



Martyrs, Fanatics, and Pious Militants: Religious Violence and the Secular State in 1930s Mexico

Gema Kloppe-Santamaría, Loyola University Chicago

FRIDAY, MARCH 26 • 2:00 PM MST • Register to attend at: <https://bit.ly/389Odccl>

In this talk, Dr. Kloppe-Santamaría will examine the cultural, symbolic, and political repertoire that contributed to Catholics' understanding of violence as a legitimate means to resist the secular state in 1930s Mexico. Despite the Church's rejection of armed rebellion as an instrument to defend religious freedom, after the Cristero War (1926-1929) many Catholic militants continued to support violence as a last but necessary recourse in their fight against the government and for the restoration of the kingship of Christ on Earth. Armed with their own understandings of martyrdom, sacrifice, and redemptive violence, and an intransigent view of politics, these Catholics regarded violence as a moral response against the injustices and dangers posed by an oppressive and blasphemous state. The talk is based on the examination of a series of violent events perpetrated by Catholic militants during the 1930s, and on the analysis of several newspapers, government documents, and Catholic publications.

*Gema Kloppe-Santamaría is a historian and sociologist specializing on violence, religion, gender, and state formation in twentieth and twentieth-first century Latin America. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Latin American History at Loyola University Chicago. She is the author of *In the Vortex of Violence: Lynching, Extralegal Justice, and the State in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (University of California Press, 2020) and the lead editor of the books *Violence and Crime in Latin America: Representations and Politics* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) and *Human Security and Chronic Violence in Mexico: New Perspectives and Proposals from Below* (Editorial Porrúa, 2019). Her work has been featured, or is forthcoming, in the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Latin American Research Review*, *The Americas*, and the *Journal of Social History*. With the support of a Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Research Grant and a Project Launch Award from the Global Religion Research Initiative at Notre Dame, Dr. Kloppe-Santamaría is working on a new project, which seeks to analyze the ambivalent relationship between religion and violence in Mexico, beginning with the Cristero War (1926-1929) and ending with today's drug-related violence and its impact on priests and lay members of the Catholic Church.*



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