

Texas Catholic Historian



Mount Calvary Cemetery, Austin, TX.
Carlos Castañeda's resting place

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Message from the President

I write to thank TCHS's membership for its continued support over the past year and to wish TCHS members and friends a successful 2024. In the past year, membership has risen and we have begun new activities that should help the society to develop in future. First, we have launched a Facebook page, which showcases material from Catholic Archives of Texas and has stories on many aspects of Texan Catholic history. Please do visit and recommend us (<https://www.facebook.com/TXCatHis>) to students, colleagues, and anyone interested in Texan and Catholic history.

Second, in September the society co-hosted a symposium on historian Carlos E. Castañeda on UT Austin's campus—hopefully this can be a model for future events. Third, and last, in November we launched a new online Brown Bag series to promote discussion of new work by scholars of Texan Catholic history.

The above activities are in addition to our well-established work of holding an annual

conference panel and publishing our journal, *Catholic Southwest*, which this year was themed around Catholic experiences of JFK's assassination in 1963.

The cover image, which reproduces Mark Balma's painting *Pietà*, was kindly authorized by the artist—who also spoke with TCHS's student intern, Corina Barr (the [video of this interview](#) can be seen on our Facebook page).

Message from the President (cont.)

In 2024, we will continue the Brown Bag meetings, beginning with book presentations by TCHS past president Amanda Bresie and Father Bob Wright. I also hope to involve a class of UT Austin History students in researching sites of historical interest to Texan Catholics and petitioning for Historical Marker status. Recommendations for likely sites are welcome!

On behalf of all TCHS members, I would like to thank Vice President Maggie Elmore and past President Amanda Bresie for all their support over the past twelve months. Thanks are also due to Chris Wolfe as editor of Catholic Southwest and to Gabby Pérez for producing this newsletter. Special thanks are due to Selena Aleman of CAT.

– Dr. Matthew Butler

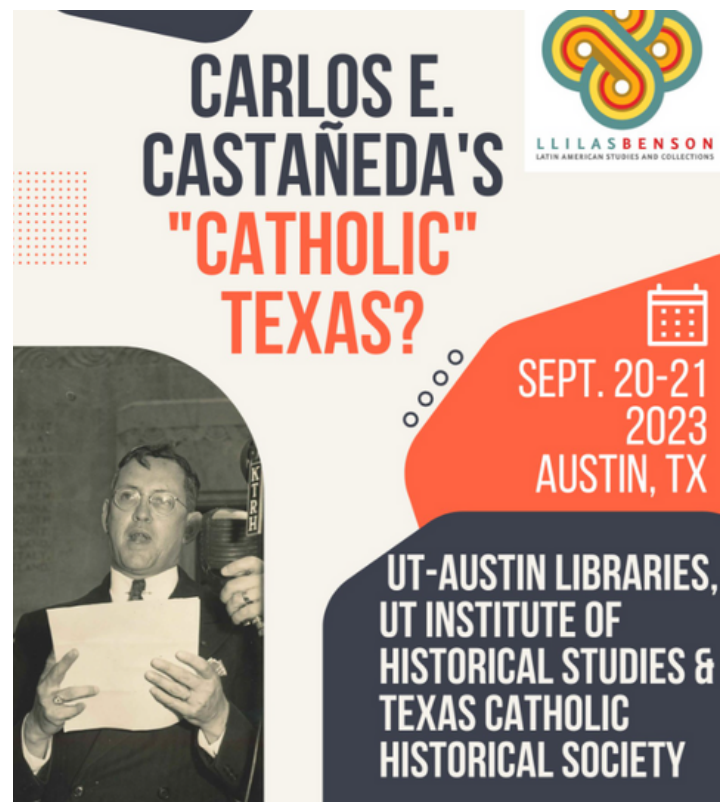
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TCHS Co-Hosts “Carlos Castañeda’s ‘Catholic’ Texas?” Symposium

On September 20-21, TCHS co-hosted with UT Austin’s Benson Latin American Collection, Institute of Historical Studies, and Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies a two-day symposium on celebrated Mexican American historian, Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, author of *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*. Also supported generously by the Summerlee Foundation, the event, “Carlos Castañeda’s ‘Catholic’ Texas?,” focused on Castañeda’s Catholicism and work in politics and labor affairs (<https://notevenpast.org/remembering-carlos-e-castaneda-a-mexican-historian-in-texas/>).

The event attracted an audience of 50-60 faculty, TCHS members, graduate students, and UT students over two days,

and featured presentations from senior and junior scholars from the University of Notre Dame, Duke University, Eastern New Mexico-Ruidoso, and Albion College, as well as no fewer than nine Texas institutions, including Catholic as well as public and private universities and colleges.



“Carlos Castañeda’s ‘Catholic’ Texas?”

Symposium (cont.)

TCHS was honored that those attending included historian and former TCHS president Karl Schmitt and various members of the Castañeda family, among them Castañeda’s daughter, Rosemary Folks, and grandsons Gustavo and Arturo Artaza. At the end of the event, a group of conference participants visited Castañeda’s grave site in the Mount Calvary cemetery, located a short walk across I-35 from UT Austin’s Benson Collection, to pay their respects.

This informative tour was kindly led by Ted Eubanks. It is intended that a selection of the conference papers will be published in an edited volume in due course, about which Texas A&M University Press has expressed interest.



Rosemary Folks at her parents’ graveside
Photo by Matthew Butler

“Carlos Castañeda’s ‘Catholic’ Texas?” Symposium (cont.)



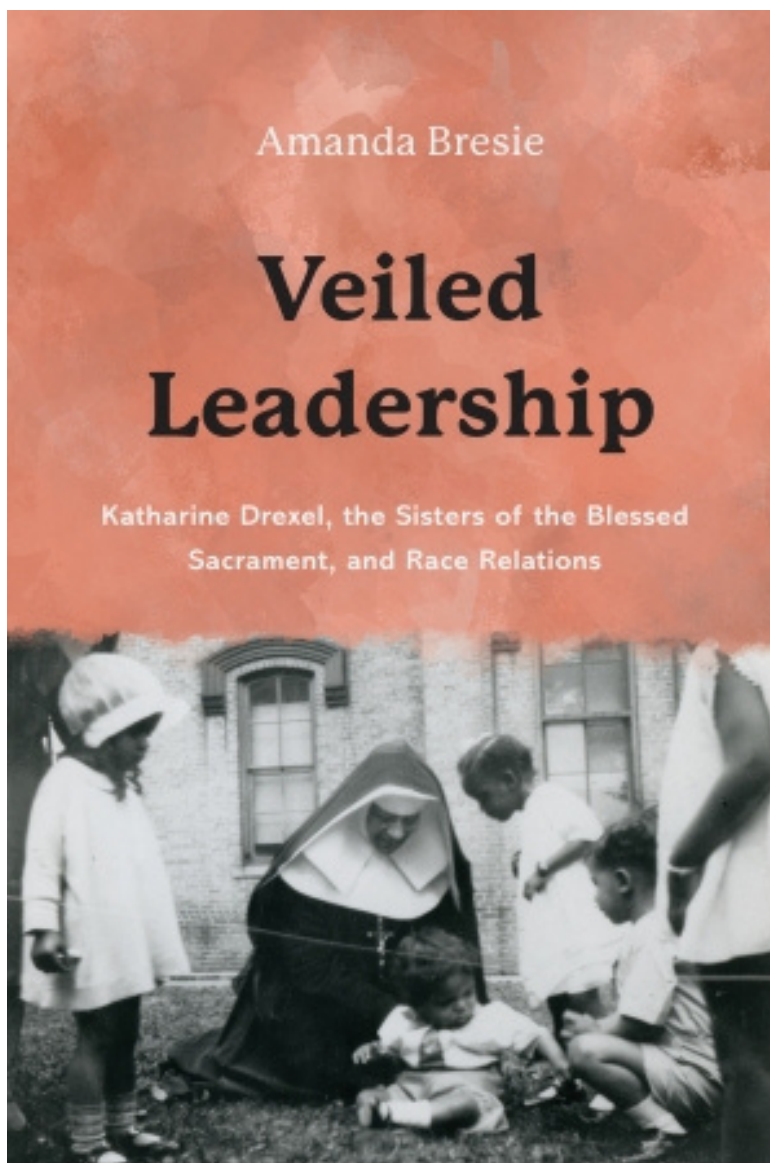
TCHS president, Matthew Butler; Benson Latin American Collection
director, Melissa Guy; Gustavo and Arturo Artza

Photo credit ROBERT ESPARZA

Annual Meeting

Instead of holding a panel at the Texas State Historical Association meeting, this year TCHS will be holding its annual meeting virtually, at **4 p.m.** on **Thursday March 7**.

At the close of the meeting there will be an online presentation of the new book by TCHS past president, Amanda Bresie, *Veiled Leadership: Katharine Drexel, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and Race Relations*, which was published by Catholic University Press last fall. The discussant will be Dr. Petro Munro Hendry (Louisiana State University).



Note: A Zoom link for this panel will be circulated nearer the time via mailshot and via TCHS's Facebook page.

Inaugural Brown Bag Series with Dr. Maggie Elmore

On November 15 2023, TCHS discussed “Being Undocumented”, a chapter from Dr. Maggie Elmore’s monograph in progress, *Unholy Border: How the United States used the Catholic Church to Control its Southern Border*. Dr. Miguel Levario (Texas Tech University) responded to the work with high praise for Dr. Elmore's use of case studies to unpack the work of Cleofas Calleros and a fluidity of citizenship. This chapter, Dr. Levario added, complicated the fixed notions of citizenship in today's conversations about policies at the US/Mexico border. The audience also chimed in with excellent questions pertaining to methodology, parallels to Jewish migration, gender, sexuality, and race.

If you missed the inaugural TCHS Brown Bag session, you can watch it on our [TCHS Facebook Page](#).

Don't forget about our next Brown Bag Session happening on Wednesday, April 3 at 5 p.m. with PhD candidate Abel Rios.

Our Next Brown Bag Session

TCHS will be holding its second Brown Bag event this semester
Wednesday April 3 at 5 p.m.

The Brown Bag will feature a presentation of new work by Texas Tech University graduate student Abel Rios, and is titled "Building Ethnic Mexican Catholic Communities in North Texas, 1900-1919." The discussant will be Dr. Roberto Treviño (UT Arlington).



Abel Rios teaches history at South Plains College and is a PhD candidate in American religious history at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. He is a twentieth-century U.S. historian with a particular focus on Texas. Abel's early research focused on peace, conflict, and American Protestants. He has contributed numerous articles and presented his research at various conferences. Currently, he examines Latina/o religious history; specifically, his dissertation examines the intersections of ethnic Mexican Catholic identity, religion, and politics in North Texas.

Note: The paper will be circulated to TCHS members a week before the event and a Zoom link for the Brown Bag event will be circulated nearer the time via mailshot and via TCHS's Facebook page.

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<https://txcatholic.org/historical-society/>

