

Transcript TSV 011:

Celebrating Shamelessness: Reflections on Our First English Season

with Nadia Arellano

Axis Mundi: [00:00:00] Axis Mundi.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Welcome to Teología Sin Vergüenza, Queer and feminist theology from Latin America and its diaspora to get those spiritual justice juices flowing. I'm your host, Reverend Sex. You may not have heard from a lot of folks who live shamelessly as both queer trans feministas and people of faith, but you're about to!

Even if you don't know it, we are everywhere. We do our work in the academy, in the church, in our homes, and on the streets. We fight for our communities and for our own lives. We are not macho, but we are many. We're irreverent Queer feminists who are shamelessly faithful, and we're faithful [00:01:00] theologians who are shamelessly activistas. We are shamelessly, las sinvergüenzas.

We pluck the ripest fruit from the Bible to make juicy, queer feminist Latine theology that refreshes your spirit and quenches your thirst for liberation. In this episode, you'll find delicious decolonial theology for the real world, right now. So get your cup of coffee, pull up a chair 'cause you belong here.

Now let's get down to pleasure.

Hi Nadia!

Nadia Arellano: Hi!

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Welcome to our season finale of Teología Sin Vergüenza in English! We've had 10 amazing conversations with Queer and feminist Latine folks of faith, leaders, pastoras, theologians, I mean, just so many people. We've had so many conversations around spiritual violence and spiritual resistance, [00:02:00] and most importantly, how we start to heal.

How, what are the tools that we have and how do we engage those in this moment?

Nadia Arellano: Yes. And it is so important and meaningful to us to be able to finally release a full season in English.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yay.

Nadia Arellano: Um, Teología Sin Vergüenza is our baby. It's a project that has grown, expanded so much.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): I know.

Nadia Arellano: And has shown us so many different perspectives, so many different paths towards liberation and spirituality, and it has always been infused by this diaspora perspective.

And we cannot talk about di- diaspora without acknowledging language. Language.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Diversity, language and accessibility. [00:03:00] So we knew very early on that we wanted to to incorporate, incorporate the English speaking Latin- Latinx diaspora.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: into our understanding of what Teología Sin Vergüenza is.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: So it's so exciting to finally be able to, to listen to those voices.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. And I think it, for me, yes, absolutely. As somebody who didn't have access to Spanish when I was growing up, it took me a long time to feel like I belonged, or I had, like, I was allowed to be in Latine community. That I had enough street cred or whatever the things were. And it took me learning Spanish, and that is an ongoing effort, but. I don't think it should be that way. Like we, this is our culture and our heritage. Many, many cultures, many, many [00:04:00] languages, many, many heritages, many, many stories. And it should be that we get to have that conversation together.

Because I feel like sometimes in Latin, when we're in Latin America, there's a little bit of a sense of, oh, you went north and then you kind of like disappear into a void almost, like it's a different world. And even though we're definitely

still connected, those of us who migrate north, or to Europe or other places, we're still very much embedded and connected to home. But there's somehow a wall that's bigger than the wall in the Frontera that keeps us feeling apart. At least in when I'm thinking about theological education. When I was studying theology in the US, I had very little, if no, maybe even no access to Latin American feminist theology in its long tradition, much less Queer and trans theology.

So this has been one of our core heart themes is how do we [00:05:00] the tejer, or weave together, these broken diasporic relationships. Particularly when we're talking about religion and theology and God, because they, we belong together because most of us here feel like we don't quite fit in. And we go home sometimes or to our homelands or with our families, and we don't quite fit there either.

So, that liminal space feels really important to address, to be able to be in community because wow, there's so many beautiful things that we've heard folks share on both sides of that.

Nadia Arellano: Yes. And I believe that for, uh, for those of us that work, uh, between those two worlds, that we go back and forth and talk to people.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: Queer and feminist activists, bo-both in Latin America and in the US. I don't know about you, but there are so many times when I am talking to a person and I feel like: you would benefit so much from [00:06:00] this conversation that I had with this other person.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm.

Nadia Arellano: And it's so frustrating to realize that there's a language barrier. But also like so many systemic barriers.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: In how those types of knowledge might connect. And there are always so many moments where I'm like, there is a gap here that I know that there's people that can fill in that gap for us. Like whenever I, I'm listening to conversations about, I don't know, like let's say justice, like

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: Reparation things, and I'm listening to US, uh, activists talk about it. There's always a part of me that's like, there are so many people in Latin America that can fill up that question that you're asking.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: With people that have that answer and, and same things otherwise. Like there are so many conversations about solidarity [00:07:00] and about, um, resistance to empire

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Uh, in the US that I think people in Latin America should listen to. And

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And yeah, I, I feel so happy and excited to know that Teología Sin Vergüenza is working in that intersection. And yeah, I, I hope that you as a listener have, um, enjoyed the season, learned from the season. And I hope that those conversations impacted you in some way.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And maybe, uh, are like, incentivizing you to listen to the rest of the seasons in Spanish.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes, and I, I feel like it's the same on both sides, right? Of this hearing folks who have access to English tell us their experiences and their strategies in English. I feel that way. Especially right now [00:08:00] in the US that we need to be listening more and more to all of our, like, co-conspirators in the global south.

So much of what happens in the US, we feel like this can't possibly happen here and it's literally happening. And so once the shock of what, that this is true and real and reality in 2025. Once that rubs off, I am hoping that more and more of us will wake up and recognize how much global south solidarity means in this moment, and how many millions of our people have been through dictatorships

and toppling of democracies and authoritarian governments and you know, the police or military being used against civilians.

Like all of these things that we are starting to experience exist in other places and have histories and legacies and resistance strategies. [00:09:00] And it feels exciting to be a part of trying to get out of the way of the language barrier. Um, I know we're looking into the possibility of uploading the episodes also onto YouTube so that there can be subtitles in the other language.

It makes me think also about Teología Sin Vergüenza in Spanish and figuring out can we get subtitles in English so that we can have access to all of the 70 something episodes before this season. But tell me some of your highlights from the season. What were some of the moments that stood out to you as someone who's literally listened to every single episode of Teología Sin Vergüenza?

You know, we're at what 90 now?

Nadia Arellano: Yes. I loved this season. It was so exciting. I loved hearing how people talk about home.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: And identity. Um, I loved being able to listen to more, uh, Afro-Latino voices. There- there's already a full [00:10:00] season of Teología Sin Vergüenza in Spanish about Afro-Latine theology.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: But listening to Black, uh, Latine voices in English was really exciting to me.

It's also beautiful. I, I'm always fascinated about how Sinvergüenzas can be so diverse.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Like, and how like, like the Sinvergüenza community itself is very diverse, but then one single person,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Has carried so many identities.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: So sometimes I know someone because I know them as a pastor and then, then started, I started listening to them talk about their family life. And I realized they carry so many other identities with them. And then they start talking about their activism. And then they start talking about their, their passions and, and [00:11:00] it's so beautiful to see like you are such a complex and exciting human being.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: So it there, I had so many moments like that in during the, this season. When I was like, you're not just a therapist, you are an activist and you're also a survivor. Or, or sometimes I was like, you're, you're such a brilliant doctor and you're such a fascinating nerd.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And I was like, this is beautiful. Like you're a clergy member, but you're also a family-oriented person who loves and who, who has so many questions.

Uh, I don't know. I, I was just so excited and in love with our community throughout the whole season.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): You know, I've said since I was a young person that humans are my favorite animal. That continues to be true. And also I had, I [00:12:00] remember, so, I can remember where I was sitting, but I remember in divinity school they were asking, who is your ideal population that you would wanna work with?

And I can remember so clearly. For the first time, maybe the only time ever, letting my heart actually just be honest. Because I was just in the fantasy like dream mode. And I was like, I would want to work with L-G-B-T-Q women and Queer and trans people. But of course that subset is such a small percentage of people.

There's no way I would have a ministry where I could just center in on that group of people. And then I have these moments where I'm in Teología Sin

Vergüenza and I am having these conversations. And I'm having these moments where I'm like, okay, in the past 10 episodes, we have gone from Dominican Republic, Guatemala, all the way down to Argentina and back to New York [00:13:00] and across to Chicago.

Like, we've had all of these conversations. We've literally spanned the continent from Arizona to New York, and California down to like Florida and Texas. So we did this zigzagging of humans where their lived experience is in this moment, and also the entire, not every single country, but covering millions and millions of miles across, uh, Latino America.

And just feeling like, I can't believe that we get to do this as our job to create spaces to amplify such brilliant, interesting and creative people. It is, no, it is always true that the more weird you are, as in the more deep you go into the things that you're passionate about or care about or love or find interesting or curious, the more interesting you are times a thousand. So I'm grateful to be in community with folks who have spent some time going deep in whatever the like, across the board, interesting things they were [00:14:00] curious about and was worth their time and energy to dig deep into.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, for sure. It's so exciting. It's so beautiful.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): I can't wait till next time.

Nadia Arellano: Yeah, and it's just so valuable to know that people are sharing these insights with us. Like, there were episodes in the season where people were sharing very vulnerable things.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And then also a lot of knowledge that I,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: I was like thinking you spent so many hours.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: Learning and processing and reading and rereading this.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And so precious that you're like explaining this to us in like such an accessible language. And I'm like, thank you. Thank you for sharing. Thank you for being here. Thank you for giving us this insight. That is so, like people would pay so much for a lecture like this.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And you're sharing it for free and you're also [00:15:00] incorporating to that knowledge your lived experience. Um, it's just so precious and valuable to me.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): And people were so brave. Like politically brave to say what they think and believe in this moment, to share opinions about how we should or should not be treating our people about how we should engage with the poor and what the poor even means.

What it means to be undocumented. And emotionally brave to share personal lived experiences that for so many of us we're told, you should be ashamed of that. You should keep that quiet. You shouldn't talk about that. Or weirdness around like, who does that thing. And, and for folks to be able to touch all three of those different pieces, the political, the deeply vulnerable and personal, and then the like, unpopular [00:16:00] special interest just feels like we have done as a community a good job of receiving our people and affirming our people that, that our guests would feel like they belong here and that they would feel safe sharing those things.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, I am thinking of a quote by Andrea Gibson, a poet that many of you might know.

Um, Andrea Gibson said, even if the truth isn't hopeful, the telling of it is.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm. And wow.

Nadia Arellano: I think of it very often. And I think of it specifically right now, uh, with what is happening in the States. Like, it feels even counterintuitive. Like, oh, let's gather together people that are Queer feminist Latinx in the States right now.

Like all the intersections that are being targeted, and let's [00:17:00] be loud and let's exist out loud. Let's talk about what it means. Let's gather. It feels counterintuitive. It, it feels like our, our instincts should be, let's hide.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And let's wait for the storm to pass.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And it's beautiful to know like, no. We are not going to be silenced again.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: We're here and we are together and we have things to say.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And that is hopeful by itself.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes, because that's the intention is to keep us scared and quiet. And I think historically that's never worked for anyone in in these situations. So it does feel, every time I hear someone be brave, it makes me feel more brave.

So it is also my hope from this season that it helps [00:18:00] reestablish in each of us a sense of commitment to a broader conversation and a bigger goal. And also reminds us, oh, I can also be brave. I can also tell the truth. I can also be seen and not be invisible, um, in, in this world, in this moment. Okay, so tell us who you are, Nadia.

We got, we just jumped in feet first, which was delicious. But we should come back a little bit. Um, for folks who aren't listening to the other pieces on the Soulfence Channel. Tell us a little bit about you. You play a huge role in all things Teología Sin Vergüenza. And so let's start from the beginning, which is are you a Sinvergüenza? And why or why not? And again, remember, because we're in English, let's contextualize what Sinvergüenza means to you, um, and how you relate to that word.

Nadia Arellano: Yes. Hi everyone. My name is [00:19:00] Nadia. As Alba was saying, I touch most of Teología Sin Vergüenza content. Uh, so, if you have consumed Teología Sin Vergüenza content in the past I was probably somewhere in the process involved.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Deep in it.

Nadia Arellano: I am the Associate Director at Soulforce and I do a lot of the Latin American programming.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Which is a lot of the Teología Sin Vergüenza work.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And well, for those of you that might not know, or might wanna hear it again, Sinvergüenza is this beautiful term that carries different meanings across Latin America and its diaspora. The literal translation is shameless. And it's that and so much more.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: It's, it's funny and beautiful how many people use it for different purposes. It's [00:20:00] usually not a good word. It's usually something that you are told when you are being naughty and your mom

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): You're being chastised.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, exactly. Like, have you no shame? Type of

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm-hmm.

Nadia Arellano: Um, and I am a Sinvergüenza. I'm a professional Sinvergüenza. I get paid to be. And it's so special to me because I don't think that I am default- well, I think, it's hard for me to be shameless.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm.

Nadia Arellano: I do believe that it's been such a difficult process. I still consider myself a Sinvergüenza in training.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: I do believe that I tend to carry a lot of shame.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm.

Nadia Arellano: Um, I was taught to.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Um, and it felt, it became a safe place to me. [00:21:00] Even if, again, it's counterintuitive. And shame is never a, a safe place.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): That's right.

Nadia Arellano: For me, it felt like that's what I should be.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Like I was doing things right, because that's something that

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Uh, white Christian Supremacy tells you. Like, if you're feeling bad, you're doing a good job, right?

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): You're good.

Nadia Arellano: If you're feeling shameful, that's good. Like you, that means you, you are, you are doing great. Like

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Right, you're paying attention. Because there's always something to be ashamed about.

So if you're feeling it, then that just means you're recognizing how terrible you actually are.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, exactly. And if you are shameless, if you're a Sinvergüenza, it's a bad thing because that means you're not, you're not paying attention. You're not, you're not suffering enough, right?

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Like you should be shameful.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Like, so I do

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): But the idea that that, that we have things that we shouldn't be [00:22:00] ashamed of, like sexuality and gender and bodies. The fact that, that the concept of- that isn't something to be ashamed about- at least for me growing up wasn't even on the table. Like that wasn't even one of the options.

It was like, whether you see it or don't see it, whether you accept it and take your responsibility and try to do better, or not. But the idea that it, there could be a position, a theological position of morally good position where you weren't ashamed of it. Body, sexuality, gender. Any of that was just not, it didn't even occur to me.

Nadia Arellano: Right. And it's so beautiful and powerful to know that the answer to that question 'have you no, shame?' can be 'no'. Like it's such a powerful thing. No.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: I don't, I don't have. I love it. I

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Right.

Nadia Arellano: I, I see that as a goal of mine. I, [00:23:00] I, it's a path that I wanna follow. Um,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And it's so beautiful to listen to people that are embarked in that journey.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Um, towards shame- shamelessness.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: Sinvergüenzura.

Um, so yes, I consider myself a Sinvergüenza. Sometimes more than others. But always in that journey, in that process. And I love being a part of it. As a, as a job, as a project, as a life goal of mine. Um, and I love, um, building that journey with others.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: Like, it feels like us creating, um, a carretera, a camino, right? Like putting, like

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Putting bricks on the pathway.

Nadia Arellano: Exactly. There's been so many people putting bricks there and we're continuing to put it, um, in, in, in, like in front of us towards what it would mean [00:24:00] to live Shameless shamelessly.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. You know, I feel like it was a different turning point for me when I understood how shame and guilt is used as a mechanism of control. And I feel like you had said, you have said before, that you wanted to dedicate your life to ministry. And so I'm interested in the intersection of how you see Teología Sin Vergüenza, do you see it as a, I see it as a ministry. I'm curious if you see it as a ministry too, and how that shift happened for you. When you started understanding how the tools of white Christian Supremacy and how things like shame and guilt are used against us and to control us, and I think the part that is so powerful about being shameless is that it means that we can't be controlled through our own [00:25:00] sense of shame and guilt and responsibility for just literally existing as who we are. Or wanting to have a body and take care of that body, use the body, enjoy that body. So, will you talk a little bit more about your experience, ministry and um, control shame shamelessness as a journey?

Nadia Arellano: Yes, yes. I, since the moment that I became a Christian or started, started to connect with the Bible, the gospel, I knew I wanted to dedicate my life to ministry. And I, that didn't go as planned. I didn't go to Bible school. But I ended up here and that for me feels exactly how it should have been.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Mm.

Nadia Arellano: It definitely feels like a ministry to me.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Um, I think something that you [00:26:00] and I, Alba, have in common is that we are both very passionate about this calling.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: We are very, I think often about this passage in Romans, the for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for his power of God, for salvation. I feel like that when I talk about Queer and feminist theology and pleasure and desire and shamelessness. I'm like, no, I, I am not ashamed like I, and you can too, like you can not be ashamed too. Like, it's possible.

It's so exciting for me. Whenever people come to our events or workshops or they listen to an episode and they share with us, this is what I was looking for, this is something that is helping me heal. It feels like, I am in the right path. I am sharing something that [00:27:00] was very important for me. Uh, for my own healing.

And it is gospel to me. That is good news. Like, you can be Sinvergüenza! That is a, that is, that is good news.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): That is a gospel declaration.

Nadia Arellano: Exactly. That is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. So,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. Amen.

Nadia Arellano: I feel so, I feel so in my, in my mission. In my ministry,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. I love that. We talk to a lot of people who have been displaced, who are migrants or immigrants for a moment, for a long time.

Not just because of economic or political pressure, but often because of gender identity or sexuality. So this question of home feels like it's a pretty universal one, both in terms of physical home, because we talked about diaspora this entire season of Teología Sin Vergüenza. You're from Mexico [00:28:00] City, live in Mexico City. Not displaced in that same way.

But the people that we talk to, um, there's so many folks, like at the trans shelters that we talk to or the refugee shelters that are displaced, not necessarily,

or at least not solely because of economic conditions or political conditions or war, but because of not having home in the places that we have been taught we should have home. Whether that's with our family of origin, or with the church, and having to move and having to be somewhere else and start over because of who we are.

So. This theme of home that's come up so many times this season. Will you tell us a little bit more about what home means to you, both theologically and or any other ways that that home comes up for you?

Nadia Arellano: Yes, I have been home. For me, home [00:29:00] is not much of a place. It's like, uh, a feeling of safety that I find in so many places.

And I, I agree with you that something that I think comes up every time during uh, TSV seasons is this feeling of belonging.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: That like, this is where I belong. This is a place where I am safe. This is a place where I can be myself. That is a privilege that, that Queer people don't have that many times.

Um, that is a feeling that we are promised in church and sometimes does not come to fruit- like fulfillment.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: I've felt displaced. Displaced so many times. From places that I thought [00:30:00] I should have considered home, or I did consider home. And then I've found home in, in so many weird places that I sh- I was told I shouldn't have.

So like in Queer bars and feminist protests and Kiki balls and churches again. And then like it, and traveling. With people that I don't know, but I know that I'm connected to.

Um, the other thing that came to mind when you were talking and that I think came up also during this season, a lot is: the body.

The body. As a home.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: As a home. That has also been so hurt. Like targeted, like our own bodies have been targeted, our own spirits. And have, like for most of us, we have been thought to hate that body.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: Um, that we carry. Um. [00:31:00] And learning to love that body as a home that we live in, um, that our spirit has its address in, in these bodies.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: That also feels like a process to me that has been

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Complicated. And I, I, I feel like there's so many moments where I feel safe and I feel sleepy and cozy. And it's not about the home specifically. It's not about the physical place, but it's because I am surrounded by my chosen family, my by my friends, by Queer community, and I'm like, this is, this is it.

I feel this is where I'm supposed to be.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And I am so, so passionate about finding and building and strengthening those places for myself and others.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): [00:32:00] Amen. Yes. I think for our bodies being so colonized and then us being our own wardens and enforcers of that toxic terrible theology and those things that, just like you were saying, that we're taught that we should feel shame and therefore become so familiar that we get comfortable with it.

The acts of reclaiming our bodies as our beings, and as ours, even. Just that it belongs to me and not to, you know, my husband or my father, or, you know, being sacrificed on the altar of a thousand other things that I'm supposed to be

taking care of, is such a radical homecoming and hard, and I think it feels better doing it in community with others.

I at least feel more empowered to do that work, especially the narratives we've been taught about selfishness, um, versus altruism or selflessness and all that stuff. So. [00:33:00] Really grateful for community who helps me remember that my body is my home and I should care for it. Like I care for the other people and places that I consider home.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, for sure.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): All right. Tell us about your ancestors. When you are needing to go back to the fount of rejuvenation that reminds you who you are and where you come from, who are those ancestors that you go to, call on, pull from?

Nadia Arellano: I have so many. I look back to the stories of my mom, my abuela, my abuelita Margarita, and things that- stories they shared with me when I was a little kid, and I don't think I understood what it took. Like una abuela that that escaped violence with, with nine [00:34:00] children. And back then I didn't understand what it meant.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: When she talked about some of the things. Like I, I really didn't get it.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: Um, um, my mom, my aunts, my cousins. And then I think about my, my friends. Whenever I, I listen to my, the stories of my friends, and I, I, I feel so rooted in their strength.

Um, and also so many activists and theologians and writers that I feel so fortunate to be able to read their stories and connect with them, and feel like other people have shared wisdom that can support me through the journey. Um, so yes, there's so many writers, there's so many, um, activists. I also feel very connected to this idea, um, this [00:35:00] Bible idea, I think the book of Hebrews, the cloud of witnesses.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: And I used to think of the cl about the cloud of witnesses with shame. Like there's so many people judging me, like there's cloud of witnesses that are like, are you sure you wanna do that Nadia? Ooh. You weren't able to, to, oh, so you, you succumb to your, to your sin now and we're all looking at you and we're like.

You shouldn't have. And now I think of that cloud of witnesses and I feel like there's so many people that are cheering for us. Yeah. Right, like there's so many Queer ancestors that have been, because Queer people, Queer and feminist people, Queer, um, ancestors, women, have been throughout, like have existed throughout the, the history of the church.

And they are there like, yes we are Sinvergüenza still! Yes, yes! And they, I feel so connected to [00:36:00] them. And I, and it brings me so much joy being like, Ooh, my abuelita would've loved this. So, yes. I, I, I love being able to reclaim that idea. from a Sinvergüenza place.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. I love that transformation between the cloud, cloud of witnesses that are like looking over your shoulder, being like, you'll never be able to do that.

You shouldn't be doing that. You shouldn't even be thinking about that. And then thinking about those, that cloud of witnesses. Being filtered, you know those microphones where it distorts your voice if you talk into them and it sounds different than what you comes out of your mouth, i'm like, oh, that feels like the, the megaphone of white Christian Supremacy that like took the love and support of our ancestors that want us to succeed and want us to heal and contorted it into this very distorted voice that sounded like judgment all the time. And now you feeling like now the [00:37:00] megaphone is just a megaphone to be like, we love you. You got this. That's okay. Try again. It's okay. You got it next time, like we can do it together. We're so excited and happy for you and that. Wow. What a difference of messaging that's coming and surrounding us, right?

Nadia Arellano: Yes. And knowing that we'll be that for others.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Right? Like knowing that there's so many people that that text the Teología Sin Vergüenza social media. And they're like, I am so excited because I just find out, found this out, and thank you for sharing this, and be

like, Ooh, people, people felt with something that I said. The same thing that I felt 10 years ago with something that someone else said. Right.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: It's just like exciting, like, yes, I wanna be that, that sister for someone else.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Absolutely. Mm. That's a driving factor for me too in all things. Be a good ancestor. Feels very core to my theology.

Nadia Arellano: [00:38:00] Yes. Amen. And what about you, Alba?

Because, if you if you're listening to this, you have heard Alba's voice all throughout the season and

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Exhaustively.

Nadia Arellano: And you are obviously thankful for that. And you, you have probably listened to the Alba's Love Letters. Um, but maybe, I don't know if you've shared, if you have specifically shared what it means for you to be a Sinvergüenza as the founder, the creator of Teología Sin Vergüenza, uh, do you consider yourself a Sinvergüenza, Alba?

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. I feel like I love the term and it feels almost like it was divinely given.

We played around with a couple of terms for the show, and [00:39:00] Sinvergüenza felt like the right thing. Reverend Dr. Lis Valle-Ruiz, who did the first episode of this season, uh, really liked Sinvergüenza as our, as our word, because it's so hard to encapsulate. How do you focus on Queer and trans lived experience in Latino America and that at the intersection of liberating theology and theory. And how do you bridge the church, the streets, and activism, and the academy, and scholars? And the Sinvergüenza felt like the right word. And I don't know that I always, we definitely in the south where I grew up with my granny had the phrase of like, have you no shame? Like, put your legs together! Or pull your dress down! Or stop talking so loudly!

Or Why are you dating that person? Don't you have any shame? And it was definitely a tool of [00:40:00] controlling, particularly girl, assigned people's behavior as we were growing up. But the word Sinvergüenza feels so

embedded. And I didn't realize there were things I was supposed to have shame about, because I was raised as an only child among very old people at the end of their life. 70, 80, 90 year olds.

And so I was indulged very much as a child. Um, as a girl child, surrounded by mostly elderly women, who found me interesting and delightful just because I was a little human. Five years old, 10 years old in this community of elders. Very, very elders. And so, I didn't realize that I was supposed to have shame around giving my opinion, or I didn't realize I was supposed to have shame around, you know, being my full embodied self because of that very insulated, tiny community that I grew up in for my younger [00:41:00] years.

So, I feel like being shameless was the Teflon coating that I needed when I came out. Because by that time, when I was 15, I already had a sense that what I had to say was important. That God loved me, that God wanted to hear me, and because I was such a rule follower, good girl, I had done all the things I had been taught around having a relationship with God and prayer.

And so my relationship with God felt very tight and very close and very constant. Like I can just, it's part of my nature to just constantly be chattering away at God and God to be listening as many of us only children have that experience. But I just felt like I was chattering away all the time with God, whether it was out loud with somebody else or in my own head.

I was just having this constant dialogue. So when I had my first experience with another girl in high school, it, it didn't make sense to me, the shame. Like everything I've been taught about what homosexuality [00:42:00] was, didn't resonate with my lived embodied experience. So it was this very strange thing to be like, I've been told that homosexuals are predators and they have horns and red tails and split tongues and all of these things, but I was just a very good Christian girl who was 15 who happened to fall in love with another girl who was like a year older maybe, but my same age. There was no predation happening. There was no, these were people that I knew, and I knew myself deeply to be a very faithful, good girl Christian who followed the rules, except for this one.

So it was a very weird experience, and that shamelessness of being a kid as an only child, as a little girl being raised by a doting and adoring great grandmother helped me in this moment be like, okay, it isn't shame that I'm feeling. I was just pissed. So me and God fought for like a decade. So for me, yes, *sinvergüenza* is something that I feel like I was given, albeit [00:43:00] unintentionally, through just an abundance of love and being an only child. And that *sinvergüenzura*

helped me not be so devastated when it came to questions around sexuality and gender.

Then it was more I was angry. And I was like, either God has something to, has some explaining to do, or the Bible has some explaining to do, something somebody has some explaining to do. And I need to understand it. And so it was that very self-righteous curiosity that drove me to the rest.

Nadia Arellano: And, and thank God for, for that.

Every time you think about that, every time you share that, that story, I am so amazed and excited and thankful. Because we need more of those people. Like, we need kids that are just so strengthened in their own spirits that are able to be like, that is not true.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yeah.

Nadia Arellano: [00:44:00] Like you're, what that guy is saying on TV about me and my family is just not true.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: I'm such in my heart and in my spirit, that is not the God I follow.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: That is such a powerful, important group that can move mountains, literally. And I, I feel so honored and thankful that there's people around us that are reminders of that. And another thing I wanted to say, like a little quick fun fact. When, when Teología Sin Vergüenza started you, you see the description of the podcast and you know that we talk about sex, sex and pleasure and Queerness, and the assumption might be that younger people were for, were attracted at first to the podcast. It was a younger audience because we tend to connect young audiences with like rebels, Sinvergüenzas, shameless [00:45:00] people. But it wasn't the case. It was older women, specifically. And that resonates to what you were saying. Like, there's a piece of shamelessness that comes with seeing things. Like just spending enough time in the world and be like, I'm, I'm too old to care.

I'm too old to care about what this person thinks of me. At it's such a liberating experience. And whenever I, I listen to older women that have followed rules for their whole lives.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: They're like Uhuh. One thing I've learned is God is not that. Tell me whatever you think, but that is not true. I've seen it Uhuh. That is so liberating and exciting.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. We want people to be at that stage earlier and earlier and earlier.

Nadia, do you remember one of our gatherings where, this is deep in pandemic land, where one of the people who came on was [00:46:00] like, maybe pushing 90, and she had to get her husband to help her unmute the microphone. And she was basically saying, I don't understand all the things that y'all are talking about, but I just want you to know that I love you so much and God loves you so much, and I want you to have everything that you need to feel good about who you are. And I'm sorry if I mess up some, the pronouns sometimes. I'm still learning. But it was like, this human who had lived most of their adult life before there was even internet, right?

So I'm on the cusp. I remember going through high school without internet and beginning of college with internet, right? But there are folks who lived most of their adult lives and all of their professional lives without the internet, smartphones, all of that stuff. And so. I think that's also something that feels good in my spirit is that our spaces are really in [00:47:00] intergenerational. Our episodes, our seasons are con-, intentionally constructed to be intergenerational so that we're not just listening to one age group or one demographic, or one country of origin or one physical location.

And that I think when we last checked that, of our Spanish channel, that women over 65 were like upwards of 25% or like a quarter of our listeners.

Nadia Arellano: Yeah, it might have changed now. But it's always been like, a very big part of our demographic.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes.

Nadia Arellano: Surprisingly to me,

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes. I also wanna share one little story of my kiddo, um, when they were very young. Which is for me, I thought that teaching my child not to be ashamed of who they are or their family or their gender, or eventually their sexuality, all of that stuff, that I would have this moment of like being patted on the back.

Where I'm like, I am a defender of my child's authenticity and agency and whatever. But I had this moment where I was [00:48:00] expressing frustration around somebody getting my child's pronouns correct. And my kid at the time, who was maybe five, said something like, oh mama, that's just them. They just can't get it. It's okay. They, that's the best they can do.

And it was so much grace and so much unbotheredness, like it was clearly their problem, even from this little five-year-old. And I feel like it took me a long time to realize that when we do a good job of instilling those values that it doesn't come back in this like, thank you so much for honoring my gender identity.

It's just normalized as like, of course that's their problem and not ours. Of course, there's more than two genders. Of course Queer people are fully human and deserve equal rights. Like, it's just, it comes off as this very flippant, kind of like, of course, who would think otherwise? Because that's what's normal.

And so I just [00:49:00] wanna affirm each other, those of us who are still working through our *sinvergüenzura*, like becoming *Sinvergüenzas*, that, working through our shame we have to affirm ourselves in each other because who we think we might get that affirmation from, it's, it's a foregone conclusion. Which means we've been wildly successful, but still it doesn't have that same satisfaction of I've checked the box and accomplished the things.

So I think *sinvergüenzura* and being a *Sinvergüenza* is something that I hope, in the future, just like the newest generations of Queer folks who are using that term, and there's no sting in it. It is for, especially young folks, especially when we are lived in privileged places to ha- be surrounded by community and be safe, using a term like Queer is a joyful thing. And many folks know it's a, a historical reclamation, but the generations I think before me in [00:50:00] particular, who just the word would make them flinch because of the violence and the incredible discrimination and oppression that happened because of it. That alone, I think, is mostly not true. At least for those of us, um, who have access to community.

Nadia Arellano: Right? Yes. And I also have another question for you, Alba. Who are your ancestors?

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Oh, like you, there are so, so many. And I've been doing ancestor work for, oh gosh, probably 15, maybe even 20 years. In a very intuitive practice, but also a very research heavy kind of practice. I come from folks without access to wealth, and that makes researching and learning things much harder. But, I think about the people that I can remember in my body, like I've been talking about, [00:51:00] my granny who raised me in Appalachia.

She's very close, very, very close, always, and kind of my constant protector. Um, as well as my mother and my grandmother are both on the other side. And so I think about them often. The people in my chosen ancestry who are very close are always Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa. Because both of them write in this orientation toward us and our wholeness and our love, and the complexity of it in such beautiful ways that both for Audre Lorde inspired the Gospel of the Ero- of the Erotic with Reverend Sex, and for Gloria Anzaldúa helped me understand liminal spaces and what it means to be *ni de aquí ni de allá*. So I keep them super, super close.

And now that I've been spending so much time in Mexico, I think Frida Kahlo has become, she's always been this very popular icon [00:52:00] who's has this beautiful look and powerful, but I really connected with her energy so much more being here, very close to where she lived in this understanding of her as someone who was disabled and who was in chronic pain. And who lived a life of defiance and like an honorable life with a lot of pride. And she had, uh, some privilege in terms of access to wealth, but she feels like she spent her life, like every drop of it, she could squeeze out of life. She used it.

And I'm really living into that feeling in my own life and in my own body. But beyond that, there's endless clouds of witnesses. I would say, where I draw my strength from, if there is a, well, it's from our community. Just like you were talking about. Every time we're in spaces of the Church of the Queerly Beloved, or we are doing workshops or we are gathering with our folks in any form or fashion. When we're doing [00:53:00] episodes of *Teología Sin Vergüenza* I'm always so restored and strengthened by our people.

They give me power and bravery and ideas and creativity endlessly. So I would say the *Sinvergüenzas* are my ancestors.

Nadia Arellano: Yes. Woo hoo. We have a, amazing community.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): We do, and we welcome those of you who are listening to join it. So this is our season finale of Teología Sin Vergüenza. We're going on a six week hiatus for the end of the year and the beginning of the next year as we prep more juicy, delicious, truth-telling, spiritually liberating content. And the next season is going to be bringing you information, interviews, discussions, further conversations on a book that we have coming out the end of this year. It should be ready for publication beginning of next year called Religious Phenomenon. and That Abuse the Faith.

So it's all about spiritual violence, spiritual terrorism. Religious abuse [00:54:00] and spiritual trauma, and not just how awful they are. It has concepts and conceptual analysis. But it also has healing strategies and also information of how to tell if you've been a target of one of these phenomena. And of course, always the theology behind it, how we connect it to each other.

So, we know that we'll miss each other, but the good things are always worth the wait. So. We will be doing that. Look forward to it at the beginning of next year in 2026. And in the meantime, we want you to send us suggestions for content. We would love what you, to know, what you love, what you'd like to hear more of.

What kind of stories should we tell? If you know a Sinvergüenza that you're like, y'all should a thousand percent interview my friend, my colleague, my sister, me. Please write us and tell us who you are. We have a beautiful long list of folks that we'd love to [00:55:00] invite to do Teología Sin Vergüenza. So, please add your name to the list or whoever's name that you would like to nominate.

Also, for the Love Letters with Reverend Sex, we would love to hear your questions. Let us know what kind of love letter or who needs a love letter in this moment. And we'll work on those on the Reverend Sex Love Letters with Reverend Sex that comes out each week. You can find us where, Nadia? Tell us all the places folks can find us.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, you can find us, uh, in Facebook and Instagram @Soulforceorg. And @teosinverguenza. You can also write us at hello@soulforce.org or teosinverguenza@soulforce.org. Um, you can comment here in this episode in whichever platform you're listening to. Um. Yeah, and please let us know what you think, what you want us to [00:56:00] talk about. Whatever you want.

Share things with us.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Yes, talk to us.

Nadia Arellano: Yes, please.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Also, you should know that there are real humans. It's either me or Nadia or a couple of other folks on our team. Some real human, not a bot somewhere, will read your comments or your stories or your emails. It doesn't go into an AI void somewhere. There are real people on the other side.

So, reach out, be in touch. We love to hear from our people. We love to build community with our people. We love you and we're thinking of you. We're constantly figuring out ways to find each other and we can't wait to be together again next season.

Nadia Arellano: Woohoo.

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Woo! ¿Eres una Sinvergüenza? Are you a Sinvergüenza? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Bye!

Nadia Arellano: Bye!

Reverend Sex (Rev. Alba Onofrio): Thank you for joining us today for Teología Sin Vergüenza. I'm Reverend Alba Onofrio, but you can call me Reverend Sex. Let us know what [00:57:00] resonated for you from today's conversation, and make sure to like, subscribe and share this episode with someone in your life who might need it.

Check out all of our other juicy content on this channel and find us on social media @soulforceorg or @teosinvergüenza in Spanish. Cuídadete mucho, and remember, we are Las Sinvergüenzas. Are you one of us? Oo, sí! Sí, sí, sí.