

# Best Practices Report – Diocese of Phoenix

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

In order to augment its efforts to welcome newcomers and diverse ethnic peoples, the Diocese of Phoenix decided to establish an Office of Ethnic Ministries, led by a Vicar for Ethnic Ministries. Diocesan structures were reorganized to reflect the coordinating role of the Vicar. Closer collaboration between the Office of Hispanic Ministry, the Office of Native American Ministry, and the Office of Black Catholic Ministry, facilitated by the Vicar, has increased the consistency of services to known ethnic communities. The Office of Ethnic Ministries also has increased the welcoming capacity of the diocese by identifying previously unrecognized ethnic communities; training diocesan and parish leaders; the establishment of a Cultural Diversity Council; recruitment and training of ethnic leaders; and the development of a directory on ethnic groups and resources to serve them.

## THE APPROACH

### *Methods or activities the diocese has taken to address the needs outlined in the diocese's needs assessment:*

The Vicar's outreach to known ethnic communities has increased communication and participation among Vietnamese, Korean, Polish, Lithuanian, Italian, Filipino, Tongan, Mayan, and African communities in the diocese that previously received no support from the diocesan structures in place. A Cultural Diversity Council was created to provide leadership in diocesan decision-making by bringing people of various cultures to represent their own communities. Pastors, religious, and lay parish ministers have been trained to be more welcoming to newcomers and to members of newly identified ethnic communities. Pilot programs using the POWR (Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees) approach have been implemented in three parishes. Catholic Social Services and East Valley Interfaith community organizers have increased the capacity of the diocese to welcome newcomers with reliable legal, medical, and spiritual support services by expanding their own services and encouraging parish leaders to direct newcomers to appropriate resources.

### *Challenges or obstacles the diocese has faced in its approach and specific actions the diocese has taken (is taking) to overcome these challenges in order to achieve objectives:*

Three bishops led the diocese of Phoenix in 2003, with another appointed to begin leading the diocese on December 20, 2003, making him the fourth bishop in that year. The unfolding of the abuse scandal as well as the car crash and subsequent resignation of Bishop O'Brien were two particularly challenging events for the diocese, even delaying the new Office of Ethnic Ministries in securing sources of funding from the Diocese.

Regarding parish resources and services, a directory of all known ethnic communities was developed and distributed via the Diocesan Directory. This overcame the challenge of ministries and services for ethnically diverse populations being limited to specific parishes, often without information about those services being available at other parishes in the diocese.

<b>OUTCOME-BASED OBJECTIVES</b>		
<i>The following is a list of the primary objectives of the diocesan action plan and indicators of success for each objective, as well as a list of activities the diocese has employed towards accomplishing each objective:</i>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Measurements of Success for Each Objective</b>	<b>Milestones / Activities involved in accomplishing the objective</b>
The diocese will establish a central point of contact for all ethnic groups in the community to facilitate communication and cooperation among ethnic groups and to augment activities to “welcome the stranger.”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The establishment of the Office of Ethnic Ministries and the appointment of the new Vicar has allowed the diocese to reach-out to previously underserved groups by cultivating leaders among them and creating vehicles for them to share their opinions and gifts.</li> <li>2. The Office of Ethnic Ministries and its Vicar now provide a means of communication and collaboration among Ethnic Communities.</li> <li>3. The Vicar has spearheaded many new initiatives to increase the welcoming capacity of the diocese including training pastors and parish ministers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Office of Ethnic Ministries was established.</li> <li>2. A Vicar for Ethnic Ministries was appointed.</li> <li>3. The Vicar for Ethnic Ministries was appointed Canonical Pastor to Native American communities, to nine missions, and to one parish serving diverse ethnic communities.</li> <li>4. The Vicar meets regularly with the leaders of long-established ethnic offices in the diocese including the Office of Hispanic Ministry, the Office of Native American Ministry, and the Office of Black Catholic Ministry.</li> <li>5. See below for examples of other activities made possible by the establishment of an Office / appointment of a Vicar for Ethnic Ministries.</li> </ol>
The diocese will empower immigrant and ethnic communities and better serve their needs by cultivating leaders from among them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Vicar for Ethnic Ministries established a Cultural Diversity Council to advise him on matters relevant to the ethnic communities.</li> <li>2. The Council serves as a forum whereby ethnic leaders can communicate their concerns and share their talents with the diocese. It also increases the capacity of the diocese to meet the needs of immigrant and ethnic groups.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Cultural Diversity Council was established and now meets monthly with the Vicar.</li> <li>2. Individual ethnic leaders from the Black Catholic, Filipino, Hispanic, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Mayan, Native American, Polish, Tongan, and Vietnamese communities meet with the Vicar on a quarterly basis.</li> </ol>
The diocese will respond better to the pastoral needs of newly arrived refugees.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Referrals for pastoral and social services have increased because a system of communication has been established between the Vicar of Ethnic Ministries and the Director of Refugee Resettlement of Catholic Social Service.</li> <li>2. Parishes are becoming more involved in the welcoming of refugees.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Vicar of Ethnic Ministries is meeting regularly with the Director of Refugee Resettlement of Catholic Social Service.</li> <li>2. Three parishes are piloting the POWR (Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees) plan, under the direction of Catholic Social Services.</li> </ol>

<p>Pastors and parish ministers will become more welcoming and supportive of the diverse ethnic communities among them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural sensitivity/cultural competency training sessions for pastors and parish ministers and new educational materials on this topic have been developed in collaboration with the Office of the Vicar for Priests.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual training sessions have been planned.</li> <li>2. The East Valley Interfaith center of the Industrial Areas Foundation has provided ongoing training and support.</li> </ol>
<p>The diocese will continue and enhance its commitment to making the Church a more welcoming place for all people by augmenting its multicultural activities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ethnic and multicultural events have been enhanced because more ethnic communities and their leaders are now involved in the planning. In turn, participation in diocesan multicultural events has increased.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multicultural Mass celebrated October 2003.</li> <li>2. National Migration Week Mass and Martin Luther King, Jr. Mass celebrated January 2004.</li> <li>3. Planning for National Migration Week and Martin Luther King, Jr. activities for 2005 is underway.</li> <li>4. A Native American Tekawitha Conference is being planned.</li> </ol>
<p>Parishes will become more aware of what ethnic communities are in their midst and what resources exist diocesan-wide to serve them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Due to a major research and publication effort by the dioceses, all parishes now easily access information on ethnic groups and the services available to them.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A directory of ethnic communities was developed which provides information about worship and ministry resources for ethnic groups.</li> <li>2. The directory was distributed via the Diocesan Directory to all parishes and all diocesan ministry offices.</li> <li>3. The diocese also now uses the diocesan newspaper to publish information on services, programs and initiatives for ethnic communities.</li> </ol>

## **EVALUATION OF HOW NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET:**

### ***Difference this initiative has made in the lives of those whom it is intended to serve:***

There is now a central point of contact to address the needs of newcomers and ethnic communities. Enhanced coordination of diocesan offices has enabled those offices to fund collaborative efforts to meet the holistic set of needs of the groups they serve.

There are leaders for the ethnic communities and newcomer groups that have been culled from those groups. This empowers those groups by giving them a voice to explain their needs and shows that they are capable of participating in projects and initiatives that help them to meet their needs and to find welcome within the Church and in society at large.

The Vicar's appointment as Canonical Pastor to Native American communities, to nine missions, and to one parish has brought direct, skilled ministry to under-served groups. This has also begun the process of empowering those groups, already demonstrated in their celebration of special feast days associated with the known ethnic communities of the area.

### ***Ways in which the project has contributed to increasing the welcoming capacity of the diocese:***

There is now easy access to previously unorganized data. Translation, promotion, and advertising, with collaboration from *The Catholic Sun*, have made information about services for diverse populations readily available.

A more accurate understanding of the make-up of the population of the diocese has enhanced its capacity to welcome more groups, broadening the group of "known" ethnic communities. In response to this, more known groups are being engaged and encouraged to participate in parish and diocesan leadership. This increases the ability of diocesan and parish leaders to know how to better serve their known populations.

Training of parish leaders and others in positions of welcoming increases the successfulness of programs that are often unprepared to meet the needs of newcomers by teaching the sensitivity and skills needed to try to find ways to meet those needs.

### ***Ways in which the diocese plans to build up the work in the future:***

The diocese plans to continue to celebrate the annual Masses, with strong promotion from the Office of Ethnic Ministries. The Vicar will continue to collaborate with various offices to welcome priests, religious, and others that are newcomers who will be called upon for leadership in their communities. Ongoing collaboration with parishes and the Diocesan Directory will help to keep a directory of services readily available for parishes to meet the needs of newcomers. The various representatives of the known ethnic groups will be encouraged to rotate in service with others who can provide fresh voices concerned with ways the diocese can improve its ministry. Continuing efforts will be made to coordinate Catholic Social Services, the East Valley Interfaith center, and various other service providers. Results of two tri-diocesan Encuentro experiences with the Diocese of Tucson and the Archdiocese of Hermosillo, Son., Mexico will be included in future strategies as all three dioceses look forward to a third Encuentro to continue their plan to work together, especially in assistance to the migrant community that has lost so many lives trying to cross the Arizona desert.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### ***For further information about this project and best practices associated with it, please contact:***

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