



# One Church Many Cultures

The Good News of Cultural Diversity

## MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE U.S. BISHOPS FOR THE V ENCUESTRO

*Dear brother bishops,*

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you. Just a year ago I was with you during my pastoral visit to the United States. There, I was impressed by the vitality and diversity of the Catholic community.

Throughout your history, the Church in your country has welcomed and integrated new waves of immigrants. In the rich variety of their languages and cultural traditions, they have shaped the changing face of the American Church.

In this context, I will commend the coming Fifth National Hispanic Pastoral Encuentro. The celebration of this V Encuentro will begin in dioceses this coming January, and conclude with a national celebration in September of 2018.

In continuity with its predecessors, the Encuentro seeks to acknowledge and value the specific gifts that Hispanic Catholics have offered, and continue to offer, to the Church in your country. But it is more than that: it is part of a great process of renewal and missionary outreach—one to which all of your local churches are called.

Our great challenge is to create a culture of encounter which encourages individuals and groups to share the

richness of their traditions and experience; to break down walls and to build bridges.

The Church in America as elsewhere is called to go out from its comfort zone and be a leaven of communion; communion among ourselves, with our fellow Christians, and with all who seek a future of hope. We need to become ever more fully a community of missionary disciples, filled with love of the Lord Jesus and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel.

The Christian community is meant to be a sign of prophesy, of God's plan for the entire humanity. We are called to be bearers of good news for a society kept by disconcerting social, cultural and spiritual shifts and increasing polarization.

It is my hope that the Church in your country, at every level, will accompany the Encuentro with its own reflection and pastoral discernment. In a particular way, I ask you to consider how your local churches can best respond to the growing presence, gifts, and potential of the Hispanic community.

Mindful of the contributions that the Hispanic community makes to the life of the nation, I pray that the Encuentro will bear fruit for the renewal of the American society and for the Church's apostolate in the United States.





With gratitude to all [those] engaged in the preparation for the V Encuentro, I assure you of my prayers for this important initiative of your Conference.

Commending you and the

clergy, religious, and lay faithful of the local churches to the prayers of Mary Immaculate, I cordially impart my apostolic blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in the Lord.

## Prayer to the Holy Family\*

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph,  
in you we contemplate  
the splendor of true love;  
to you we turn with trust.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth,  
grant that our families too  
may be places of communion and prayer,  
authentic schools of the Gospel  
and small domestic churches.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth,  
many families never again experience  
violence, rejection and division;  
may all who have been hurt or scandalized  
find ready comfort and healing.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth,  
make us once more mindful  
of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,  
and its beauty in God's plan.*

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph,  
graciously hear our prayer.*

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### \*PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY

**Source: In The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia) Pope Francis concludes with a Prayer to the Holy Family. This thoughtful prayer contemplates the splendor of true love and the sacredness of the family in God's plan.**

**Prayer cards are available for purchase at USCCB's online store <http://store.usccb.org/Prayer-to-the-Holy-Family-Prayer-Card-p/7-541.htm> or call 1-877-978-0757 and use the product code 7-541.**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By: Mrs. Mar Muñoz-Visoso, MTS, Executive Director

# MOVING FORWARD WITH THE HOLY FAMILY AS OUR GUIDE

As the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy has come to an end —giving the Church renewed hope and strength and certainly setting her in “field hospital” operational mode— it is time to reflect on “what we have seen and heard.” As we look forward, reflecting on the experiences and learnings of the past year should propel us with renewed confidence and determination towards what lies ahead.

What a year of riches and redeeming experiences it has been! In particular, I would like to highlight the great gift that Pope Francis made to the Church and to the world with his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, (*The Joy of Love*). If you have not had the opportunity to read it yet or started but did not finish it, and even if you did, I invite you to take it on as an Advent/Christmas discipline and a serious new year's resolution.

This is an appropriate time to contemplate the mystery of the Holy Family of Nazareth and to draw inspiration from them. We see Mary and Joseph's journey, their search for a place to stay and for Mary to deliver her baby safely, their experience of rejection, the humble stable that housed the birth of the King of Kings, the silent adoration of the humble shepherds and of the wise men coming from afar to put their own riches at the feet of the newborn King; we see the Holy Family's hurried migration into Egypt, where they lived as refugees fleeing from persecution and seeking protection for them and especially for the life of their most precious gift, Baby Jesus.

As we contemplate both their strength and vulnerability, one cannot help but draw parallels to situations in our own families and other families around us. Some of these parallels may be quite literal, such as the plea of numerous immigrant and refugee families in our midst, and some of them may help us to revisit in a new light the struggles, threats and realities facing families today.

As *Amoris Laetitia* has helped to draw new attention to the pastoral care of families and to the meaning of sacramental marriage, and as we contemplate the mystery of the Holy Family, we will do well to reexamine the ways in which we accompany families in their journey. Every family, of every kind and shape, is on a jour-

*What a year of riches and redeeming experiences it has been!*

ney. Like Christ himself with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are called to meet them by the side of the road and to walk with them, most especially in their times of distress, difficulty and mourning.

The Holy Father has also given us another pointer, another moment to look forward to: the next Synod of Bishops called forth by Pope Francis in 2018, which will focus on youth. In the context of the United States, we really need to pay attention to the culture and the influences our kids are growing up with, how they think and operate, if we want to accompany them effectively and make them protagonists of their own evangelization.

We also need to pay attention to their diversity. In a recent presentation to the General Assembly, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, told the U.S. bishops: “How the Church is connecting — or not! — with this younger generation of Catholics, in all their diversity, is vital for our future. Ecclesial institutions need to adapt to this evolving reality. This will necessarily have a major impact on strategies and approaches to several major issues such as vocation discernment and recruitment, Catholic education, access to the Sacraments, development of leaders, stewardship of resources, and pastoral outreach.”

Finally, one initiative currently unfolding that will pay particular attention to young people and families over the next few years is the Fifth National Encuentro on Hispanic Latino Ministry. As we encourage and accompany our Latino brothers and sisters in their journey, may we, by walking with them, be enriched as well by the experience. May we discover that it really is also our journey, and perhaps be moved to discern our own call in the next stage of that journey.

## ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS

By: Sr. Myrna Tordillo, MSCS, Assistant Director, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs

### Dear Co-workers and friends,

Time flies so quickly and we are now in the Advent season, the liturgical season the Church designates to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth. Our preparations then, must be that which "directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and also to the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas" ([www.usccb.org/worship/liturgical-year/advent/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/worship/liturgical-year/advent/index.cfm)).

Families, especially parents have a distinct role to encourage and guide family members in particular children to live the Advent season intentionally and spiritually through family activities, religious traditions and popular devotions. An activity that families can have the opportunity to be together is the preparation and blessing of the Advent wreath and the candle wreath. Novena prayers during Advent, religious traditions observed by diverse cultural families and the blessing of a Christmas tree are means to nourish the spiritual life. There are printed and on line Advent resources available in parishes, dioceses, the USCCB, by Catholic publishers and various Catholic groups that are helpful in celebrating Advent as the Church prescribes.

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of the Gospel), emphasizes the "family's vocation and mission of love. It speaks about the family's strengths and gifts, and also the contemporary challenges faced by families throughout the world" ([www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/amoris-laetitia.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/amoris-laetitia.cfm)).

Celebrating Advent together as a family is an occasion for parents and children to be strengthened spiritu-

ally, nurture familial bonds of love, patience and understanding. It is also a catechizing moment when parents can teach the children about the faith.

During Advent, Asian and Pacific Island Catholic communities observe religious traditions and popular devotions that first generation immigrants brought with them from their homeland and passed on to next generations. One example is the Filipino religious tradition called *Simbang Gabi* (dawn Mass), a novena of Masses celebrated for nine consecutive days.

Pope Francis reminds us that "Nazareth teaches us the meaning of family life, its loving communion, its simple and austere beauty, its sacred and inviolable character. May it teach how sweet and irreplaceable is its training, how fundamental and incomparable its role in the social order."

May families prepare hearts and minds this Advent so as to joyfully welcome the Emmanuel at Christmas.



## AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

By: Mrs. Donna Toliver Grimes, Assistant Director, Subcommittee on African American Affairs



Truly, there is a balm in Gilead! Find an antidote for the deflating critique of Black Family Life in America in these inspiring examples and resources.

The Archdiocese of New Orleans is intentional about implementing marriage ministry that speaks to African Americans. Spokesperson Marc A. Barnes informed me that through the Knights of Peter Claver organization in one parish, the initiative is growing across the Archdiocese. Annual programs mix fun, faith and real conversations. The couples' mixer addresses marriage issues and helps recruit new members to the ministry. Valentine's Day Date Night of dinner, movie and discussion was a hit. The highlight is an overnight retreat. Presently, a team of married couples is being trained to serve as mentors to engaged couples through their first year of marriage. Marc informed me that this program supplements the Archdiocese's Pre-Cana

preparation. For African Americans, it's the real-life stories and witness that help develop essential communication and conflict resolution skills. He tells couples, "Love is not an ocean, it's an action."

In the Archdiocese of Louisville, the Catholic Enrichment Center (CEC) is jumping with activity for all age groups, supporting Black Catholics and the larger community. Dorice Firmin, a Haitian-born young adult, is CEC's Family Life Skills staff person. Dorice helps implement programs that cover nitty-gritty issues e.g., parenting, financial literacy, healthy living, tutoring assistance and teen life skills. Prayer circles and retreats offer multi-generational spiritual enrichment opportunities. Annette Turner, Executive Director of the Office of Multicultural Ministry, further spoke of family-oriented programs, including days of prayer, family-to-family networking and a one-day retreat for families.

### Check out these Resources:

**Andrew and Terri Lyke who for 35 years have faithfully labored in the vineyard for African American marriages and families will release their new book online in early 2017. *Marriage on a Lampstand: Exploring A New Paradigm for Modern Marriage* (Visual Dynamics Publishing). The book can be pre-ordered in December 2016. Visit [vdpublishing.net](http://vdpublishing.net) for information on how to purchase your copy.**

**The National Association of Black Catholic Administrators (NABCA) and National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM) have developed an inculturated version of NACFLM's *Ministry with Families 101* training. For details contact Deacon Royce Winters of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at [rwinters@catholiccincinnati.org](mailto:rwinters@catholiccincinnati.org).**

*Will you help African American Affairs compile and share Best Practices for Marriage and Family Life Ministry? Send your ideas and news of local initiatives to [dgrimes@usccb.org](mailto:dgrimes@usccb.org).*

# PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, & TRAVELERS: GIFTS AND CHALLENGES

By: Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ, Ph.D., Assistant Director, Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, & Travelers and Mr. David Corrales, Projects Coordinator, Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, & Travelers

PCMRT serves and coordinates the evangelization outreach for people who came to the United States from Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean and Europe. It also supports the pastoral care of Refugees and People on the Move, consisting of migrant farm-workers, seafarers/merchant mariners, airport/ airline workers, travelers, Circus and Traveling Show Ministries, and Apostleship of the Road. These diverse groups bring both their giftedness as a people and their challenges to the Church.

The PCMRT Communities have blessed our church with a growing number of vocations to the priesthood, religious life and strong lay leadership. Many of these migrant and refugee families offer us not just their profound religious belief but also their cultural identity. For many of them, family life is of utmost importance. Strong family values for them entails a lively and vibrant liturgy, a rich faith tradition, and the rise of popular devotions that shapes the face of the Catholic Church today.

One of problems facing the PCMRT families is identity crisis. A



great number of these families continue to struggle to live bi-culturally in their new society. We see them struggle in the area of parenting. They feel that as a result of secularism, their children and grandchildren are often challenged and confused in

matters of the faith and their culture. The fear for discrimination, sanctions and deportations that many of these parents face often even gets in the way of the manner in which they educate and discipline their children.

Three examples of initiatives, which focused on strengthening PCMRT families this year were:

1) The Third African National Eucharistic Congress (ANEC) which highlighted the gifts, contributions, challenges and evangelization opportunities of African immigrant families in the United States. The historic African National Eucharistic Congress was a celebration of thanksgiving to the Almighty God for the giftedness, faith, presence and the future role of the African community in the United States.

The gathering brought together African Catholics from around the country, who came to share in the vitality and richness of the African spiritual heritage and to identify and celebrate the gifts that Africans bring to the American Church. The theme "Responding to the New Evangelization: The African Catholic Family, A Gift to the Church in America." Sessions and workshops were held to address issues concerning the youth and young adults as agents of evangelization. There was also a session challenging African Catholics on rekindling their love for themselves, their heritage, and others.

2) The National Brazilian Apostolate Gathering took place



on September 23-26 in Boston, Massachusetts. This was an opportunity for Brazilian religious and lay leaders from across the country to talk about the pastoral needs of Brazilian families in the United States. PCMRT staff and Bishop Edgar da Cunha, PCMRT's Episcopal Liaison to Brazilians in the United States, gave two presentations on the pastoral challenges of Brazilian families and on the Subcommittee's work to support them through initiatives such as the PCMRT Population Study, pastoral visits and leadership trainings.

The staff also presented on the importance of the Brazilian presence in national Church initiatives such as the V Encuentro. Since Brazilians also self-identify as Latinos, the apostolate has now decided to participate in this process and its families will also seek to get involved whenever possible.

3) A Special Jubilee Audience for the Circus and Traveling Show People called by Pope Francis during this Year of Mercy, engaged several PCMRT leaders of the traveling show ministries. Fr. John Vakulskas, Carnival Priest and PCMRT Adviser on Carnival Ministries, who had the honor to meet the Pope during this important event, asked one of his lay leaders in the apostolate to share about the pastoral and social realities of Carnival Catholic families in the United States.

## HISPANIC AFFAIRS

By: Mr. Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Assistant Director, Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs

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The Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (V Encuentro) is ready to begin its process in thousands of parishes throughout the country. This process of evangelization, communion and consultation will also reach families through the Por Tu Matrimonio website, [www.portumatrimonio.org](http://www.portumatrimonio.org).

Beginning in January 2017, interested families will have free access to the five sessions of the Parish Guide for V Encuentro. Their participation as families will enable the Church in the United States to hear the dreams, concerns and challenges faced by Hispanic couples and families in the United States. It will also give families the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas about how Hispanic couples and families contribute their values and gifts to the strengthening of the Church and the common good of society.

Through the same website, the V Encuentro will also offer ten sessions designed to bring the Word of God into our homes. The ten sessions follow the liturgical year and

offer a wonderful opportunity for the Bible to encourage the Catholic Faith of families. This effort is a response to the call of Pope Francis to encourage the pastoral care of the family with the Sacred Scriptures. For this we also have the Catholic Family Bible, which was developed by Hispanic pastoralists for the benefit of millions of Hispanic families residing in the United States. We are grateful to Editorial Verbo Divino and to the Center for Ministry Development for this wonderful gift to our families and communities.

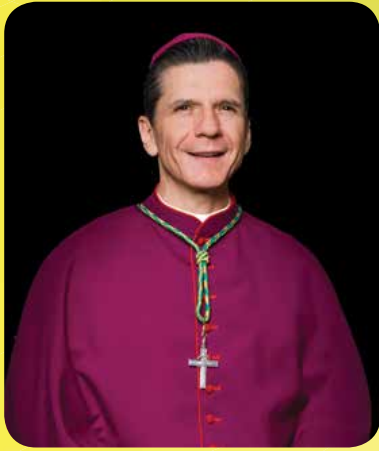
As you can see, the V Encuentro is an initiative launched by the bishops of the United States to meet and accompany Hispanic families, and to send us as missionary disciples. The Good News of a Kingdom of justice, love and truth proclaimed by Christ and the Church gives us hope during this time of anxiety and fear. Do not be afraid. Rather, be fruitful, for this is also an opportune time for God's grace in our midst.

God is with us today and always!

*Spanish translation on page 10*



*God is with us today and always!*



*At the November 2016 General Assembly of the Catholic Bishops, Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S. Archbishop of San Antonio, offered a presentation on a groundbreaking study on cultural diversity in the Church. After an overview of findings by Mr. Mark Gray of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Archbishop García-Siller offered a reflection on challenges and opportunities the findings pose to the U.S. Church. The Special Report by CARA can be found on the USCCB's website use keywords: New Study on Cultural Diversity or contact [diversity@usccb.org](mailto:diversity@usccb.org). What follows are excerpts of the archbishop's remarks.*

## PRESENTATION TO U.S. BISHOPS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: CARA CULTURAL DIVERSITY STUDY

**Dear brother bishops,**

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you highlights from the recently concluded study on Cultural Diversity in the Church in the United States.

The study is groundbreaking in two ways: first, it is the first time that all available data, from Catholic and non-Catholic sources alike, was brought together to map the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Church nationwide; second, it is also the first time that parish life was studied about the experience of diversity that is very relevant for our Church and nation today.

Both as a Conference and as individual bishops we need to reflect on what the numbers tell us, what dynamics and attitudes they reveal to us. Allow me, an immigrant and missionary shepherd, to offer some remarks on the opportunities and challenges before us.

As we know, the face of the Church in the United States is in constant change. Our ecclesial struc-

tures and pastoral plans also need to change and evolve with our people and the environment. Clearly, our mission always remains the same: to evangelize, to go out and make disciples of all nations. In order to meet the demands of evangelization today, Pope Francis has called the universal Church to a pastoral conversion and a renewed missionary zeal:

I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. "Mere administration" can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be "permanently in a state of mission." (EG 25)

To fulfill her mission, the Church needs to form missionary disciples. Disciples with a profound Christian identity, who have a personal relationship with the risen Lord and live according to his teaching and example. And missionaries, who zealously share the Good News with people of "every race, nation and tongue",

because the Word of God burns within them! Missionaries who are not afraid of going out of their comfort zones, to encounter and dialogue with the diversity of peoples whom they encounter daily and to include them in the life of the Church.

The Church in the United States, with her growing diversity, also needs missionary disciples who are interculturally competent; who can communicate, work, and relate across cultural boundaries; who will help to build up a profound Christian identity in every member; who seek the unity of faith and do not feel threatened by the diversity of its many expressions.

The numbers also tell us that these missionary disciples, those who are to carry the light of the New Evangelization here and now and into the future, must come from a great diversity of cultural and ethnic families.

Let us look closely at our local realities. Do we really know who the Catholics in our pews are? How about the Catholics who are not in the



pews? What are we doing to reach out to them and to others who also deserve to have the Good News proclaimed to them?

At the national level, the findings of the study tell us many things. Let us consider only a few.

First, we know that immigration has fueled the growth of the Catholic Church in the U.S. in recent decades. Despite current trends of secularization and serious questions raised about the role of religion in our society, the Catholic Church is the only Christian denomination in the country that has continued to grow or remains stable in numbers, despite being subject to the same dynamics and realities affecting other churches. Like others, we face the challenge of a growing disaffection for any form of organized religion in our nation.

Despite our best efforts to form and educate our long-time and newly converted Catholics, this growth or stability in numbers is, for the most part, due to demographics: a consistent influx of Catholic immigrants — mostly from Latin America, but also increasingly from countries in Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa—and their U.S. born children and grandchildren who now comprise a very

large segment of the young church today.

How the Church is connecting — or not! — with this younger generation of Catholics, in all their diversity, is vital for our future. Ecclesial institutions need to adapt to this evolving reality. This will necessarily have a major impact on strategies and approaches to several major issues such as vocation discernment and recruitment, Catholic education, access to the Sacraments, development of leaders, stewardship of resources, and pastoral outreach.

There are also important discrepancies between the way our congregations look — the diversity in our pews — and the leadership in those communities. Much of the current leadership, whether ordained or lay, is aging and in many cases nearing retirement. We are at the brink of an important generational replacement. However, many of our young adults report not finding room for them in our Church despite their demonstrated interest in ministry. Moreover, as we look to our families for vocations to the priesthood and the diaconate, to religious and consecrated life, to marriage, or to serve the Church as lay ecclesial ministers,

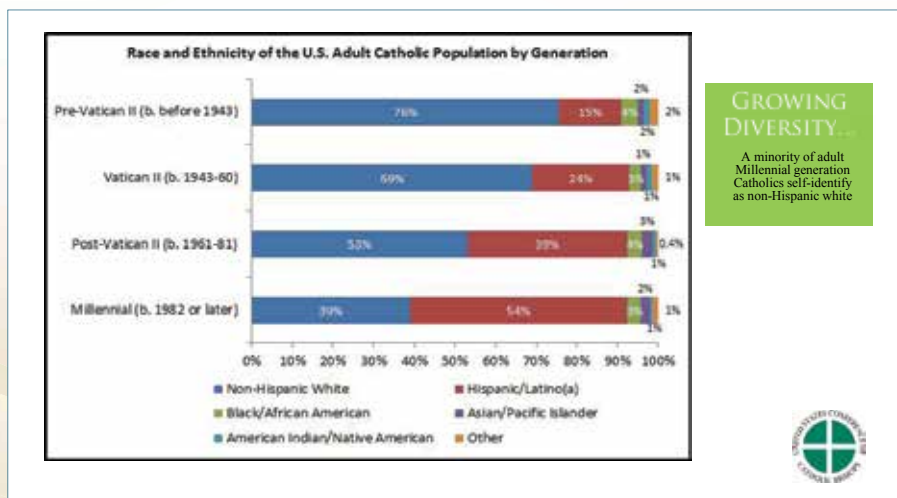
those persons will have to be much more ethnically and culturally diverse — or they simply won't be!

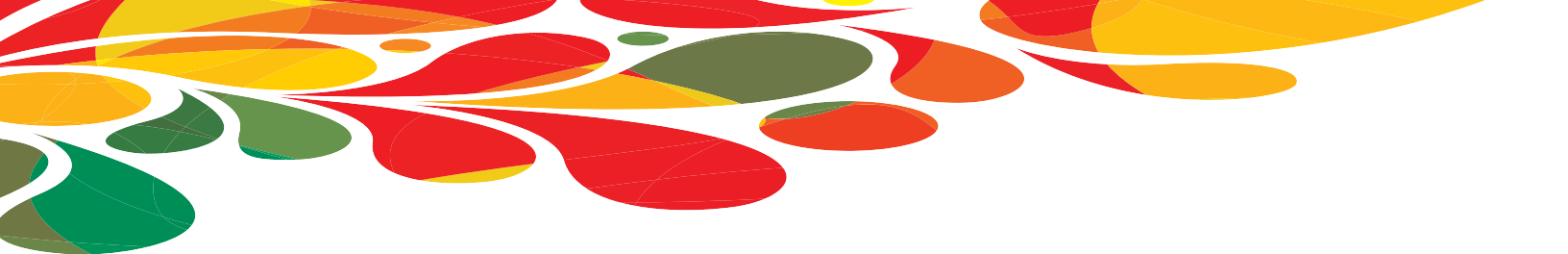
Most Catholic immigrants bring with them a vibrant faith that, in some cases, is centuries old. Others are more recent converts. As pastors, how can we welcome and nurture traditions and expressions of the Catholic faith that are sometimes older than our country? As pastors, how can we nurture the zeal and the energy of those who converted more recently, often because they saw the testimony of the Church in the face of adversity and even persecution?

Beyond the immigrant communities, as shepherds, how can we better acknowledge, and celebrate the faithfulness and resilience, the vibrancy, the wisdom and uniqueness of African American and Native American Catholics? In short, how can we better imitate the model of the Good Shepherd who defends, nourishes, guides, and unites all into his one flock?

The Church is called to be a reflection of the triune God. We are called to live, walk, and grow as “unity in diversity.” Our diversity is a great gift to the Church and the nation. Therefore, we need to recognize, affirm, and celebrate the diversity of gifts, languages, and expressions of faith that the Lord has blessed us with, while at the same time helping to build up an authentic Catholic identity in every person and cultural community.

Brothers, this is an opportune time. By actively and creatively promoting evangelization, access to the sacraments, faith formation, service opportunities, and leadership development in every community, we will enable Catholics of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds to be the missionary disciples that the Church needs to continue her mission to transform the world into the reign of God.





El V Encuentro Nacional de Pastoral Hispana/Latina (V Encuentro) está listo para iniciar su proceso en miles de parroquias a lo largo y ancho del país. Este proceso de evangelización, comunión y consulta también llegarán a las familias por medio del portal electrónico [www.portu-matrimonio.org](http://www.portu-matrimonio.org)

Comenzando en enero del 2017, miles de familias tendrán acceso gratis a las cinco sesiones de la Guía del V Encuentro. Su participación como familias hará posible que la Iglesia en Estados Unidos escuche los sueños, las preocupaciones y los retos que enfrentan las parejas y familias hispanas en Estados Unidos. Además, dará la oportunidad a que las familias compartan sus experiencias e ideas sobre cómo éstas contribuyen con sus valores y dones al fortalecimiento de la Iglesia y al bien común de la sociedad.

A través del mismo portal electrónico, el V Encuentro también ofrecerá diez sesiones diseñadas para llevar la Palabra de Dios a nuestros hogares. Las diez sesiones siguen el año litúrgico y ofrecen una oportunidad

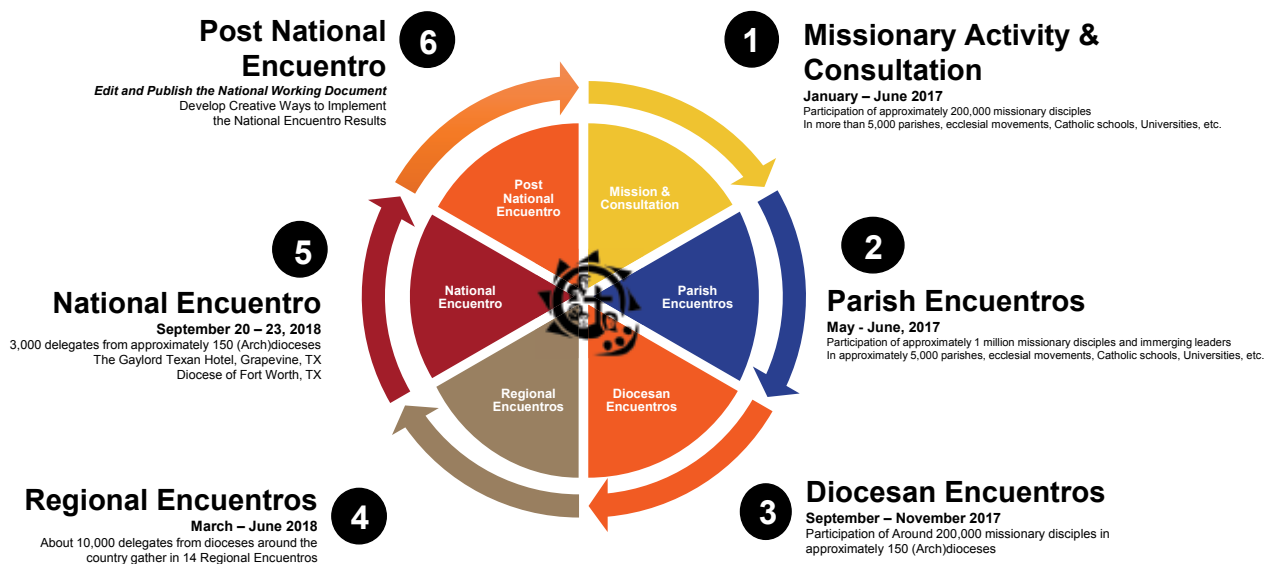
maravillosa para que la Biblia anime la Fe Católica de las familias. Este esfuerzo es una respuesta al llamado del papa Francisco a animar la pastoral familiar con las Sagradas Escrituras. Para ello también contamos con La Biblia Católica de la Familia, la cual fue elaborada por pastoralistas hispanos para el beneficio de millones de familias hispanas residentes en Estados Unidos. Agradecemos a la Editorial Verbo Divino y al Center for Ministry Development por este maravilloso regalo a nuestras familias y comunidades.

Como pueden ver, el V Encuentro es una iniciativa lanzada por los obispos de Estados Unidos para encontrar y acompañar a las familias hispanas y enviarnos como discípulos misioneros. Las buenas nuevas de un reino de justicia, amor y verdad proclamada por Cristo y por la iglesia nos dan esperanza durante estos tiempos de ansiedad y miedo. No tengan miedo. Por el contrario, den muchos frutos porque éste es también un tiempo oportuno para la gracia de Dios entre nosotros.

¡Dios está con nosotros hoy y siempre!

*¡Dios está con nosotros hoy y siempre!*

## The Four-year Process of the Fifth Encuentro



## NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS

By: Fr. Michael Carson, Assistant Director, Subcommittee on Native American Affairs  
Written with Mr. Robert Aberle, MS, Head of Guidance, Rapid City Catholic School System

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***Death is never easy, and consolations can be difficult to come by, but for those facing the loss of a loved one to suicide the consequences are even higher.***

In Native American communities, suicide is seven times the national average. Out of all the ethnic groups in the United States, this suicide rate is the highest. Suicide is especially alarming for the Native American youth and Native American males. Suicide is the second leading cause of death between the ages 10 and 34. For males aged 15-24 the suicide rate is reaching epidemic proportions. -Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Like all forms of violence, - there is an important spiritual component, that of hopelessness. Hopelessness bleeds not only into thoughts of suicide, but can also be found in other forms of self-destructive behavior such as alcoholism and drug addiction.

Most Native American cultures are rooted in family and the family extends beyond blood. The whole culture, when working at its best, seeks the best for the entire community regardless of its inhabitants. There are times, when we fail to be our best, that the structures of some families may limit access to supports which may be of benefit to an individual.

Rural communities often produce individuals with problem solving skills and an independent mindset.

These same strengths can become a hindrance when a person begins to isolate and depress.

Lack of hope may lead to symptoms of depression. We know that those suffering from depression may become isolated, less able to defend themselves, and more likely to progress in the number and severity of symptoms, unless they get outside support. That outside support can come in many different forms, both physical and spiritual.

Faith, according to Aquinas and others, is the assent of the intellect toward truth. Faith is a sure and sturdy fortress in times of difficulty. Without faith, persons may tend to despair. And a common thinking error associated with despair is suicidal ideation.

So how do we help others foster the virtue of hope? We start with Christ. Christ is the wellspring of all hope. It is from Christ that meaning and purpose comes to all of our lives. The goal is to help others find their purpose and meaning as intended by Jesus Christ. Christ lives beyond culture and embraces the best every culture has to offer. To quote St. John Paul II, "He is the beauty to which we are so attracted".



# SERVANT OF GOD JULIA GREELEY

## REMARKS

*During the November 2016 plenary assembly, Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, Archbishop of Denver, consulted with the U.S. Bishops on the case for the canonization of the Servant of God, Julia Greeley. The episcopal consultation is a step in the Catholic Church's process toward declaring a person a saint. The following are remarks on the merits of the case. The bishops supported Archbishop Aquila moving forward with the cause.*

Archbishop Kurtz,  
Cardinal DiNardo and  
my fellow brothers in

the episcopate, thank you for the chance to share with you about the heroic witness and virtues of a woman whose love for Jesus and compassion for his poor sons and daughters moved her to selflessly care for them in their difficulties, at a time when society often looked down upon black men and women like her.

Julia Greeley was born into slavery in Hannibal, Missouri sometime between 1833 and 1848. As is the case with most people who were enslaved, very little is known about her origins. For instance, we know that the names of her parents were George and Cerilda – but their family names are unknown.

And yet, we know that God chooses the simple and humble to do great things. Julia's life is a testament to that truth. After being freed from slavery, Julia made her living as a servant and cook, eventually coming to Denver between 1878 and 1880 to work for Colorado's first territorial governor, Col. William Gilpin.

Through the influence of the governor's wife, Julia Pratte Gilpin, Julia Greeley was baptized on June 26, 1880 in Denver's Sacred Heart Parish.

From then on, Julia was a daily communicant and maintained strong devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In fact, the Jesuits who ran Sacred Heart Parish considered her the most enthusiastic promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus they had ever seen. This is backed up by the testimonies of prisoners, police men, firefighters and lay people whom Julia handed out Sacred Heart League and Apostleship of Prayer pamphlets to every month. Her desire to help people reach heaven and her trust in the Sacred Heart were so great that even though she couldn't read, she traveled to all 20 of Denver's fire stations on foot each a month to hand out what she called,

"Tickets to Heb'n." (Heaven)

Julia's faith was not limited to merely promoting belief and devotion. In fact, she was better known among the people of Denver as a "one-woman St. Vincent de Paul Society." In spite of the harsh treatment she received as a slave, including the loss of her right eye to a master's whip, Julia was kind to those in need.

Sr. M. Irene Lally, SCL, recalled how Julia carried out her acts of charity.

To avoid embarrassing the people she helped, Julia did most of her charitable work under cover of night through dark alleys. Her acts of charity, despite her marginalized and poor state, have remained strongly in the memory of those who had witnessed her selfless acts: "She went out on the street with gunny sacks filled with wood, coal, clothes and food and medicine and would make her rounds to the desperately poor for whom no one else provided. She took care of and administered what supplies she could beg for them. Policemen and firemen would give donations to her and recommend her wherever she went because she was taking care of the forgotten poor." (Testimony given on May 6, 1974)

My dear brothers, the growing number of broken families, the divisiveness of our political discourse, the tense relationship between races, and the increasing number of people who live as though God does not exist are all signs of hearts that have become hardened.

It is in times like these that we need holy witnesses whose hearts have been softened by Jesus' love for humanity. Our people need to hear about men and women like Julia Greeley who have not allowed the brutalities of life to cause them to retreat from charity but have allowed the grace of God to permeate them and spring forth in charity and concern for their fellow men and women.

Thank you for your consideration of the timeliness of introducing Julia Greeley's cause and your fraternal support.

**Archbishop Aquila will be opening the archdiocesan phase of her cause on December 18 at the 8:30 a.m. Mass at our Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.**

# FAMILY, MARRIAGE, THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND COLLABORATION - OH MY!

By: Mrs. Yolanda Taylor-Burwell, CMP, Education and Projects Coordinator



## FAMILY, MARRIAGE, THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND COLLABORATION - OH MY!

On November 15, 2016, the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops approved the proposal of the 2017-2020 strategic plan, titled, Encountering The Mercy of Christ and Accompanying His People With Joy. The strategic plan's five priorities include evangelization, family and marriage, vocations and formation, and religious freedom along with mandates, goals and activities of the collective work of 16 standing committees, 18 subcommittees and one ad-hoc committee.

The staff of the Secretariat met for months beginning in 2015, planning and strategizing about the direction of our work. We unanimously agreed that family, marriage and youth are the most important themes of our work.

Over the next three years, our staff will collaborate within our Secretariat and with other committees, secretariats and offices in the building to accomplish the following goals:

- Support and promote pastoral attention to families of culturally diverse communities (by participating in the writing of a comprehensive pastoral plan for Family and Marriage and family life ministry and advocacy, while applying the teachings of the Holy Father's Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and the recommendations from the two recent synods on the family. From a Cultural Diversity perspective, we will put a special emphasis

on immigrant and transient populations, the poor and the marginalized and broken families affected by mass incarceration, geographical separation and divorce)

- Promote intercultural competence in ministry formation of leadership of the church (Collaborate with diocesan seminaries, major national Catholic Organizations and institutes of pastoral formation)

- Promote ministry training and certification within culturally diverse communities

- Provide educational resources that promote and strengthen the pastoral care of culturally diverse communities, such as: a pastoral letter on racism, guidelines for implementation of a National Pastoral Response to Asian and Pacific Island Catholics, the proceedings of a V National Encuentro on Hispanic Ministry, and to identify and promote best practices that strengthen the pastoral care of migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities and people on the move. A special emphasis will be put in identifying resources and promoting best practices that strengthen marriage and family life, vocations and evangelization in these communities.

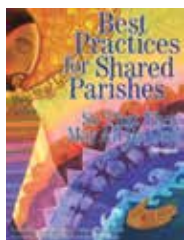
All of the staff in the Secretariat are incredibly excited about our upcoming work. We look forward to sharing updates in future issues of the newsletter.



**ENCOUNTERING**  
THE MERCY OF CHRIST AND  
**ACCOMPANYING**  
HIS PEOPLE WITH JOY

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

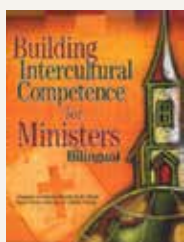
Visit <http://store.usccb.org/> to browse and order your resources or call 1-877-978-0757. Remember to have the publication number ready when placing your order.



## BEST PRACTICES FOR SHARED PARISHES BILINGUAL

Publication No. 7-389

Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They All May Be One is a guide to assist pastors of culturally diverse parishes in the challenging task of building unity in diversity. The guide identifies pastoral responses and proven practices in relation to intercultural competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills.



## BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FOR MINISTERS -BILINGUAL

Publication No. 7-887

The Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers manual is designed to help ministry leaders achieve a basic level of awareness and proficiency in the area of intercultural competency.



## CARA STUDY

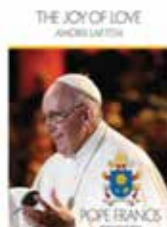
New Study on Cultural Diversity Displays Catholic Church's Growing Multicultural Parish Population

[www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/Cultural-Diversity-Summary-Report-October-2016.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/Cultural-Diversity-Summary-Report-October-2016.pdf)



## HARMONY IN FAITH KOREAN AMERICAN Catholics

This small book on Korean American Catholics connects each believer to their roots in Korea, weaving through thick layers of their history of faith.

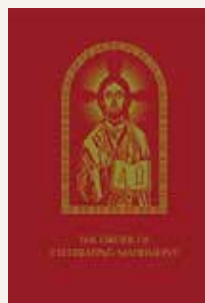


## THE JOY OF LOVE (AMORIS LAETITIA)

Publication No. 7-540

Spanish: Pub. No. To be determined

Brings together the results of the two Synods on the Family convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015. Striking for its breadth and detail—and firmly grounded in the challenges of family experiences—the Joy of Love affirms the rich and complex reality of family life with pastoral care, speaking the language of experience and hope.



## THE ORDER OF CELEBRATING MATRIMONY, SECOND EDITION

Contact Donna Grimes at

Publication No. 7-538

Bishops, priests, and deacons alike will be delighted with this second typical edition, which includes new blessings, sample intercessions, chants for the nuptial blessings, and cultural adaptations for use in the United States.



## POVERTY USA

PovertyUSA.org website is full of facts and statistics about the reality of poverty in the U.S. and how we can respond as Catholics. A Spanish mirror site is at PobrezaUSA.org. Materials are also available for Poverty Awareness Month in January in English and Spanish.



## RESETTLING IN PLACE A VIETNAMESE AMERICAN CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE

Publication No. 7-480

This book is a snapshot description about a community who rebuilt their faith life by sustaining family values, culture, and Catholic devotional practices.



## TWO FEET OF LOVE IN ACTION

Publication No. 7-348

This foundational teaching model is based on the teachings of Christ and Pope Benedict XVI. The model and supplemental resources were done bilingually and there is both an English and Spanish webpage.



## WE ARE SALT AND LIGHT

Visit [WeAreSaltAndLight.org](http://WeAreSaltAndLight.org).

The website helps disciples be salt and light in their communities. It contains over 100 resources, over 80 success stories, videos, and an assessment tool. Select "en Español" in the Resource Filter for dozens of resources in Spanish.



## MEET THE STAFF

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## YEAR OF FAITH FAMILY PRAYER CARD (BILINGUAL)

**O GOD OUR FATHER,**  
in Jesus you call all Christian families  
and homes  
to be signs of living faith.

By the light of the Holy Spirit, lead  
us to be thankful for the gift of faith,  
and by that gift may we grow in our  
relationship with Jesus, your Son, and  
be confident witnesses to Christian  
hope and joy to all we meet.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**OH DIOS, PADRE NUESTRO,**  
en Jesús llamas a todas las familias y  
hogares cristianos a ser ejemplos de  
fe viva.

Guiados por la luz del Espíritu Santo,  
haz que seamos agradecidos por el  
don de la fe,  
y que por medio de ese don crezcamos  
en nuestra relación con Jesús, tu  
Hijo, y seamos auténticos testigos de  
esperanza y gozo cristiano para todos  
aquellos con los que nos encontremos.

En el nombre de Jesucristo, nuestro  
Señor.

Amén



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Prayer cards are available for purchase at USCCB's online store <http://store.usccb.org/bilingual-year-of-faith-family-prayer-card-p/7-385.htm> or call 1-877-978-0757 and use the product code 7-385.

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