

“Las Culturas de lo Cotidiano: Popular Culture as Locus Theologicus”

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Abstract

For many Latin@ theologians lo cotidiano, the daily, functions as locus theologicus. Ordinary living is privileged as source, provides content, particularizes context, and marks the spaces and place(s) from which Latin@s do theology. In a worldview where distinctions between the sacred and secular are blurred, the faiths of the people also find expression in practices that need not be explicitly religious. The representation of lo cotidiano as constructed in sport, art of all kinds, and performance in various media are not simply reflective of life but active in the construction of complicated identities, in imagining new possibilities, and in creating an improved future. In June 2012 Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi presented the department of *Culture and Sport* under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for Culture. In these complex expressions of popular culture the department seeks to identify “a new Areopagus for believers and non-believers in the spirit of the *Court of Gentiles* in sport.” Latin@ theologizing on lo popular, and in particular on sport as part of fabric of our daily living offers challenges, directions and insights worth consideration.

Bio

Dr. Carmen Nanko-Fernández is associate professor of Hispanic Theology and Ministry, and director of the Hispanic Theology and Ministry program at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois, USA. A Latin@ theologian, she served as President of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS/2008-2009) and in 2012 received the Virgilio Elizondo Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology. Nanko-Fernández was born and raised in the Bronx, New York and views teología, in her own words, through a decidedly “urban@” lens, i.e. Hispanic and urban. Her scholarship explores relationships between popular culture and religion, and incorporates a focus on theology and sport through béisbol and baseball, with attention to race, migration, and colonization. She has presented her research nationally in various venues including the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Among her publications is a book *Theologizing en Espanish: Context, Community and Ministry* (Orbis Books, 2010). Recent publications include chapters in anthologies, “Ordinary Theologies, Extraordinary Circumstances: Baseball at the Intersections of Faith and Popular Culture,” in *Recovering 9/11 in New York*; and “Lo Cotidiano as Locus Theologicus,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, (Orlando O. Espín, editor, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); and the article “Performative Theologies: Ritualizing the Daily Latinamente,” *Liturgy* (Spring 2014). Nanko-Fernández is currently completing *¿El Santo! Baseball and the Canonization of Roberto Clemente*, a book in the Sport and Religion series of Mercer University Press.