maria de la Torre was part of such as the Brotherhood of perpetual Candle and the Third Order of Saint Francis.

Father Ignacio was heavily involved in his parishioner's education in addition to organizing religious groups for Catholic youth. He created schools on church grounds that taught catechism in 1938. The school relied on the labor of young Catholic women in the parish to keep the schools. He valued education so much that he created three schools from 1942 to 1950 named Eusebio Francisco Kino, Primary school for Children of Better Society, and Fray Pedro

[150] Jose de la Torre, *Estampas Cristera*, Alfonso de la Torre died two years before due to a Cristero Battle in Aguas Fría in Sonora. (Tucson: University of Arizona's Special Collection), 18.
[151] Mother Superior Socorro Martinez Ochoa, *Semblanza Guadalupana*, from *Estampas Cristeras*, 19.

de Gante School.[152] As with the magazine *Juventud*, Father Ignacio did everything he could to keep the fees modest so that finances did not hinder his parishioners. Unfortunately, the restrictive fees came at the expense of the teachers who did not receive a pay. Yet, the mother superior did not mention the sentiments of the teachers. In this project, Father Ignacio was involved in the children's curriculum and created twenty lessons that were based on the Catholic Creed, the Ten Commandments, and sacraments intended for the learning levels of children.[153]

Father Ignacio spent his energy serving the youth, but Father Ignacio shared Catholicism with every person he met despite any setbacks made by the Mexican government. Father Ignacio was guest speaker at different radio programs to share his knowledge on Catechism and current events through his experience. However, the opportunities to speak on the radio were limited due to communication laws in Mexico.[154] The law that Mother Superior may have been referring to was the Law of General Means of communication (LVGC) which were revised in 1931 and 1932. Joy Elizabeth Hayes, a communications professor, explained, "The LVGC required commercial broadcasters to carry all government announcements free of charge at the same time as it prohibited them from transmitting programs of a political or religious nature."[155] This period of Father Ignacio's life shows his innovative thinking by using technology to share the teachings of Catholicism. Father Ignacio's interaction with radio shows and backlash portrayed the issue of censorship after the Cristero War.

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[152] Mother Superior Socorro Martinez Ochoa, *Semblanza Guadalupana*, from *Estampas Cristeras*, 22.
[153] The Catholic Creed is a proclamation of Catholic beliefs Catholic say at Mass. The Catechism defines sacraments as sacred initiation events that a Catholic goes through in their life.
[154] Mother Superior, Socorro Martinez Ochoa "Semblanza Guadalupana" from *Estampas Cristeras,* 22
[155]Joy Elizabeth Hayes, "National Imaginings on the Air: Radio in Mexico, 1920-1950" from *The Eagle and the Virgin: National and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940,* edited by Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 247.

Out of all of the work Father Ignacio did for his communities in Sonora, his legacy is remembered through his Church construction projects. The name of the Parish was *The Most Holy Mother of Guadalupe Parish* and was by the contributions of his parishioners. Beyond the aid and labor of his parishioners, Father Ignacio, with the help of the parishioners, funded the construction of the church through fundraisers, organizing festivals or *quérmeses*, raffles and plays performed by the children of the parish. The parish also organized plays about the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe to both honor her and to remind the people that their labor was for the construction of the cathedral, named after the Virgin of Guadalupe. Father Ignacio managed to build the Most Holy Mother of Guadalupe Cathedral despite complications, such as engineering miscalculations, in December of 1969.



The Most Holy Mother of Guadalupe Parish photo taken by Gerardo Garcia from Google Maps obtained February 4, 2025

People in Sonora appreciated Father Ignacio's work in the border region and loved him as a family member; however, not everyone was fond of Father Ignacio. There were accounts of people who blew smoke from cigarettes in Father Ignacio's face or spat at him when he was at the construction site for the cathedral. One reporter, George Thomson, claimed to be a student in one of the schools Father Ignacio oversaw. In an article reflecting on Father Ignacio's death, he wrote:

> "One day Padre Nacho came to my school in his purple robes and with his online entourage. The nuns at my school lined us up to greet him to kiss his ring. The 50 kids in line in front of me kissed it. When it was my turn to be in front of the Father, instead I shook his hand… The nuns approached me immediately and asked, 'Don't you respect the Lord?' They asked, 'Don't you believe in him?' Don't you respect or revere him? No, I don't I thought but I was too afraid to tell the truth. This man who preached humility, chastity, and poverty, strutted through the rows of boys and girls with adorned clothes wearing robes of silk and gold." [156]

There are some concerning parts of this article such as constantly using the wrong year of Father Ignacio's death. Yet, it is important to use this account to show the perspective of people who did not view Father Ignacio in a positive light. This account from the student reveals conflict within the parish community. While Mother superior memorializes Father Ignacio as saintly, Thomson's account reveals the humanly side of Father Ignacio as well as the issues of Parochial schools ran by religious sisters. Despite the polar views of Father Ignacio, his legacy tends to lean more towards a positive and heavenly legacy. This is clear through the parishioners of The Most Holy Mother of Guadalupe, who changed the street in front of the church from San Martin Street to Padre Nacho Street.

Many people loved Father Ignacio, but he also made enemies along the way which was evident in his death. Father Ignacio was murdered on October 4, 1979. Father Ignacio left Hermosillo, Sonora to go to Magdalena when along the way he was killed by someone or a group of people. His body was found at the bottom of a 13,800 cliff of Imuris-Cananea highway.

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[156] George Thomson, "Padre Nacho-A powerful and controversial Nogales priest is remembered by a student," *Borderzine: Reporting Across Fronteras,* June 17, 2010. https://borderzine.com/2010/06/padre-nacho-%E2%80%94-a-powerful-and-controversial-nogales-priest-is-remembered-by-a-student/

Father Ignacio's case remains unsolved.[157] Some family members believed that he was killed by criminals, while others speculated that a person struggling with mental illness may have been responsible, since Father Ignacio's wallet and medals were on him.[158] What is know for certain is this death had a profound impact on the community. The archbishop wrote, "…Father Nacho was a real brother for all Nogalesenes. A brother who knew how to take teachings of Divine Word not only in its explanations and admonitions but also in its example and in its prayer. True Brother for children because he was the distinguished catechist…."[159] An unknown writer, wrote, "Goodbye Father Nacho, Nogales says goodbye to you with tears and crying for your soon departure…Please Don't Forget from the Town of Nogales and Always remember us with love." [160] These words from both the clergy and a probable parishioner demonstrates their respect for Father Ignacio and his work in Nogales, Sonora. By the time, Father Ignacio was



Ignacio de la Torre Uribarren in his youth, undated, courtesy of the University of Arizona Special Collections

[157] Semblanza Guadalupana del Ilmo. Sr. Vicario General de la Arquidiocesis de Hermosillo, Sonora, "Semblanza; Pbro. Ignacio de la Torre U." 33-34, Part 2-Ignacio de la Torre 1979-1981, De la Torre Family Papers, University of Arizona Special Collections Library.
[158] Por Luis Orduño González, *"Consterna la Muerte del Padre de la Torre*" segment from a news article, "Solo un Desquiciado Pudo Cometer el Crimen: la Policía" Newspaper source unknown. Part 2-Ignacio de la Torre 1979-1981, De la Torre Family Papers, University of Arizona Special Collections Library.
[159] Archbishop Carlos Quintero Arce, "*3er Aniversario De Una Ausenccia" Así Mueren los Justos" Santuario,* no.132 (Nogales, Sonora) October 3, 1982, 2. Spanish Translation: En realidad el P. Nacho fue un verdadero HERMANO. Para todos los Nogalenses. Un Hermano que supo llevarles las enseñanzas de la Palabra Divina, no solo en sus explicaciones y amonestaciones sino también en su ejemplo y en su oración. Verdadero Hermano para niños porque fuel el catequista distinguido…"
[160] Unknown, "*Adios Padre Nacho"* From De la Torre Family Papers, University of Arizona Special Collections library. Spanish Translation: "Adios Padre Nacho Nogales Te Despide con lagrimas y llanto port u pronto partir…Rogamos no te olvides del pueblo de nogales y siempre nos recuerdes con un amor."

killed, a newspaper reported that he was survived by three siblings, Francisco, Benjamin, and Maria de la Torre.[161]

Conclusion: Cristero Priests

The meaning of Catholicism in the Cristero movement narrative heavily relied on the martyrdom of religious people to highlight the cruelty of the government and spark anger in the Cristeros. Father Ignacio was one of many priests who put his life in danger. Father Miguel Pro was a Jesuit priest who was executed in 1927 and was an example of a priest's death affecting people's hearts. His execution became famous for what he told a guard before his death and his pose he did when he faced the firing squad. Witnesses of Father Miguel Pro's execution reported a that guard, by the last name of Quintana, asked Father Pro, "Father, will you forgive me?" Father Pro had replied, "Not only do I forgive you, but I thank you for opening the doors of heaven to me."[162] Before his death, Father Pro extended his arms out to look like he was crucified. This image along with other images portrayed Father Pro as a youthful martyr and was spread throughout Mexico and the United States. The De la Torre family took part in distributing flyers and prayer cards that contained Father Pro's execution and image. Catholic priests during the Cristero War made sacrifices for the Cristero movement in hopes of peace and to bring the Catholic sacraments back.

Father Ignacio's perception of Catholic faith, virtues, and spirituality was expressed through his conversations with his family about the value of sacrificing for God's glory. Father

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[161] Keith Rosenblum, "'Padre Nacho,' founder of church in Sonora, robbed, slain in Mexico," *The Arizona Daily Star,* Tucson, Arizona, Thursday October 4, 1979, from the De la Torre Family Papers, University of Arizona Special Collections library.

[162] *Book of Martyrs, Padre Pro 1891-1927,* Hesburgh Libraries, (South bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame), Spanish Translation: El guardia, Quintana, le preguntó a Pro: "Padre, ¿me perdonarás?". Pro respondió no sólo te perdono sino que te agradezco por abrirme las puertas del cielo.

Ignacio wrote to his sister offering comfort. He wrote, "Your prolonged silence, more than anything makes me realize how confused you are about what to do, with my mother sick and no maid. Blessed by God who gives you such a precious opportunity to sacrifice yourself for the sake of duty and thus merit glory." [163] When he wrote this letter, he was in the seminary. Father Ignacio was inspired by his lessons in the seminary and wanted to provide comfort to his sister in her time of struggle. This interaction between Maria and Ignacio offers an insight to how siblings bond over faith. Maria's portrayal of her struggle as an opportunity to give glory to God and honor her duty showed how the De la Torre siblings used faith to persevere through phases of trials. Father Ignacio's role as a priest exemplified his use of faith to provide comfort people in Sonora.

Father Ignacio was training as a priest during the Cristero War. As a priest, he risked his life to continue providing the sacraments in Sonora despite the strained environment between the Church and Sonoran state. Similar to Father Miguel Pro, Father Ignacio offered the sacraments and spoke the Catholic doctrine despite the backlash from both the government and enemies of the Catholic Church. While Catholics who were found violating the anti-clerical laws faced fines, prison, or execution, a priest was considered a bigger threat because of their higher position in the church and their activities with the Cristeros. Father Ignacio's persistent work in Sonora resembled that of other martyred priests who were killed for refusing to leave their flock. Marisol López-Menéndez wrote, "Pro became an example of those priests who did stick to their sacred duties and remained to shepherd their flock. His martyrdom accorded the institutional

[163] Ignacio de la Torre, "Carta de Ignacio de la Torre a su hermana Maria de la Torre, sin fecha (a)" *Special Collection Online Exhibits*, De la Torre Family papers from University of Arizona Special Collections Library. Spanish Translation: Tu prolongado silencio. mas que todo, me da a conocer lo muy aturrullada de que hacer que entaras. con mi mama enferma y sin criada. Bendito sea dios que te da tan preciosa opportunidad de sacrificarte en aras del deber y de merecer asi muy grande gloria.

Church an instance of legitimacy by exemplifying its commitment to *neutral* priesthood during the 1926-1929 upheaval." [164] Father Ignacio's commitment to his parishioners resembled father Pro's approach. The night that Father Ignacio was murdered, he was heading to Magdalena to administer the sacrament of confirmation, meaning he was murdered while on business to fulfill his sacred duty just as other priests during the Cristiada.[165] While the circumstances between Father Miguel Pro and Father Ignacio de la Torre were considerably different, their passion for Catholicism is prevalent in both cases.

Father Ignacio embodies the ultimate martyr within the De la Torre's family history. His sacrifice of choice, safety, and life shows his actions and legacies as servant of Christ. Like Maria and Alfonso, Father Ignacio sacrificed his safety, choice, and comfort for the Cristero movement despite the dangers of federal retaliation due to breaking the law. Father Ignacio faced danger that was different from Maria and Alfonso due to his profession as a priest. The height of the Cristero War forced Ignacio to leave his country to continue his goal of becoming a priest. Once he became a priest, he put his personal safety at risk to provide masses for family and friends in Mexico when services became limited. Father Ignacio sacrificed his freedom to make personal choices to follow Bishop Narravatte's order to go to various parts of Sonora to continue spreading Catholicism. These selfless acts evince a broadly held belief in the need to prioritize Catholicism over personal freedom. Father Ignacio used various disguises to travel throughout Sonora to avoid the federal authorities.[166] In other times, people harassed Father Ignacio for the work or message he emphasized. Father Ignacio's choices, from leaving the family to support the business as a child, becoming a priest, and withstanding persecution, led to hardships; his

[164] Marisol López-Menéndez, *Miguel Pro: Martyrdom, Politics, and Society in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, 41
[165] Mother Superior, "*Semblanza Guadalupana" Estampas Cristiadas,* 38.
[166] Ibid, 17

choices reflected his priority of his faith and family over his comfort.[167] This stems from his upbringing and his position as the eldest son. Maria and Ignacio, who shared similar life experiences as eldest children, prioritized faith and family. Whereas the other younger siblings had the same loyalties, it was not as prominent as it was in the eldest two siblings.

Father Ignacio De la Torre's life epitomizes the role of the Catholic Church post-Cristero War Mexico. While Father Ignacio was not active in the Cristero War like his brother, Alfonso, Father Ignacio served the movement by ensuring Catholicism was relevant in the border region after the Cristero War by becoming a priest in Sonora. Since the beginning of Father Ignacio's priesthood, he dedicated his skills to educate young people. Father Ignacio believed in his mission to guide the youth into Catholicism. Father Ignacio was associated with the term 'From Sonora to Heaven' and kept true to his word of bringing Catholicism into Sonora region.

[167] Mother Superior, "*Semblanza Guadalupana" Estampas Cristiadas,* 13.

Conclusion:

Familial Roles, Catholicism, and the Nature of the Borderlands

The stories of Maria, Alfonso, and Ignacio de la Torre show that childhood experiences, family upbringing, and environment influenced their decisions to sacrifice their lives, comforts, and safety for the Catholic faith. The De la Torre family relied on the border between Arizona and Sonora to continue their livelihoods and faith. Each family member relied on their familial bonds and faith to support each other to carry out their goal. The Cristero War was a major event that affected the De la Torre children's perception of the world around them.

Maria de la Torre was the eldest child of the family whose role was to keep the family communication organized. Her identity, as a Catholic woman, allowed her to lead the family to diligently participate in the Catholic Church in the Sonora border region. Her story highlights the role of women in post-revolutionary Mexico within Catholic communities. For this reason, Maria needed to cross the border to Arizona and use a pseudonym 'Margarita Sophia', inspired by her maternal grandmother, Margarita Velazco.[168] Maria supported her family in every way by keeping everyone informed about each other's well-being and providing her brothers with a peace of mind. She also took on the role of supporting her brother, Ignacio, with his church projects by leading fundraisers and decorating for events like Ignacio's ordination. Maria dedicated her life to serving her faith and family.

Alfonso de la Torre's chapter viewed the role of masculinity in catholic communities during the Cristero movement. His perception of manliness was formed by the men in his family,

[168] *Estrada Libre y Soberano de Aguascalientes,* De la Torre Family Papers, De la Torre family paper MS420 Biographical files:certificates nd,1877-1962 1/1 (Tucson: The University of Arizona Special Collections Library)

such as his father and older brother. While his siblings, Ignacio, Carlos, and Francisco de la Torre represent the spiritual side of Catholic masculinity through their priesthood, Alfonso portrayed Catholic masculinity as a layperson. Alfonso showed similarities with other Catholic men who felt the desire to participate the Cristero movement. Alfonso's commitment to Catholic masculinity was endorsed by other Catholic men that he interacted with such as the men in the ACJM and the Knights of Columbus in addition to his male family members. Alfonso participated in multiple ways in the Cristero War, from leading catholic activist groups and joining the Cristero army. Alfonso willingly chose to interact with the Cristero movement, but through his letters, it is clear that religion played a role in motivating him.

Ignacio De la Torre's life experiences were influenced by his position in his family as the eldest son and priest. As the eldest son, Ignacio was expected to step up for the family when it came to the challenging times. Whereas the other younger siblings were able to receive their education from a Catholic institution, Ignacio was homeschooled like Maria de la Torre. His position as the oldest brother meant that when the father, Don Ignacio, faced financial troubles, Ignacio was expected to step up to the plate to provide for the family. Through Ignacio's experience away from the home, he saw the power of Catholic youth through the organization, A.C.J.M. Ignacio's involvement with the organization, especially through learning about Catholic apologetics and taking part in education volunteer events, were factors that contributed to his desire for the priesthood. His loyalty to his family reflected the timing of when he became a priest, which was around the same time the family was starting to recover from financial losses incurred due to the Mexican revolution. His training in the priesthood was in the height of the Cristero War which made performing mass and allowing a certain number of priests based on region harder for Ignacio to train as a priest. He spent his life as a priest spreading Catholicism

throughout the Sonoran region. His passions were education and the youth, and his projects that supported the parish was due to the hands of women. Father Ignacio's legacy in the Sonoran region has honor, memorialization, and is overall remembered positively.[169]

Importance of Perspectives

The De la Torre Family's narrative shows the importance of understanding a person's experiences to understand the choices they made as adults. The family's challenges during the Mexican Revolution tarnished their view on the Revolutionary government. The De la Torre's Catholic background was a major factor in Maria, Alfonso, and Ignacios' decision to participate in the Cristero War.Maria and Ignacio de la Torre were the most involved in the Cristero movement. They were born before the Mexican Revolution, so their memories, during childhood, contained life experiences before the Mexican Revolution. Maria and Ignacio saw the troubles the Revolution brought to their family, such as their parents financial struggles. Furthermore, Ignacio's sacrifice of his childhood to protect the family's finances led Ignacio to perceive the revolution negatively. The anticlerical clauses in the Constitution of 1917 and the harsh enforcement of these laws from Calles served as the boiling point for the De la Torre family to support the Cristero Movement.

The method of using perspectives to understand historical events can be applied to a broader scale. Historian James W. Wilkie argues that the cause of the Cristero War can be interpreted differently based on perspective.[170] The revolutionary government's perspective was

[169] Pablo Lechuga Bórquez, "Padre Nacho y la Catedral de Nogales, Sonora", November 12, 2018, 3:21, https://youtu.be/Rh_yGdwLBI8

[170] James W. Wilkie, "The Meaning of the Cristero Religious War Against the Mexican Government," *The Journal of Church and State,* Spring 1966, Vol. 8, no.2, 214.

that the Catholic Church violated the laws from the 1917 Constitution. Therefore, according to the Mexican government, the Catholic Church needed to be suppressed to prevent the church from encouraging an uprise against the government. One the other hand, the Catholic Church clergy and officials in the Vatican believed that the federal government used the clauses as an excuse to push the church away from having a leading position with the Mexican people. The general understanding of the Cristero War was that the contentious relationship between the Catholic Church and the government led to the war.

Familial Roles in the Cristero Narrative

The Cristero War impacted the Catholic family structure causing the family to adapt to the changing environment. Alfonso's chapter reveals the role of men within the Catholic community as leaders, providers, and protectors of both the Catholic Church and their families. The Cristero men's accounts portray their motivations for the war was to defend their family's religion. Some Catholic Cristeros risked their lives with the confidence that God and the community would look after their families. For example, the president of the A.C.J.M., Manuel Moral, told a priest, who considered trading his life for Morale, "No, Mr. Priest, don't ask for more, I die but God does not. He will care for my wife and children."[171] This account was one instance where men took up arms against the government with the reassurance that their family will be care for.

Men's comfort in their families' security was strengthened by the women in their lives. Women were the spiritual leaders in their families by pushing their families to go to church and

[171] *Book of Martyrs*, University of Notre Dame, Hersburgh libraries, Spanish Translation: No, señor Sacerdote, no pida más, yo muero pero Dios no. Él cuidará de mi esposa y mis hijos.

participate in Catholic events. Father Ignacio's projects in his Nogales parish were through the support of women and his sister, Maria. Catholic women were the powerhouse of the entire Cristero movement. Women's services, as nurses, cooks, and advocates made the movement for the Cristeros and clergy's mission possible, as shown through Doña Maria and Maria de la Torre. Going beyond the mortal boundaries of the Cristero narrative, the Virgin of Guadalupe plays a role in encouraging both men and women to stand up against the secular government. Maria's story show women were just as passionate, or more, about defending Catholicism as men. In a patriarchal society, a Catholic woman risked their safety, livelihood, and loved ones for the Cristero War. While the women had their love and best intention for their male family members, they understood the possibility of the men's sacrifice for the greater cause to preserve Catholicism for their children.

I argue that children are a pivotal point to the story of the Cristero War. Children are central and influential members of Mexican society because by claiming authority over children's upbringing, the institution had more influence over society. The Catholic Church and the Mexican government symbolize children as the future between the 1900s through 1980. Cristeros viewed their movement as a mean to advocate for religious freedom that Catholic children could enjoy. Cristeros relied on children's presence to make their causes relevant. Referring to Anacleto Gonzales's son, from chapter one, Cristero children were taught by their parents that martyrdom was good. The view of children as human beings needed of protection and guidance places children in a more prominent role in the Cristero War. Martyrs, such as Father Miguel Pro, age thirty-six, Anacleto Gonzalez Flores, age thirty-nine, Alfonso de la Torre, age twenty-seven, and Jose Sanchez de Rio, age 15, were young men who had youthful features. The stories of these youthful men sacrificing their lives for the Cristero movement would

encourage outrage over the cruelty of the Mexican federal army. The role of the family is important for historiography of Mexican history because the family has men, women, and children that contributed to its history.

Motivations

The De la Torre's narrative provides historians a better understanding of the importance of motivation. The motivation to participate in the war included spiritual responsibility, martyrdom, and social Catholic expectations. Families, like the De la Torres, took part in the Cristero movement because their faith, as Catholics, pushed them to protect their culture, spiritual practices, and heritage. Catholicism and Mexican heritage intertwined as seen with the Virgin of Guadalupe, who captured the hearts of many and drew people to Catholicism. For many families, like the De la Torres, Catholicism was a crucial factor that united the family. Considering Catholic families' view of Mexico and Catholicism made it clear why families, especially women, disapproved Calles's goal of controlling the clergy. Calles attempted to create a Mexican revolutionary Catholic Church which insulted Catholic families.

The De la Torre's letters contained words or phrases include: Our Lord, Our Holy Virgin, Give me your blessing, God will help me, etc. [172] The family had a connection to their faith through their devotion to certain religious figures, such as the Virgin Mary. There were various images of the Virgin Mary in their possessions. The Virgin of Guadalupe is an important icon for Catholic Mexicans, including the De la Torres. The Mexican Revolution and the Cristero War relied on the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The battle cry for the Cristeros was, "Long live

[172] These phrases came from various letters from Maria, Ignacio, Francisco, Carlos, and Alfonso de la Torre. Spanish Translations: Nuestro Señor, Nuestra Santísima Virgen, Dame su bendición, Dios me ayude mi

Christ the King! Long Live the Virgin of Guadalupe!"[173] The Virgin of Guadalupe is an iconic figure in Mexico; the family's attachment to her shows the De la Torre families' love for Catholicism, their nation, and each other. The De la Torre family was heavily involved in the Cristero War that was revolting against the revolutionary government, but it did not mean they hated Mexico. In fact, I argue that one of the reasons the De la Torre family became involved in the Cristero War was to fight for Mexico to embrace its Catholic roots. The De la Torres and other Cristeros believed that their fight in the Cristero War was for the betterment of Mexico.

The De la Torre's witnessing of the violence, suppression, and execution of many Cristeros by the government increased the value of keeping their faith alive. It is why the De la Torre's kept images of children's sacraments, such as their First Holy Communion.[174] The sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism were special for the De la Torres because these sacraments are formative moments of a young Catholic's life to become a part of a bigger community. The De la Torre children who had their own children, such as Benjamin, passed the legacy of Catholic education onto their children.

[173] Spanish translation: "Viva Cristo Rey! Viva La Virgin de Guadalupe!"

[174] First Communion is a sacrament in the Catholic faith where a person can receive the Eucharist, defined by the Catholic Church as taking in the Body of Christ. The catechism defines this initiation as Holy communion as a person uniting themselves to Jesus along with other Catholics who take Communion. *CC1322-1331.* It is why this sacrament was important to Catholic families like the De la Torre's because it was their children becoming part of a larger community of Catholics.



Edmundo de la Torre Uribarren with his family and daughters receiving First Communion, July 16, 1950, Courtesy of the University of Arizona Special Collections Library.



Fotografía de la Primera Comunion de Carlos De la Torre, junto al padre Juan Navarrete, Carlos De la Torre is the closest child on the left side to Father Juan Navarrete, 1919, Courtesy of the University of Arizona Special Collections Library.

People can relate to the De la Torre' experience because it relates to religious persecution and provides a lens on what families endured, adapted, and faced during major political, social, and economic disruption. While the De la Torre family is an extraordinary group of people, they can relate to parts of their story, such as sharing with loved one's new experiences the way Francisco de la Torre did with his family. Historians have a great understanding of subjects such as the U.S. Border, the Cristero War, and post-revolutionary Mexico. It is important to include more stories of ordinary people who took extraordinary measures to fight for what they believed in. Our role as historians is to bring the past to our audience, whether for other scholars or the public. History becomes more engaging when readers meet people they can relate to. Historians touch on the role of women and men's organizations, and focus on individuals such as Anacleto Gonzales

Flores, and Father Miguel Pro. However, there are limited sources from scholars that focuses on the family structure and childhood experiences during the Cristero War. It is for this reason the De la Torres' narrative provides a glimpse of how and what families endured.

Catholic activism was significant in post-revolutionary Mexico in response to secularization promoted by the revolutionary government. Catholic activism is one of the major factors that popularized martyr stories during the Cristero War.This study has shown that Catholic groups in the twentieth century took part in Mexico's political conversations. Catholic groups were not against the changes or progress offered by the revolutionary government. They believed there was a better option for developing and modernizing Mexico centered on Catholicism. Catholic activism appears in different forms due to the individual experiences of people involved in the group. Catholic activism, organized by the clergy, advocated for control and privileges to educate children and control Mexico's morality. Catholic women either advocated for Catholicism's role as a moral leader and protector of family values or used Catholicism to justify issues not supported by the church. Catholicism is not a uniform identity. Catholic youth activism aligns with both conservative and liberal ideologies. In Mexico during the twentieth century Catholic identity and activism evolved to political discussion about women's health, education, and ideologies. Whether it is a war between church and state or debates about education or public health, Catholic activism adjusted to the changing times and the meaning of being a Catholic.

The Catholic Church still has a heavy influence on the social and cultural traditions in Mexico. The efforts of Cristeros to preserve Catholicism in Mexico were successful, clear from the strong Catholic traditions in present day. The De la Torre's experiences in the Cristero War were not universal for all Catholic Mexican families. Like Catholic activism, Catholic Mexican

families responded differently to the Cristero war based on their experiences. Families such as the Pro family and the Flores family faced more loss and danger then the De la Torres. Similarly, families such as the Ballesteros, the family mentioned in the introduction, had little involvement in the Cristero War besides supporting the cause discreetly. Other De la Torre family members were hesitant to support the Cristero War. For example, Benjamin, one of the siblings, wrote to his mother about his arrival in Aguascalientes and expressed his resentment towards his aunt, Andrellita, because of her refusal to let him go out in fear of getting in trouble with Mexican authorities for their connection with Alfonso, who was killed a month before.[175] The aunt clearly cared for her nephew, otherwise she would not have taken him in. Yet she did not want to be associated with the Cristeros due to her fear of the authorities' retaliation. This example demonstrates the complexities of people's experiences, and the careful consideration needed before writing about a person.

Both historians in United States and Mexican history can benefit from studying the De la Torre family due to their experiences in both countries. The De la Torres earned their education, did Cristero work, and sought refuge in the United States. However, through my research, there is no evidence that they wanted to become U.S. citizens. The De la Torres was in the United States sporadically throughout their lives for education or to hide from government surveillance or Cristero business such as passing out flyers about Father Miguel Pro's death. Most of the letters and documents track the family most of the time in Sonora. However, the De la Torre family wanted access to the United States to continue their work in the Cristero movement. If

[175] Benjamin de la Torre, *Carta de Benjamin De la Torre a su Madre Maria Uribarren*, De la Torre Family papers, (Tucson: University of Arizona *Special Collections*),December 9, 1935.

historians can broaden their perspective of cross-border movement beyond desire for citizenship, historians can understand borderlands history on a deeper level.

The history of families in Mexico during the Cristero War is not only important to the De la Torre's family history, but to many other family histories. My grandfather, Francisco Ballesteros, was a child in the height of the Cristero War. Later in life, Francisco recalled a memory from when he was four and was hiding with his siblings and a man in a room. He overheard his grandmother telling someone at the door that there were no Cristeros. Francisco and his siblings all received their sacraments in Mexico, grew up Catholic, and passed their faith onto his children and grandchildren. As we near the hundredth anniversary of the Cristero War, we have an opportunity to recognize how families, such as the De la Torres and Ballesteros, affect their families' future through their choices of keeping Catholicism central in a moment of conflict with the Mexican government. The legacies of the Cristeros' faith in Catholicism and their families are visible in Mexico with Catholic Churches that have the phrase, *Cristo Rey,* in its name and the Virgin of Guadalupe continuing to reign in the hearts of many families on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border.

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