

***Latinos of Boulder County, Colorado,
1900-1980***

**Volume II:
*Lives and Legacies***

**Chapter Five:
*Religion***

by

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Chapter 5

Religion

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, most Latinas/os in Boulder County have been Roman Catholics. Religion was generally very important to them, as individuals and as families. Religious rituals marked the key stages of life, and certain Catholic beliefs and practices remained part of many people's cultural identification even if they were not regular attenders at church. There were, however, marked changes across the span between 1900 and 1980. Prior to the mid-century, Hispanics were rarely involved in a parish community. Few lived within walking distance of a church, and even if they were able to attend Mass, they were not welcomed by the priests or other parishioners. Religious practice was therefore centered within the home, led often by a senior woman. As in other aspects of Latino family life, gendered and generational factors were significant. The 1960s and 1970s saw greater social and religious inclusion of Latinas/os within the church but also dissatisfaction among some local people with aspects of Catholic beliefs and traditions.

A. Latinas/os and the Local Catholic Churches Prior to the 1940s

Each of our three towns had a Catholic Church by 1910, built by Anglo members of the community. Boulder's Sacred Heart of Jesus was located in the downtown area, near the early Protestant churches and within walking distance of the Water + Goss Streets neighborhood.¹ The church of St. John the Baptist in Longmont was located one block east of Main Street, accessible to Anglo Catholics but convenient for Latinas/os

¹ See "Boulder Public Library and Sacred Heart of Jesus Church" for the church in 1931; for the church and school in 2013, see "Boulder, film of places of historical importance."



Illus. 5.1. Bernal children's First Communion, 1951

as well.² In Lafayette, the first Catholic church (St. Idas's) was erected in 1907, when the community was little more than a mining camp.³ St. Ida's was later replaced by a small and then a large and architecturally modern Church of the Immaculate Conception.

Latinas/os who lived in urban areas commonly wanted to mark important life transitions with a religious ceremony, if they could afford the cost. In addition to baptisms, weddings, and funerals, which we have already discussed, the church provided religious education in preparation for First Communion and confirmation.⁴ Children went to catechism and received their First Communion at the hands of their parish priest around the age of 6-7; at age 13-14, after more catechism, they were confirmed, this time by the bishop. Photos were often taken—and treasured within families—of children at those occasions.⁵ A

² "St. John's Catholic church and parsonage," "Sanctuary, St. John's Catholic Church," and "Longmont, film of places of historical importance."

³ *Lafayette, Colorado*, T103. For a video from 2013 that shows both of these churches and talks about their practices, see "Lafayette, film of places of historical importance."

⁴ See Ch. 1B above.

⁵ See "Becky Archuleta's First Communion remembrance," "First Communion, Josephine and Esther Arroyo" (photo and text), "Eddie Quintana's First Communion," "Rhonda

Illus. 5.2. Sister Rosa Suazo with children at their Confirmation in Longmont



celebration was then held at home. Yet interview material suggests that prior to the 1940s, some—perhaps many—families did not attend Mass regularly or feel a strong connection with any parish church. Especially for people living in rural areas and those who spoke little English, home was the center of prayer and even of religious instruction.

Detachment from the formal structure of the Catholic Church stemmed from multiple factors. Several related to the nature and location of people's employment. Agricultural laborers and miners commonly worked 6-7 days per week, with little if any time off to attend religious services. Most field workers lived on scattered farms, located at some distance from urban churches. If people did not have access to a car or truck, they had no way to get to Mass. The challenges were even greater for migrant workers, who were unable to form an attachment to any particular church. Miners living in dispersed camps likewise had no religious facilities nearby. Dora Bernal, born in 1911, said that as a child living in the San Luis Valley, she walked to church with her parents.⁶ But

Gonzales' and another girl's First Communion," and "Brenda Romero at her First Communion."

⁶ Bernal, Dora, interview, 1978.

when she and her husband began working on farms in Boulder County, they never attended Mass because they did not get Sundays off and there were no churches near them. After they moved into Boulder, they occasionally went to baptisms but did not attend church otherwise.

Limited Latino participation in local churches was due also to the negative attitudes of many of the Anglo priests and lay people who ran the parishes. Latinas/os were not greeted warmly at Catholic services, and seating was commonly segregated. Alex Gonzales of Longmont remembered with some bitterness that the church “didn’t let us sit where there were books or missals. The priest would tell us to move.”⁷ The church in Lafayette was an important part of Eleanor Montour’s childhood during the 1940s and 1950s.⁸ Her Spanish-speaking grandparents, who could not read or write, were able to understand some of the Mass (which was in Latin until the mid-1960s), and her grandmother went to St. Ida’s every morning. But Latinas/os had to sit very quietly at the back. Later, after the parish moved to Immaculate Conception, there was more mixing in services, with Latinas/os and Anglos sometimes sitting next to each other.

Nowhere in the county were there any Spanish-speaking priests or Spanish-language services until at least the 1970s. Latinas/os who were not fluent in English were therefore unable to go to confession and did not know what was being said during the sermon. Some Latino families in Boulder’s Water + Goss Streets neighborhood attended Sacred Heart Church each week, but nearly all of them spoke English. The absence of Spanish priests and services was not a necessary feature of Catholic churches in the Southwest. Some people who had grown up in northern New Mexico or southern Colorado remembered that when they were children, Spanish-speaking priests staffed their churches and conducted services in Spanish.⁹ Parishes in Huerfano County held Hispanic festivals, such as a three-day celebration of the Day of Santiago and the Day of Santa Ana.

Latinas/os cared about attending services in their own language. Mrs. E. E. Bernal was an elderly woman when interviewed in 1977. Still more comfortable speaking Spanish than English, she said that while she and her husband were seasonal beet workers in northeastern Colorado from

⁷ Gonzales, Alex, interview, c. 1987.

⁸ “Lafayette, film of places of historical importance.”

⁹ E.g., Abila, Mr. and Mrs. George, interview, 1978.

Illus. 5.3. *Secundino Herrera and
Father James Longmont*



1919 to 1934, she made her children go to church if one was available.¹⁰ When the family settled in Boulder, there was no Spanish-speaking priest in Sacred Heart parish, and no visiting priests came from outside. She and her husband therefore made the trip “all the way to Denver” every Sunday to hear Mass at a church with a Mexican priest. Here is another connection between Denver and Boulder County.

An alternative form of Catholicism for a few Latino men was participation in the confraternity movement known as the *Penitentes*. Throughout northern New Mexico and southern Colorado during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, groups of *Penitentes* brothers met in special religious buildings, called *morados*, for worship and to carry out rituals not part of typical Catholic practice, including flagellation. J. H. Cortez was a member of a *Penitentes* group whose *morado* was in Fort Lupton.¹¹ (A local religious network evidently operated for alternative as well as conventional Catholicism.) As Cortez’s great-granddaughter later explained, Cortez attended

¹⁰ Bernal, Mr. and Mrs. Emerenciano, interview, 1977.

¹¹ “Cortez, Jose Hilario (“J. H.”) and Maria Sabina, biography” for this and below.



Illus. 5.4. Suazo family in a beet field, early 1940s

the meetings and services with his friend, Onofre Romero, and others. The *Penitente* brotherhood had been driven underground by the Roman Catholic Church, which had been dismayed by its extreme religious rites. The *Penitentes* have since reclaimed their legitimacy and operate freely in New Mexico and, presumably, elsewhere. Apparently they have tempered their religious zeal.

Both Boulder and Longmont had Catholic schools, which offered some benefits to adults as well as carrying out their educational mission.¹² Teresa Alvarez remembered that when she moved to Boulder in the 1940s, mothers used to walk their younger children to Sacred Heart School and got to know other families that way.¹³ Secundino Herrera worked for St. John's School in Longmont for 13 years, under the supervision of Father James and Father Martin.¹⁴ He emphasized that although he learned a lot on the job, he also "contributed so much that it's hard to mention everything I did, along with other people." He saw their work as part of the unrecognized contribution of Mexican people to the community.

Probably as the result of the Catholic Church's unwillingness to incorporate Latinas/os fully into its activities, very few local people

¹² For Catholic schools, see Ch. 6A-B below.

¹³ Alvarez, Teresa, interview, 1977.

¹⁴ Herrera, Secundino, interview, c. 1987.

Illus. 5.5. Sister Rosa Suazo when she took her final vows, 1953



became priests, monks, or nuns. That pattern differs from the experience of certain other Catholic immigrant groups, like the Irish, for whom going into holy orders was a highly respected and readily available option. Apart from Sister Maria Regina Rodriguez, born in 1927 to a Lafayette family, the only local person encountered in this study who entered the church was Sister Rosa Suazo.¹⁵ Born in 1933, the future Sister Rosa was one of 14 children of Daniel and Santos Suazo, who moved with their family to the Longmont area from New Mexico around 1940.¹⁶ The father and older children worked at least part-time in the beet fields.¹⁷ Sister Rosa attended St. John's School through eighth grade, where she greatly admired the Franciscan nuns who taught there. In 1950, at age 17, she entered the convent of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Milwaukee.¹⁸ After serving her order there for 23 years, she returned to Longmont, where she worked primarily with immigrant families until her retirement in 1996. Even then she remained active. Sister Rosa was a

¹⁵ "Sister Maria Regina Rodriguez." For Sister Carmen in Lafayette, see Vol. I, Ch. 6B.

¹⁶ "The Little Rose" [Sister Rosa Suazo], a biographical newspaper article written when she retired.

¹⁷ For photos of the Suazo family, stretching from the 1920s to the 1950s, see Vol. I, Illus. 5.1, and "Daniel and Santos Suazo," "Portrait of the Suazo children," "Suazo family in front of Lloyd Dicken's house," and "Suazo family," 1950-60; "Suazo family house" shows where they later lived.

¹⁸ A later picture is "Sister Rosa Suazo (in white, on right)."

respected, even beloved, member of Longmont's Latino community, but she apparently did not inspire others to take holy orders.

B. Traditional Religious Practices at Home

Until at least the mid-twentieth century, many religious practices among Boulder County Latinas/os were carried out at home, whether they attended organized church services or not. The key figure was usually the senior woman of the family. When Teresa Alvarez, born in 1897, was a child, she lived in various places in Boulder County, with her parents until their death and then with foster parents.¹⁹ When her father was working in the beet fields, the family lived on those farms; when he was employed in the coal mines, they lived in a camp next to the mine. In neither setting did they ever go to church, because they had no way to travel to a town. But, Teresa reported, "My mother was a Catholic; my foster mother was a Catholic. They had prayer books and they'd teach us catechism and all that at home. They told us things about the Lord, . . . but we never went to Mass."

The descriptions given by the children and grandchildren of these women make their domestic religious practices come alive. Marcella Diaz said that her grandparents, Juan and Josephine Martinez, were "Catholic but not involved in the church."²⁰ When they came to Boulder, they sent the children to church on Sundays but did not attend Mass themselves. Religious activity happened mainly within the family. When Marcella was young, in the 1940s and 1950s, "altars made to . . . Jesus, Mary, and other saints, and pictures of other saints and candles were common at home." Prayer was part of her grandmother's way of life. When she said, "'Let's go pray,' we knew we were in for a long period of kneeling, praying the rosary (*El Padre Nuestro y Santa Maria*) followed with a new novena every tenth day, or other prayer petitions, until she had her fill. Lenten season was an everyday prayer time for us, or anyone who intentionally wanted to join the family in Spanish prayer, and whoever happened to knock on our door during prayer time."²¹

¹⁹ Alvarez, Teresa, interview, 1976.

²⁰ "Martinez, Juan and Josephine; Marcella Diaz, biography," for this paragraph.

²¹ Gregoria Martinez was likewise the center of her family's religious life. "She would gather her female children and all grandchildren to pray the rosary every Wednesday and pray the Stations of the Cross on Friday during Lent" ("Martinez, Canuto and Gregoria, biography").

Sabina Maes Cortez, who lived in Longmont, maintained an altar in her house in the 1920s and 1930s. She felt greatly honored when she was allowed to host the “Traveling Virgin” from St. John’s church “as the Virgin made her rounds throughout the parish.”²² She had various secondary religious practices too. “To keep evil out of the house, Sabina hung crosses over all of her doorways, especially over the front door. When there were bad storms, she would make the sign of the cross with salt, and then make the sign of the cross with a knife, outside, in the elements, to ‘cut the storm.’” Sabina’s religious piety led to high expectations for her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren: “Good behavior was never enough; she aimed for perfection, based on a very strict brand of Catholicism and imposed through her own iron will. If she thought they needed it, she did not hesitate to thrash a child with her cane—anybody’s child who was misbehaving and within her reach.”

Roseann Chavez Ortega, who was born in 1942 and grew up on farms in eastern Boulder County, said that although her family rarely went to church, her grandmother was religious.²³ “She had a little altar in her house. Whatever house she moved to, she made this little altar in the corner. It was usually the bedroom. She’d have curtains hanging in the corner. She’d have her saint there and her candle.” Her grandmother believed in witches and witchcraft. “I don’t think she practiced it but she was ‘wise’ to it. She knew about it. Always cautioning me, my mother, about being careful about meeting certain people. You could tell they were witches because of certain things.” Roseann said that such talk “scared the h--- out of me!” Only one person interviewed in 2013—an elderly woman—referred to witches: they came up when she was describing a frightening person who had been on a long bus trip she once took.²⁴

Cecelia Arguello wrote about the religious customs of her widowed mother, Donaciana, who was living in a small house in Longmont with her large family in the 1940s and 1950s.²⁵ Donaciana had an altar (really a dresser) that held her statues and religious items. “Once the hollyhocks bloomed in the spring, we younger kids helped our mother every day to cut the flowers and bring them inside to adorn the edges of the ‘altar’ To this day when I smell the hollyhocks in my own

²² “Cortez, Jose Hilario (“J. H.”) and Maria Sabina, biography,” for this paragraph.

²³ Ortega, Roseann Chavez, interview, 1986.

²⁴ Gonzales, Doris, interview, 2013.

²⁵ “Arguello, Alfredo and Donaciana and family, biography.”

yard, I am transported back to those days of my childhood.” Although Donaciana made her children go to Friday night novenas and Sunday Mass at church, she had additional activities at home.

Faith played a big part in my mother’s raising her twelve children. . . . Christmas Eve we always made tamales and, while they were cooking, we would pray the rosary. After the rosary was prayed, Mother would pass around the ceramic Christ Child to receive a kiss from each one in attendance. Then she would lay the Child in the manger. (Until then the Child had been sitting up in a little chair that my mother had made.) This signified that the Christ Child was born, as by then it was a few minutes after midnight and Christmas day. Then we would enjoy the tamales.²⁶

Some people prayed especially to a favorite saint or aspect of Christ or Mary. Oli Duncan’s Grandma Nina “prayed her sons home” when three of them were in infantry divisions overseas during World War II. As Oli described,

She performed an ancient ritual in their behalf. She collected all the religious statues and pictures (*santos*) in the house and placed them in a drawer where they would stay until her sons came home. During that time, no one in the household prayed for another thing. The *santos* were busy watching over the young soldiers. And all three of them came home.²⁷

When Lou Cardenas’s son was in the military in Vietnam, “I used to pray and pray that everything was all right. My saint is *el Santo Niño* [the Holy Child], and I used to pray to him and light candles and everything to keep my son safe. I guess all my prayers were answered. He came home all right.”²⁸

C. Involvement with the Catholic Church after the 1940s

From around 1950 onward, Boulder County’s Catholic churches gradually became more hospitable to Latinas/os, reducing the importance of older women as organizers of home-based worship. As urban parishes started to introduce social activities, especially for young people,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Olivas, Ralph and Rose, biographical account.”

²⁸ Cardenas, Lou, interview, c. 1987.

Latinas/os were allowed to join. Tom Abila, who moved to Boulder as a teenager in 1947, remembered playing bingo and going to dances at Sacred Heart Church.²⁹ By 1963, that church had become more inclusive, with John S. Chavez, Jr. serving on its parish council, as a Eucharistic minister, and as an usher.³⁰ In Longmont, St. John's Church organized a baseball team for young Latinos in the mid-1940s.³¹

The late 1960s and 1970s saw some dissatisfaction with traditional Catholic beliefs and/or practices, especially on the part of Latinas/os whose families had lived in the U.S. for several generations. (New immigrants were generally more respectful of the official church.) A new assertiveness among lay people concerning the clergy and structure of the church was facilitated by the reform measures instituted in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, opened by Pope John XXIII in 1962. In Boulder, Latinas/os who were unhappy with the conservative theological stance of Sacred Heart of Jesus and its resistance to offering services in Spanish could move to St. Thomas Aquinas, the more liberal chapel that served the university and participated in community projects.³² Susie Chacon, a local businesswoman, said in 1977 that she was not a regular churchgoer, but when she did attend, she went to St. Thomas Aquinas, not Sacred Heart, in part because the university parish had a Spanish priest.³³ In Lafayette, Sister Carmen's work with needy families and migrant workers during the 1970s led the Catholic parish to become more fully involved with the Latino community.³⁴

A significant change beginning in the 1970s was the introduction of Spanish-speaking priests and Spanish-language services, including the Mass itself. This shift resulted largely from pressure by Latino members of the congregation, thus forming part of the wider movement of Chicano activism.³⁵ Marta Moreno, who grew up in a Latino community in El Paso, was heavily influenced by the nuns there.³⁶ When she moved to Longmont in 1974, she was shocked to find there were no services in Spanish at St. John's Church. So she prepared and circulated a petition

²⁹ Abila, Tom, interview, 1978.

³⁰ "John S. Chavez Jr. and Knights of Columbus."

³¹ See Illus. 4.9 above.

³² See, e.g., its role in creating Alvarado Village and its Social Action Fund, Vol. I, Chs. 6C and 7A.

³³ Chacon, Susie, interview, 1977.

³⁴ See Vol. I, Ch. 6B.

³⁵ See Vol. I, Ch. 7A.

³⁶ Moreno, Marta Valenzuela, interview, 2013.

proving that 250 Spanish-speaking families in the parish wanted to hear the Mass in their own language. By 1977, St. John's was offering a Spanish Mass on the third Sunday of each month, conducted by visitors.³⁷ Somewhat later the parish hired its own Spanish-speaking priest. The Morenos also helped to start a Hispanic choir at the church, which gave them and other Latinas/os a chance to sing religious music they loved, in Spanish.³⁸

Such measures had an impact on Latino participation in services and parish activities. Secundino Herrera commented in 1987 that St. John's church had started having a weekly Spanish service. This was good, "because people will now understand what's being preached and they'll go and listen and concentrate on what's being said."³⁹ Reina Gallegos, born in 1937, said in an interview 50 years later, "I have always been a very devoted Catholic whether I go to church or I don't."⁴⁰ As a child, her family prayed at home, and when she moved to Longmont around 1975, she could not find a church where she was welcomed. For the past few years, however, she had felt much more at home at St. John's: "the best thing that's happened to the church is Father Padilla being there." Reina talked also about the beautiful shrine that had recently been erected at the church: "Our Lady of Guadalupe, the *virgin madre de los mejicanos*, . . . is to me a very beautiful thing. I understand that the shrine was put in by *la gente mejicanos*." When the *Coro San Juan* was set up at the church, Reina joined it. "I love to sing. And I especially love to sing to my God."

A few people were upset with the Church on theological grounds. Virginia Maestas described the conversations about religion she had had with her grandmother in a rural area of the San Luis Valley, as she kept the older woman company during walks to meetings or services at church.⁴¹ Virginia believed that those discussions had led her to think more independently about religious issues. When she and her husband moved to Boulder in 1969, they joined a discussion group at Sacred Heart Church to explore such elements of faith as the "Our Father" prayer. But when Virginia brought up questions about what the doctrines really meant, and what relevance they had for people today, the priest running the group criticized her. At that point, she shifted to St. Thomas Aquinas,

³⁷ "Longmont, film of places of historical importance."

³⁸ Moreno, Heriberto ("Beto"), interview, 2013.

³⁹ Herrera, Secundino, interview, c. 1987.

⁴⁰ Gallegos, Reina, interview, c. 1987, for this paragraph.

⁴¹ Maestas, Virginia, interview, 1978.

which she described as a more diverse community, with people from all over the world and a more open-minded stance about faith.

Similar experiences led Yolanda Arredondo to stop attending church entirely. Yolanda—the director of Boulder’s Safehouse for abused women—said in 2003, “I was raised Catholic, so I’m baptized and communioned and confirmed and all that stuff. I don’t practice Catholicism any more. I don’t actually practice any religion.”⁴² When she was young, her parents expected her to go to church every Wednesday and Sunday. Even as a child, however, she was having difficulty accepting official doctrine. When she went to confirmation class, she would ask the priest questions but never get answers. “They’d be like, ‘Shut up, Yolanda. Don’t ask. Just learn your verses.’” One of the issues she raised was why the Church had used “the Bible and God to justify having slaves. That to me would be the ultimate sin. . . . What you’re doing is imprisoning another human being. That’s evil. In my mind that’s absolutely evil.”

When Yolanda went to college, she was free to analyze the Catholic Church and its beliefs on her own. “What I came up with was that the church I grew up in was very patriarchal. Finances were very important to the church.” She disagreed with some of the policies of the church too. Why, for example, did it consider her mother a sinner and refuse to allow her to re-marry with its blessing because she had divorced her husband; whereas her mom’s first husband, who had had an ongoing affair with another woman during their marriage, was allowed to remain a Catholic in good standing? Noting that her parents were disappointed with her for not continuing to practice religion, Yolanda concluded: “I do attend Easter Mass with them, I attend at Christmas with them at home. And when I go to Mexico, I attend church with my grandfather, but I do that out of respect for him, I do it out of respect for my parents. I don’t do it because I agree with the institution of the church. Ultimately, to me it’s a bunch of white men in Europe who wrote all of those laws anyway, and I don’t agree with them.” Yolanda provides an unusual suggestion of Chicana feminism among local residents, though she had not grown up in this area.⁴³

Despite some dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church, few local Latinas/os seem to have left it for a Protestant denomination. Candace Arroyo’s mother and grandmother, who converted to Free Methodism,

⁴² Arredondo, Yolanda, interview, 2003, for this and the next paragraph.

⁴³ See Vol. I, Ch. 6A.

were rare early exceptions.⁴⁴ Although Candace's parents had been married in the Catholic Church, she and her siblings were raised as Free Methodists. There is no indication that local Protestant churches were proselytizing among Catholics during most of the twentieth century, but by its end, a few evangelical denominations—especially in Longmont—were actively wooing Latinas/os. But even people who joined a Protestant congregation might maintain some Catholic traditions. Lucia Villagran, born in 1926 and interviewed in 2013, had stopped going to Mass at St. John's Church in Longmont in favor of an evangelical denomination, but she still continued some activities that she thought of as Mexican: celebrating Christmas on Dec. 24, making *buñuelos* for New Year's, and observing Lent by cooking fish enchiladas and lentils.⁴⁵ The association of food with religious holidays thus remained strong. By the 1980s and 1990s, however, intermarriage between Latinas/os and other ethnic groups had increased, creating more families that had mixed religious traditions or where one spouse left Catholicism to join the other's church.

Catholicism nevertheless remained a feature of many Latinas/os' lives in the decades around 2000. People commonly took older relatives to Sunday Mass. Families sometimes went to church as a group and then got together with friends or relatives afterwards at a home or restaurant. Some people were heavily involved with their parishes. Angelina Casias of Lafayette, who was nearly 70 when she described her activities in 1989, appreciated Immaculate Conception Church, especially participating in a prayer group called the "Renew Class."⁴⁶ But some religious practice still occurred at home. When 71-year-old Hank Blazón was interviewed in 2013, he displayed some of the religious objects that his family continued to treasure.⁴⁷ They included a carved wooden *santo* that his deeply religious parents used to love, which Hank and his siblings now passed around among themselves every three months, to maintain the family tradition. Arthur Perez, a much younger man, stressed how important religion was for his family.⁴⁸ "We're Catholic, it's what my family's always been. Very strong Catholic. My grandmother and my mother to this day still pray a rosary every morning." All the significant

⁴⁴ Arroyo, Candace, interview, 1977.

⁴⁵ Villagran, Lucia and Lily, interview, 2013. See also Ch. 3A above.

⁴⁶ "Casias, Angelina and Raymond, biography."

⁴⁷ "Hank Blazón showing his family's religious objects" and Blazón, William ("Hank"), interview, 2013.

⁴⁸ Perez, Arthur, interview, 2013.

religious milestones, “getting married or your first Confirmation, all these things are a big deal in our family. Celebrated with joy. God and Jesus Christ have been a big part of our family.”

Yet some bitterness lingered from previous racism within the Church. One participant in the BCLHP described a conversation with a priest at Sacred Heart in Boulder about scheduling his marriage service in the church in the mid-1970s. The priest said, “You monkeys always spend too much on weddings. Why don’t you just elope and save your pennies to pay off your debts?” Another participant said that although he was still nominally a Catholic, he had little respect or affection for the Church, “which has always treated us like cattle.”

Although participation in parish life was limited for many Boulder County Latinas/os until at least the 1950s, being Catholic remained part of many people’s identity right through the twentieth century. Religious faith was one of the legacies left by earlier Hispanics in Boulder County. Even if people did not go to Mass regularly, they rarely abandoned Catholicism for another church. The cultural and social components of religion were also important. As the Epilogue to this book suggests, spirituality still mattered to young people in 2013, though they did not always adhere strictly to the practices of their parents and grandparents.

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- 5.1. Bernal children’s First Communion, 1951. Courtesy of Janet Romero Perez. [BCLHP-FP-074](#).
- 5.2. Sister Rosa Suazo with children at their Confirmation in Longmont. Courtesy of El Comité de Longmont. [BCLHP-LHS-039](#).
- 5.3. Secundino Herrera and Father James, Longmont. Courtesy of El Comité de Longmont. [BCLHP-LHS-126](#).
- 5.4. Suazo family in a beet field, early 1940s. Courtesy of Longmont Museum. LM, 2007.024.003.
<http://longmont.pastperfectonline.com/photo/0031F059-93AE-47B9-A1E3-249100160050>.
- 5.5. Sister Rosa Suazo when she took her final vows, 1953. Courtesy of Sister Rosa Suazo. [BCLHP-FP-019](#).

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¹ For entries with a BCLHP reference:

- Items labelled as FP are family photographs loaned by community members and digitized by the BCLHP. The photographers are unknown unless specified.
- Items labelled as LHS are photos loaned to the Longmont Hispanic Study in 1987-8 by a relative or descendent of the people shown. They were converted into slides by Oli Olivas Duncan for use in public presentations associated with the 1988 publication of *We, Too, Came to Stay: A History of the Longmont Hispanic Community*, which she edited. In 2014, the BCLHP was given permission to make digital copies of the slides, many of which showed unidentified people. The dates, locations, and photographers of these photos are unknown unless specified.

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