



FILM REVIEW

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Adelante, a documentary film by Noam Osband

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Antonia Giannoccaro is an artist, a singer-song writer and a filmmaker born in 1977 in Southern Italy. She graduated at the University of Bologna in mass communication with a thesis on perceptions in movies in 2003. She has been researching in cognitive linguistics and journalism at UC Berkeley, assisting teaching at the University of Bologna DAMS and she is now studying for her PHD in film as creative practice at the Queen's University Belfast. She has authored documentaries, fiction movies and experimental movies for international film productions and for her independent film production company Creativesisters Filmhouse. She is interested in abstract painting, principles of consciousness, experimental movies and documentaries and in perceptions in movies. She is particularly interested in art as a medium for conflict's transformation.

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Adelante (2014, 50 min., distribution: AcademicVideoStore)¹ means *Come In* and, as the title suggests, it is an open invitation to meet people coming from different cultural backgrounds and languages to share communion, in religious as well as in a laic meaning of the world, and to use it in order to reinforce the Catholic local community beyond any linguistic, social, racial and cultural differences that may separate them.

Adelante is indeed a touching portrait of immigration and faith, a marvelous documentary about immigration and integration in the USA, narrated through the lenses of faith, common religious values and beliefs and an experience of immigration which brings along a strong sense of proud and nostalgia.

It is a story that describes how Catholicism unifies communities in the name of the development of a church and of a religious belief and that with the help of the church and the faith enables a better integration of the immigrant community in a foreign country such as the

¹ See the trailer on Academic Video Store: <https://www.academicvideostore.com/video/adelante-forward>

USA. The church is San Patrick's Church. Built in 1835 in Norristown, Pennsylvania USA, the church was erected by the Irish immigrants and was originally exclusively meant for them and for the English speaking Black Catholic community living in the town and still subjected to the discriminatory laws which had been ruling the country since its constitution. At that time the linguistic differences had prevented the integration of the various Catholic immigrant communities living in the town, specifically Italians and Polish people. Yet, the situation had totally changed in the past fifteen years when the constantly decreasing Irish population in the local area was forecasting the end of San Patrick's Church. But a miracle happened, providing hope for the parish: the increasing immigration from Mexico started repopulating the town and giving hope for the future development of the parish as well as of the community itself, with their high birth rate and their strong need for faith to bound them together and help them overcoming the struggles and obstacles presented by the immigrant conditions. The presence of an enlightened bilingual priest of Irish origin, who was able to attract to the church the entire Mexican Spanish speaking community, and the importance of preserving the sacrament of marriage, which was in danger within the Mexican community where children were born outside the marriage because of the economic difficulties to celebrate the wedding in Mexico, have been the two main elements bringing the Irish and Mexican community to join forces and strengthen their faith and communities. The encouragement to adopt bilingualism in the ceremony and the ability to reciprocally embrace the specific cultural celebrations, rituals and traditions created a unity between Irish and Mexican people and saved San Patrick's church, presenting to the world an example of integration through faith.