

Review: *Abuelita Faith*

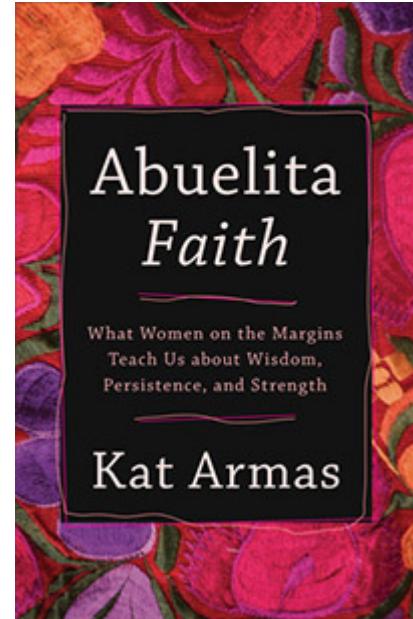
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Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us About Wisdom, Persistence, and Strength

Kat Armas (Brazos Press)

Abuelita Faith is part memoir, part biblical exegesis, part call for justice. All three grow out of Kat Armas' Cuban heritage and the story of her grandmother's life in Cuba and the United States. She weaves all three aspects back and forth throughout each chapter.

Armas approaches Scripture from the perspective and embodied wisdom of women, particularly oppressed, marginalized and nameless women. Some readers may struggle to get past her social and cultural references, particularly as they are integral to Armas' understanding of Scripture. Others will be uncomfortable with Armas' designation of the Holy Spirit as female. Still others will reject some of the theologians she cites whose presuppositions and positions differ from conservative evangelical stances. However, those who follow the narrative long enough to encounter Armas' examinations of women in the Bible will be rewarded with deeper insight into the background of biblical stories. Readers also will gain cultural insight through the stories Armas tells about her family and Cuban culture



in Miami, and in Spanish terms and phrases sprinkled throughout the book.

Armas considers the following women from the Old Testament: the wise woman of Tekoa, Shiprah and Puah, Jochebed, Tamar, Rizpah, Huldah the prophet, Hannah, Ruth, Naomi and Orpah, Achsah, and the daughters of Zelophehad—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. From the New Testament, she examines: the Canaanite woman, Joanna, Tabitha, Lydia, Mary, and Lois and Eunice—Timothy’s forebears praised by Paul. Each woman seems overshadowed by the male characters in their stories until one understands the ways in which these women exhibited agency—knowing full well what they were doing—and became protagonists in their stories. Armas also illuminates the wisdom, cunning, subversiveness, survival instincts, resourcefulness and tenacity of these women, pointing out each was blessed by God or Jesus despite—and sometimes for—behaving in ways modern evangelical Christianity frequently castigates.

Armas presents the Bible as a living book, the lives of biblical women repeated in the lives of modern women in Armas’ family and culture. The takeaway: Just as subjugated, ignored, despised, unnamed women found favor with God and Jesus then, they do now.

*Eric Black, executive director/publisher/editor
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