

# El nino fidencio the mythical curandero

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



El Nino Fidencio The Mythical Curandero Throughout the book Curanderismo: MexicanAmerican Folk Healing Trorrer and Chavira make mention of el Nino Fidencio in countless areas of the book.

It is mentioned that one of the most important spiritualist movement is based on “ the life teaching, and the spirit of a famous young folk healer (now dead) from northern Mexico el Nino Fidencio” (1997: 35). Even today el Nino is an important figure in many aspects of the belief system and practice associated with the Curanderismo folk healing. History plays a major role in culture when it comes to establishing religion and medical practices, which in the case of the Mexican Curanderos many times martyrs or perhaps people with supernatural or mythical abilities lay the foundation for the belief system and its practice. Consequently, this allows such people (those with supernatural abilities) to become saints thus becoming an important part of the Catholic faith, which has become syncretic with the traditional folk healing system. What is interesting about el Nino and his legacy, is that he not only serves as an influential figure in the history of Curanderismo but also plays a large role in the spiritual practices and the contemporary culture associated with the Mexican folk healing practices. In a modern society where immigration has promoted syncretism and a separation between those who still live in or near Mexico and those who have moved to other regions causing them to lose many of their traditional beliefs and practices el Nino serves as an icon from the folk saint movement that helps draw a culture and the people back together. One of the things that turned Fidencio into a saint and a man of great power was the vision or hallucination that he had of a bearded man with a halo who came to him under a tree when he was a

young man right after he had been run off by the family with which he had been living with this is what he says he was told in his hallucination.

Fidencio, you are called to a very high destiny. I put in your eyes a marvelous curative power, which will serve to alleviate the suffering of those with pain. I give you this divine power only for the good of humanity, only in order to that you will cure those who are deserving, never for you to enrich yourself with it, not to benefit those who do not deserve such good things (1973: 91) What caused Fidencio to become so well received was not only the fact that he had a gift but the way in which he came to understand develop and use his gift for healing. Many saints receive divine intervention, which leads them on a particular path. When taking on such a role as Fidencio did he made the decision to leave the secular world behind to enter into a practice, which is often ill-defined and perceived based upon the fact that it involved dabbling in the supernatural and the lines between good and evil are thin. " The curandero is considered different from ordinary people, and this difference produces respect, distrust, and even fear. Sometimes it produces the accusation that the curandero is a brujo, a witch, doing antisocial magic so not everyone feels drawn to this profession" (1997: 110).

However, Fidencio was not perceived in such a way; he was known to give, and share with the people. Thus using his gifts as instructed by what many refer to as " the heavenly father", for good striving to benefit those around him as he was told to do. It is said that, " Fidencio accepted his mission and devoted the remainder of his life to curing. But from time to time intense fatigue would weaken his resolve. On these instances he would weep and

say that he has been ordered to cure and had no choice but to do so" (1973: 91). In doing so he inspired others and created a legacy that would be remembered and celebrated long after his death. The "fidencistas" (Fidencios followers) have built a number of temples (called centros) in Mexico as well as in the United States where Mexican immigration are prevalent.

Such temples are important when it comes to the practice of spiritual curanderimo. This is because although many of the foundational aspects of folk healing stem from some of the methods used by Fidencio mediums who work in the spiritual realm have special gifts thus they look to the guidance of Fidencio's spirit. This has created a sort of sub culture or cult in which those who have the ability to become a medium sometimes choose to spend their lives living and working in such temples. The centros are staffed by trance mediums who, often... go into trance, and (in their words) let the spirit of el Nino descend on them, their bodies forming a link between the material and spiritual realms of existence. Through this linkage, the immortal spirit of el Nino performs cure, does consultations, even predicts the outcome of future events for members of his cult (1997: 35). Followers of Fidencio and other spirits tend to have much more religious beliefs due to the fact that they are wholly focused on doing their work through the guidance, protection and possession by that saint. Although it is interesting to note that people consider the curenderos to be saints because of the connection that they have with the seen unseen realms associated with the gifts that mediums possess.

Not all mediums choose to become part of a cult dedicating themselves and their work to the will of a saint who will ultimately work through them. Others might choose to work alone, some for profit and some solely for personal growth knowledge and gratification as is mentioned in chapter six of *Curanderismo: Mexican American Folk Healing*. Yet these Mediums might still attempt to gain guidance and protection from the saints such as Fidencio conversely; they do so with the help of a master curendero or by making a trip to a temple while making no commitment to the cult. Today although it has been more than 72 years since the death of el Nino Fidencio's death many people still attribute their successes in both giving and receiving healing to the saint el Nino Fidencio. He serves not only as an important figure to those who practice Curanderismo but also those who receive treatment from the curandos. The saint plays such a large role in the culture in Mexico (even today) that people make pilgrimages to his burial place located outside of the small town of Espinazo on the eve of his birthday. According to the Houston Chronicle, the procession and rituals are as big a deal for many Mexicans as it is for those who have immigrated and become Mexican Americans.

Thousands of Hipics come to this high desert site in northern Mexico on the eve of the birthday of legendary healer el Nino Fidencio. Through song and ceremony, pageantry and ritual, they have come to invoke El Nino's spirit, to prostrate themselves in acts of humility and submission, to crawl up the road of penance that leads to his tomb, and to find rebirth through immersion in a muddy pool of water (1995: 8). For many people the pilgrimage represents more than just going to honor the dead saint for the most determined

believers, (both those who practice and those who are served) it is a quest for answers and solutions to the myriad of problems common to the human condition. Through the spirit of el Nino, they believe that they can find a way to cope with illness, business, marriage, money, the community and ultimately, with life itself. The ceremonies associated with the pilgrimage are so large that they draw the attention of newspapers, which publicize the special events that take place in honor of the dead saint. In the National Catholic Reporter it was noted that, " During the week of Oct. 17 and again in March, to honor El Nino's patron St.

Joseph, throngs of devotees carry flowers and copal incense like ancient Aztec celebrants. They wend their way through narrow Espinazo streets to El Pirulito (which is the little pepper tree where he had his Hallucination), where El Nino received his healing powers" (Burbank1997: 3). In participating in such ceremonies the people are celebrating and honoring not only the saint but " God" as well, thus insuring that they will have a prosperous rest of the year. The celebration is a time for people to not only honor el Nino but also the Virgin of Guadalupe. People dance in headdresses and costume near the tomb and vendors have to opportunity to make money off of the crowds by selling items like balloons and medicines. Many of the people who attend the pilgrimage are poor, marginalized, and have little to no access tohealthcare. For many, it is about more than just honoring a saint and being a Catholic; these celebrations allow people to gather and seek healing for ailments that they could not otherwise afford to get treated.

The reasons for the celebration go beyond the fact that he was a saint; he also represents the freedom that Curanderos have to practice their craft. In 1928 Mexican President Plutarco Elias Calles suppressed the Catholic priesthood, which resulted in a revolt the following year he went to Mexico to arrest el Nino for practicing without a license. However, he and his daughter were ill and el Nino healed them both in Espainazo. This attracted much attention and caused him to not only escape a jail sentence but also made him the most famous Mexican curandero according to the National Catholic Reporter. This proved not only that he was a gifted healer but also that he was willing to help those who wished to oppress him and keep him from his craft. Thus proving to be a symbol of hope, strength, and power for the people of Mexico, and Mexican Americans who come to celebrate him. The Curanderismo folk healing of Mexico has a long legacy and although it has changed and become synchronic due to religious influence and Western medicine.

Its fundamental roots have survived; the spiritual and physical healings that result from the craft are still received by those who live both within as well as outside of Mexico. Saints such as el Nino Fidencio help remind the people of amazing healing powers that curenderos can possess and serves a figure which causes the people of the culture to unite yearly despite the fact that some have immigrated or moved to other geographical locations. The tale of the saint El Nino and his legacy not only serves as an influential figure in the history of Curanderismo but also plays a large role in the spiritual practices and the contemporary culture associated with the Mexican folk healing

practices. Works Cited Burbank, J. (1997). Catholics, too, venerate el nino fidencio. National Catholic Reporter, 33(14), 3.

Macklin, B. J. , ; Crumrine, N. R. (1973). Three north mexican folk saint movements. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 15(1), 89-105.

Spaulding, G. (1995, January 8). JOURNEY OF THE SPIRIT ; pilgrims by the thousands are drawn to the town where curandero el nino performed his legendary healings. The Houston Chronicle, pp. 8. Trotter, R. T.

I. , ; Chavira, J. , Antonio. (1997). Curanderismo: Mexican american folk healing (Second ed. ). Athens, Georga: University of Georgia Press.