

Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us about Wisdom, Persistence, and Strength

Kat Armas

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Abuelita Faith is a passionate study of the role that marginalized women play in promoting religious values. Citing their “wisdom, persistence, and strength,” it notes the moral resilience of women, and how their modest homes often become the spiritual centers for families and communities.

Evelia, Kat Armas’s *abuelita*, left Cuba as a refugee in the 1970s. She settled in Miami, worked in a clothing factory,, raised her children, and maintained financial independence despite her widowhood. Through difficult times, she relied on her Catholic faith and longed to someday return to her homeland.

Armas details how, like Evelia, women of color born in the early twentieth century encountered entrenched racism, sexism, and economic inequality. Often limited to domestic or factory work, many found their faith to be a source of hope, as they prayed for better days and encouraged future generations with their righteousness.

Abuelita Faith balances Armas’s bright recollections of growing up amid Miami’s Cuban community with the theological career she pursued as an adult. Emotional and expressive by nature, Armas often felt repressed by traditional evangelical attitudes. She also discovered that women’s religious history tended to be minimized or misinterpreted. She examines the Bible from a decolonized perspective, reasserting Jesus’s healing tolerance, and not the Christianity of enforced conversion.

Here, the fascinating biblical accounts of Esther, Ruth, and Miriam are assessed with renewed vigor. The book also considers the role of devout women in effecting social change, such as Havana’s Ladies in White, who in 2003 gathered weekly in quiet defiance following Catholic Mass to protest the unjust imprisonment of their loved ones.

With its framework of diverse scholarship, *Abuelita Faith* is a vibrant theological survey. It is also a multifaceted portrait of women like Evelia who sustain their cultures and do God’s true work.

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