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**Joseph of Nazareth in Sixteenth-Century New Spain
An Elderly Saint and Popular Devotion**

Despite Joseph of Nazareth's immediate key role in the conversion of the indigenous populations of the Americas and the prevalence of 17th- and 18th-century New Spanish images of the saint, relatively few examples from 16th-century New Spain remain. As a result, an image of a young, handsome, robust foster-father prescribed by 17th-century Inquisition censors has come to dominate our understanding of his colonial iconography. This essay highlights a marginalized, yet potentially critical ingredient to Joseph's success as a missionary saint: the role his old age played in popular devotion both in Europe and in New Spain, even as such depictions were being contested by theologians. It therefore probes the potential limits of theological and Inquisitional discourses for the study of 16th-century colonial image theory.