

# Title: Our Lady of Carmen Celebrations

Photographer: Rafael Gómez

## Description:

*El Día de la Virgen del Carmen* ("Day of Our Lady of Carmen") is celebrated worldwide by Catholics and other spiritual communities. In the Dominican Republic, the celebration, which honors one of the Virgin Mary's identities, has become a powerful symbol of popular spirituality accessible in and out of the church's walls. Devotees decorate altars and hold *misas* (masses) and fiestas with music, dance, and food to honor La Virgen. The celebrations are often multi-generational and include the participation of younger devotees who contribute in different capacities, including as musicians.



## Biography:

Rafael Gómez is a visual ethnographer, photographer, and educator working in Latin America and the Caribbean. His work centers around different celebratory ritual practices of the African Diaspora. Throughout the past ten years, Gómez has been documenting the Rara/Gagá celebrations in various locales in the Dominican Republic, focusing on the issues historically marginalized communities face as they seek to maintain their traditions. His current work examines celebrations of public joy by Black communities of the African Diaspora. Gómez is also a lecturer in the Pan-African and Latin American Studies Departments at California State University, Los Angeles.