



## CHAIRMAN'S REFLECTION

### THE PAIN OF PREJUDICE AND BIGOTRY

Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—peace be with you!

One of the many blessings of being a bishop is the opportunity to visit parishes, schools and other ministries in our dioceses. Like all bishops, I enjoy being with the people I am called to serve. These moments are truly sacred encounters where I experience the presence of Christ in the people. Every time Jesus encountered someone in the Gospel, there was a change.

Whether it was the call of the disciples or the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, lives were changed because of sacred encounters. In the midst of the pandemics of Covid-19 and racism, we experienced great loss—loss of life, loss of jobs, loss of learning and much more. Indeed, some relationships have been frayed and even broken.



Our bishops saw these moments of challenge as opportunities for pastoral care with renewed hope. We have issued statements, walked the streets and gathered our people for dialogue, healing and reconciliation. We know that we don't address the divisions among us from the view of the world, but led by the Word made Flesh, Jesus Christ.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I held a listening session with African American Catholics and learned once again the pain of broken relationships and racism that they experienced. Other

members of the Body of Christ can identify with the pain of prejudice and bigotry as well.

It was this experience that led me to action, to form a Commission on Racial Healing. It is a diverse group that consists mostly of lay faithful. They represent various races

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and cultures, ages and perspectives all with one purpose of helping us heal the sin of racism and see each other as sisters and brothers, children of our Heavenly Father. They are charged with the tasks to develop a plan of action to bring about sacred encounters. One concrete action the Commission is planning is to sponsor a concert of sacred music in our Cathedral with various choirs coming together to sing God's praises. However, what is unique about this concert is that there will be one choir that will learn music in different languages and from diverse cultures and sing together. Isn't that a taste of the Heavenly Choir!

In his encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "How wonderful would it be, even as we discover faraway planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters who orbit around us" (FT, 31). Sacred encounter is the challenge of our Holy Father, and indeed, the mandate of Christ. As we continue to work on the 2021-2024 USCCB Strategic Plan, *Created Anew by the Body and Blood of Christ: Our Source of Healing and Hope*, may each of us seek new ways to encounter each other as sisters and brothers, work for justice and be a source of healing and reconciliation. May Christ, the Good Shepherd, lead to a future full of hope.



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHAIRMAN: BISHOP J. ARTURO CEPEDA

The conclusion of the November 2021 General Assembly also brings a transition in leadership for the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church. Most Rev. Arturo Cepeda, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit, will be our new chairman for the November 2021-November 2024 term. Bishop Cepeda has served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs until November of this year. In this capacity, he was responsible for leading subcommittee efforts on the implementation of the V Encuentro initiatives. He served in various USCCB committees and working groups, and was rector of Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, before being appointed auxiliary of Detroit on April 18, 2011.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

# RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN MULTICULTURAL SETTINGS

Mar Muñoz-Visoso, MTS

Dear friends in Christ:

You will notice that several articles in this issue have an underlying theme of healing and reconciliation. Each author approaches it from a different perspective, gathering the voices of different communities. Some approach the topic from a victim's perspective, and some from that of one who has barely come to realize their own role in perpetuating racism, discrimination and prejudice.

In an environment where hateful speech and hateful acts, lack of respect for human dignity, division and polarization run rampant, we felt the need to remind ourselves that ours is a ministry of reconciliation. As the Church worldwide initiates a process of reflection on "synodality as the path for the Church," a journey we must undertake together, I would like to highlight three aspects of reconciliation and healing that are key for ministry in intercultural settings.

First, reconciliation as a sustaining spiritual pillar for ministry in culturally diverse contexts. "We all have been victims and wrongdoers at some point in our lives. Intercultural contexts can sometimes give rise to situations in which people feel they have been wronged, treated unfairly, or dehumanized. That is why reconciliation is an integral part of our identity and well-being—of our very lives as Christians" (*Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*).

More so, in modeling that identity, we must also remember that reconciliation is "first and foremost the work of God, who initiates and completes in us reconciliation through Christ," but also that God always starts with the victim. In *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, Fr. Robert J. Schreiter offers the following observation on the nature of reconciliation from a Christian perspective: "Ultimately, reconciliation is not a human achievement, but the work of God. Furthermore, God initiates the work of reconciliation in the lives of the victims. Ordinarily we would expect reconciliation to begin with the repentance of the wrongdoers. But experience shows that wrongdoers are rarely willing to acknowledge what they have done or come forward of their own accord. If reconciliation depended entirely upon the wrongdoers' initiative, there would be next to no reconciliation at all. God begins with the victim, restoring to the victim the humanity which the wrongdoer has tried to wrest away or to destroy. This restoration of humanity might be considered the very heart of reconciliation [...] It is through the victim that the wrongdoer is called to repentance and forgiveness. Seen from this perspective, repentance and forgiveness are not the preconditions for reconciliation, but are rather the consequences of it."

Second, the work of reconciliation in multicultural and multigenerational communities means that, as ministers, we must attend to bridging the gap between the *hesitant host* (long established community) and the *reluctant guest* (newcomers). "Along with hospitality, reconciliation is the other hinge that supports the process of ecclesial integration/inclusion...Listening deeply to the concerns and fears of both the longtime parishioner and the newcomers and accompanying them as they grieve the loss of what was familiar to them, is at the heart of a ministry of reconciliation in shared parishes" (*Best Practices for Shared Parishes*; Part II).

My third and final point is that racism, and any form of discrimination based on race, ethnicity or cultural heritage, is incompatible with our identity as Christians, a sin that is against both the unity of the Body of Christ and the good of society. As the Catholic bishops of the United States remind us in *Open Wide Our Hearts*, their 2018 Pastoral Letter Against Racism, "... there is no place

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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racism in the hearts of any person; it is a perversion of the Lord's will for men and women, all of whom were made in God's image and likeness" (26). More so, as Christians "love compels each of us to resist racism courageously. It requires us to reach out generously to the victims of this evil, to assist the conversion needed in those who still harbor racism, and to begin to change policies and structures that allow racism to persist" (15). "To press forward without fear means 'to walk humbly with God' in rebuilding our relationships, healing our communities, and working to shape our policies and institutions toward the good of all" (16).

As Catholics, we must strive to work for healing and reconciliation within our families, communities of faith,

and society at large. "To work at ending racism, we need to engage the world and encounter others—to see, maybe for the first time, those who are on the peripheries of our own limited view. Knowing that the Lord has taken the divine initiative by loving us first, we can boldly go forward, reaching out to others...Only by forging authentic relationships can we truly see each other as Christ sees us. Love should then move us to take what we learn from our encounters and examine where society continues to fail our brothers and sisters, or where it perpetuates inequity, and seek to address those problems" (19).

Knowing ourselves loved and forgiven by God, let us become the face of God's mercy for others. Ours is a ministry of reconciliation.



*God knows that the only way to save us, to heal us from within, is by loving us. He knows that we become better only by accepting his unfailing love, an unchanging love that changes us.*

**Pope Francis, June 19, 2021**

## NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS

### CATHOLIC SISTERS AND THE TROUBLED LEGACY OF THE NATIVE BOARDING SCHOOLS ERA

Sr. Sue Torgersen, Member of the Congregation of St. Joseph



schools. I was vaguely aware that some of these schools were run by the Catholic Church and some religious communities.

I also knew of the reality of incidents of abuse that took place in the past within some of these schools. Occasionally, such occurrences would even receive short-lived media attention. However, with so much to focus on with today's issues of injustice, these past wrongs simply haven't been on the radar of many Sisters. Recently however, my eyes and heart were opened as I began to participate in several Native boarding school listening sessions.

Cultural genocide was the government's intended outcome in establishing these schools; trauma carried across the generations is their legacy. From a Native perspective, we as Sisters we are the face of the pain Natives carry from the boarding school era. Though as religious communities we find ourselves actively concerned about many issues of social justice, we are sorrowful as new understandings of our own complicity with the injustices of racism, colonialism, and

Only recently have I begun to understand the scope and gravity of the harm inflicted upon Native Peoples, by the attempted cultural eradication envisioned by the U.S. government assimilation policy, which forced Native children into boarding

cultural genocide come to light.

Approximately one third of the government promulgated Native boarding schools were Catholic; many of these administered by Sisters. In total, there were over 350 Native boarding schools in the U.S. during a period of 100 plus years. Through multiple generations nearly all Native children, sometimes as young as three, were forcibly removed/stolen from the arms of parental tenderness and loving care. They were then placed in boarding schools, often at great distance from their homes, where they were systematically stripped of their Native ways and punished for speaking the only language they knew.

They were subjected to a harsh militaristic regimen fraught with abuse. We can only appreciate the trials and challenges faced by Native communities today by understanding all that happened during the Native boarding school era.

Though only a portion of women's religious communities had historical involvement in these schools, I believe all of

us as Sisters need to reckon with this history. Today many communities are taking initial steps to dismantle various manifestations of the institutional racism imbedded in our congregational lives. We can each make an important contribution to the healing needed by Native boarding school survivors, simply by learning the full story and its impact on Native lives.

We can listen to and humbly receive the experiences that our Native sisters and brothers may wish to share with us. We can try to understand. And as Sisters we can "sister" our Sisters who are engaged in the holy work

of reckoning with their historical involvement in these schools. Together let us beg for God's healing graces where they are most needed, as we also pray for forgiveness for all our manifestations of the sin of racism.



*Today, many communities are taking initial steps to dismantle various manifestations of the institutional racism imbedded in our congregational lives.*

## AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

### REPAIR THE BREACH

Donna Toliver Grimes, Assistant Director, African American Affairs

*“... Releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke... ‘Repairer of the Breach’ they shall call you.” (Is 58:6-7;12)*



Inside the paradox of Black Catholicism coexist joy, welcome, riveting sermons, contemplation, cultural markers, pain, rejection, unanswered questions and generational horrors. For the Black Catholic Apostolate —81% of whom worship in predominantly white or multicultural parishes—this

paradox exists in the Church much as it does in American society.

Once, a domestic mission mostly accompanied by religious orders, today three million African Americans choose to be Catholic. More identify as Catholic than affiliate with major Protestant denominations. However, recent studies by the PEW Research Center revealed an alarming exodus of African Americans. Just 54% of African American adults raised Catholic remain Catholic.

In some dioceses, the Black Catholic Apostolate thrives. Clergy and lay leaders stretch resources and allies collaborate to advance the mission. Still, encouragement or assistance in most U.S. dioceses is thin. Closure of diocesan offices, parishes, schools, ethnic ministries and bans on inculturated liturgical expression indicate declining recognition and support. Moreover, Church silence in the face of atrocities in the community adds salt to old wounds. Thus, many wonder if the Catholic Church will invest ever again in the African American community?

One bright light is the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). Born in 1969 during the Civil Rights era, CCHD began listening and working alongside largely African American community groups that attracted people of other races and faiths to reduce poverty and relieve local problems. CCHD survived numerous attacks and challenges yet remains a strong Catholic response to cries for justice and reduced poverty. CCHD distinctly positions itself by championing empowerment. Recently, I spoke with CCHD Executive Director, Ralph McCloud about CCHD and the Black community, including Catholics.

**GRIMES:** Does CCHD promote ecclesial movement to-

wards reconciliation and healing?

**McCLOUD:** Through CCHD the Church makes deliberate, intentional effort and engages in hard conversations. It's about making communities whole and holy.

**GRIMES:** How about ordinary Catholics?

**McCLOUD:** Essentially, people supporting CCHD community organizing and economic development projects ask, “Is it I Lord, am I causing the breach?” because we have to go where the pain is. Walk together. Don't just write checks. Compassion is to share passion. Make your “we” bigger, broader. Understand that reality is based on other perspectives. Be open to listen and share both joys and pains.

**GRIMES:** What do you say to those who refuse the annual collection?

**McCLOUD:** They got bad information. They need to encounter [low-income, marginalized] people. And then accompany people without driving the agenda.

**GRIMES:** Do more Black Catholics need to get involved with CCHD?

**McCLOUD:** Our commitment has to go beyond kente cloth. I hope they believe, as I do, that the plight of my people is my concern. At past National Association of Black Catholic Administrators (NABCA) meetings we did “sweat equity” projects. NABCA and Knights of Peter Claver (KPC) members working with CCHD groups can witness to bishops about the good work of CCHD.

**GRIMES:** Why has the CCHD collection date changed and what's the new date?

**McCLOUD:** The national day for this collection is the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary time, same as the World Day of the Poor. This also makes a strong faith connection amidst other campaigns. In 2021, that Sunday is November 14. Like with everything else, communities of faith are welcome to take up the collection on any other Sunday if the proposed national date does not work with their calendar for whatever reason.

Learn more about the PEW Study and CCHD here:

[https://www.pewforum.org/2021/02/16/faith-among-black-americans/?utm\\_content=buffer79405&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.pewforum.org/2021/02/16/faith-among-black-americans/?utm_content=buffer79405&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/catholic-campaign-human-development>

## ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

### HARMONY THROUGH HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

Fr. Linh Hoang, OFM, Ph.D., Siena College



The global community is still dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. It continues to make people frustrated, exhausted, and fearful not only of the disease but also of one another. Everybody hopes to return to a time when COVID-19

did not hold everyone captive. Before hope is realized, though, one must confront difficult issues surfaced in the pandemic.

A major concern for the Asian and Pacific Island (API) Catholic communities, is the dramatic increase in attacks against Asians during these past couple of years. The website “Stop AAPI Hate,” a clearinghouse for documenting the rise in hate-filled attacks and crimes against Asians, saw a 150% increase reported incidents as a result of Asians being blamed for COVID19. Videos of unprovoked assaults on elder AAPIs, arson at a Chinese Catholic church, random attacks, literally, thousands of racist and violent incidents both in-person and online are disturbing. Some of these racist incidents have tragically ended lives and wounded deeply the families of the victims.

These hate-filled attacks have galvanized the API communities to stand up against the hatred. The API communities have organized prayer vigils, peaceful rallies, and letter writing campaigns to government leaders in order to bring an end to these hate attacks. Also, it has brought forth a central

value for the API communities: harmony.

Harmony starts with relationships that build toward unity. The vision of harmony is striving towards communion with God. It is worked out by each individual person with all of creation. The work of harmony recognizes that differences and pains between people must now be brought into mutual interaction. Through this interaction, the hard work of healing and reconciling can occur.

Healing starts with recognizing the harm and wrong that has been done. It works toward relieving the pain and correcting the wrongs. Then reconciliation can occur. Christians know that they must repent of their sins. God always welcomes back the sinner who asks forgiveness. This return establishes again a renewed relationship. Reconciliation is both personal and communal. The community needs to recognize its own sins and work towards healing. In reconciliation, the community and individual experience a correction and overcome the rupture in the relationship. This is a process of healing and reconciliation where harmony is crucial for APIs in their faith journey. In addition, many API Catholics do this in a very concrete way—starting at home.

Many API Catholics erect shrines and altars in their homes to remember their ancestors, venerate their favorite saints and to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. The shrines will usually include a statue of Mary, a Crucifix, candles and pictures of their beloved dead. The Church’s remembrance of the saints supports this practice of prayer for the saints and ancestors. These shrines become a concrete place of solace, prayer, and ritual. These shrines materialize the representation of harmony where the living and the dead gather to ask for healing and reconciliation with one another and with God.



*The journey of reconciliation calls for patience and trust. Peace will not be obtained unless it is hoped for.*

**Pope Francis, September 21, 2020**

## HISPANIC AFFAIRS

### MEMBERS OF THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Assistant Director, Hispanic Affairs and National V Encuentro Coordinator



of this dramatic demographic change as they contributed more than 50% of the population growth over the past ten years. Groups with roots in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and growing numbers of Native Americans also contributed to this growth. Such diversity is even greater in the Catholic population.

Anticipating such demographic changes, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops convened a national celebration in the year 2,000 to recognize and affirm the cultural diversity present in the U.S. Church. This celebration was called *Encuentro 2000: Many Faces in God's House* and took place in Los Angeles, CA in the Jubilee Year 2000. One of the highlights of this ground-breaking event was the Reconciliation Service that involved the participation of Catholics from all races and more than a hundred countries of origin. This intimate and sacred space, and yet on the national spotlight, gave the various cultural/ethnic groups the opportunity to express and give witness of the times when their community was hurt, isolated and discriminated against even within the church. A spirit of prayer, and the gestures and symbols of the ritual, created a space of safety and trust that led participants to experience forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. The Reconciliation Service during the national event was a personal *encounter* with the risen Christ and with one another, leading many participants to conversion and communion among the Many Faces in God's House, and offering a vision of the church for Third Millennium.

Twenty-one years have passed since the celebration of *Encuentro 2000*. Without a doubt, many graced moments have

The Census of 2020 finds the United States of America on track to become a society with no majority racial or ethnic group in the not-so-distant future. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics/Latinos are the leading indicator

of this dramatic demographic change as they contributed more than 50% of the population growth over the past ten years. Groups with roots in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and growing numbers of Native Americans also contributed to this growth. Such diversity is even greater in the Catholic population.

been inspired by the vision and experience of *Encuentro 2000*, bringing healing and reconciliation in culturally diverse parishes across the country. For instance, hundreds of new parishes have welcomed Catholics living in the peripheries, mostly new immigrants, by establishing ministries in their cultural and linguistic context, bringing the total number of shared parishes to over 7,500 across the U.S. However, today we find ourselves face to face with the reemergence of racism and xenophobia, particularly directed to Hispanics/Latinos and more specifically to Mexicans. The factors that promote anti-immigrant sentiments are many and complex ranging from the economic to the political and social realm. But behind all these factors is an ideological discourse, a narrative, that promotes fear towards immigrants, particularly Mexicans, calling them the "silent invasion." The recent targeting of Asian Pacific Islanders blamed for the pandemic, and the well documented violence against Black and Brown people by some police agents, are other examples of discrimination and racism.

Samuel Huntington's controversial book, *Who Are We? The Challenge to America's National Identity*, states that "There is no American dream. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican-Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English" (1). But how does dreaming in English turn a Mexican-American Catholic into an Anglo-Protestant, and at what cost? And what should be expected of the thousands of immigrants coming to the United States every year mostly from the Southern Hemisphere, and almost half of them from predominantly Catholic countries?

The paradigm of the Melting Pot perhaps worked well for many white European immigrants, many of whom call themselves Anglos even when they have Italian, Irish, Polish or French backgrounds. However, it is highly questionable to say that the conquered and then isolated Native-Americans, or the enslaved Africans and their African American descendants, or the displaced Mexicans and their Mexican American descendants were ever a part of a Melting Pot nation. To various and different degrees, these communities have experienced violence and suffering ranging from extermination, to slavery, from segregation to displacement. The wounds they





carry as a result of these injustices are deep and still fresh. These groups have contributed to the economic, social, and cultural development of the United States with their blood and sweat and yet, their narratives are mostly absent from public life, history textbooks, media or political discourse. They have been silenced under what Robert Schreiter calls a narrative of the lie: "Violence tries to destroy the narratives that sustain people's identities and substitute narratives of its own. These might be called narratives of the lie, precisely because they are intended to negate to truth of a people's own narrative" (2). Schreiter notes that not to accept the narrative of the lie [not to be assimilated] means resisting the breakdown of our own narrative.

People of color will soon constitute half of the U.S. population. Our stories are varied but our narratives intertwine across centuries of violence, colonialism, *mestizaje-mulatez* and the search for a better life in a foreign land. How can we maintain our narratives and become a source of understanding, reconciliation and relationship building among ourselves and with people from all different cultural and ethnic backgrounds? This involves in Schreiter's words the quest to "Discover and embrace a redeeming narrative that can be liberated from the lie's seductive and cunning power" (7). Schreiter points out that the process of reconciliation

involves seeing the sameness in the other so that we may be strangers no longer. Seeing a fundamental difference, and embracing it, is also called for as well. This possibility opens the doors to envisioning how we can be members of the one Body of Christ while honoring our unique history and narratives. When different groups share a common space within a common boundary, they overcome the alienation that existed between them and become a new humanity (12).

How can the Church foster this narrative through a ministry of reconciliation, so healing can take place? The Church can model a process of reconciliation and healing that allows people from different cultures and ethnicities to learn from one another and develop a common narrative for a future full of hope. The Reconciliation Service during *Encuentro 2000* has already given a taste of what is possible when we seek forgiveness and reconciliation among peoples from different cultures and ethnicities. My hope is that this new century we will do a better job of honoring the narratives of the various groups that constitute the United States of America, while weaving together a common narrative that makes us one and strong. It is my belief that the Catholic Church can play a key role in promoting reconciliation and healing among the many faces in God's house. This is the Catholic vision for the Third Millennium.

# Registration is Open!

## Saturday, January 29 - Tuesday, February 1

### 2022 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

#### "Justice at the Margins"

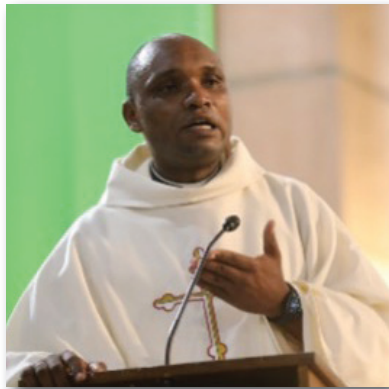


[www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org](http://www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org)

## PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, & TRAVELERS

### RECONCILIATION, A PATH OF HEALING FOR THOSE IN SEARCH OF HOPE

Fr. Luc Philogene, Haitian Apostle, The Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC



Human beings carry the new life of Christ in “clay vessels”. Subjected to temptation, misery, difficulties of all kinds, our lives as children of God can be weakened or even suffocated by sins. As a result, Christ, the physician of souls,

entrusts the Church with the perpetuation of his work of healing and salvation among his members. Reconciliation is the utmost expression of God’s love and consolation.

Thus, we can resolve to rebuild with God what sins have destroyed; that is through penance towards oneself, the people one has wronged, the Church, or the world. God himself takes charge of what seems humanly irreparable. Forgiveness is a gift; it offers human beings this inner peace that cannot be found anywhere else. Therefore, let us try to reflect on reconciliation as a path of healing for those in search of hope.

God is a loving Father who created men to achieve happiness. However, men became disobedient and preferred themselves to God’s love. This design of God, an expression of full love, is inscribed in the most intimate part of our being: men seek, desire, and pursue happiness in every action and, especially, in all their wishes and acts of love. Aristotle understood this twenty-three centuries ago. He wrote in the first chapter of his manuscript titled *Nicomachean Ethics* that

all men agree that happiness is the supreme good, for which we choose all other goods (health, success, honor, money, pleasure, and so on...) In reality, everyone knows this and should therefore be able to say: “What I want is to be happy.”

Yes, some people, as well as some countries, are looking for this happiness unsuccessfully. This is the case of the Haitian population, which is the model we would like to consider in this article. Haiti is the first black republic in the Western Hemisphere; nonetheless, since the evening of its independence, the population has been experiencing sufferings and disappointments. Haitians have been wounded, torn. They wonder where this agony comes from. To this question, they always answer with their faith: a faith in this God who is the supreme healer, faith in this God who invites us to take the path of reconciliation with ourselves, our neighbor, and God. Haiti has known for many years a succession of violence, it has lived through difficult days, some more difficult than others. One thing that is certain for this population is that their God will never forsake them; they believe that their God is able to lead them out of this maze.

The experience of the Haitian population makes me realize that there is a close connection between Reconciliation, Healing, and Hope. In the chorus of the vicissitudes of the life of these people, there is only one constant: their faith. Because of their faith, Haitians have hope: hope that one day they will experience joy and contentment; hope against hope. When the Haitian people find a way to reconcile with themselves, they will also find the way to live their hope, be healed of their anguish, and be witnesses to God’s love and compassion.



*All of us have spiritual infirmities that we cannot heal on our own. We need Jesus’ healing, we need to present our wounds to him and say: “Jesus, I am in your presence, with my sin, with my sorrows. You can set me free. Heal my heart.”*

**Pope Francis, March 11, 2021**

# FAMILY PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

## Parent(s):

*Good Lord, we beg your blessing upon our family. We thank you for the children with which you have blessed us. Bless us as we use this day to give you praise. Help our children grow towards you through the various things they learn about the mysteries of life and creation sewn by your hand. Grant wisdom to me/us their parent(s), their teachers and others you have given to guide them. Preserve our efforts to give our children all that they deserve.*

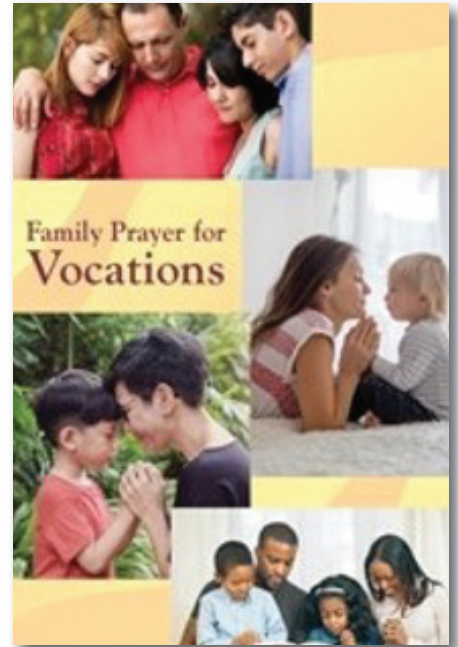
*We pray you grace our children with faith, openness of heart, a willingness to learn, a desire to do good to others as you have taught. Keep them ever strong and ready for any test of character. As they grow in knowledge and experience inspire in our children a desire to serve you in holiness of life. In whatever walk of life they choose be for them a true path to your kingdom. May you find among our children generous hearts to serve you and the Church perhaps as a priest, or religious brother or sister. Should their Calling be to extend this family of ours, may theirs be a holy matrimony and family life after the example of your life with Mary and Joseph.*

## Child/Children:

*O Jesus, whisper in my heart how I might best serve you. Make me strong in faith, always attentive to people's needs, ever spiritual, understanding and charitable. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. Bless our priest(s) and religious who serve(s) us. Bless my parents, our bishop and pastors and all who help the Church's work.*

## Family:

*Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, increase the number of our priests and religious men and women. Preserve them for your Church. Keep them zealous in their vocation and successful in their labors. May they do all things for love of you and the Church. We pray through our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.*



This prayer card (product code 7-677) can be purchased from the [USCCB store](#)



*The experience of encounter changes us and frequently suggests new ways we never thought of taking. This is how God so often points out new paths. Everything changes once we are capable of genuine encounters with Him and with one another.*

**Pope Francis, June 21, 2021**

## THE CHURCH OF GOD IS CONVOKED IN SYNOD: A REFLECTION ON SYNODALITY

Mar Muñoz-Visoso, Executive Director, Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church

Pope Francis has called the Church worldwide to reflect on synodality as the path for the Church. Synodality is both her way of being and of fulfilling her mission in the world.

What is synodality? The term comes from the Greek *syn-odos*, and it has been translated in different ways: “walking together,” “journeying together,” “walking alongside”—in a sense, being, moving and operating together.

It is not a new concept. In fact, it is a very ancient practice. As the *Preparatory Document for the Synod* reminds us, it was the ordinary way in which the Church acted in the first millennium (PD, 11). And even at those times when the hierarchical functions were more strongly emphasized in subsequent centuries, the Church never lost her synodal dimension through the celebration of local, diocesan and provincial synods and universal or Ecumenical Councils, pastoral councils, etc. Synodality is a constitutive element of her being.

The Second Vatican Council calls for a return to the sources (*ressourcement*) and for an “update” (*aggiornamento*), a reading of the signs of the times. The Council is anchored in this dynamic of Tradition and puts an emphasis in rediscovering the Church as the People of God (PD, 12).

The Council also emphasized how, by virtue of the anointing of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism, the totality of the Faithful “cannot err in matters of belief” (*Sensus fidei*) (PD, 13).

For this reason, the pastors, established by God as “authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole Church,” should not be afraid to listen to the Flock entrusted to them (PD, 14, quoting Pope Francis’ address at the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod, October 17, 2015).

The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority, because there is, at the basis of participation in every synodal process, a shared passion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests. It is in the fruitful bond between the *sensus fidei* of the People of God and the magisterial function of the Pastors that the unanimous consensus of the whole Church in the same faith is realized. Every synodal process, in which the Bishops are called to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Church, not by themselves but by listening to the People of God, is an evident form of that ‘journeying together’ which makes the



*Even in the diversity of the Lord’s calls...faith always emerges as a valuing of people: their plea is heard, their difficulty is helped, their availability is appreciated, their dignity is confirmed by God’s gaze and restored to the community’s recognition.*

**Preparatory Document for the Synod, 17**

Church grow” (PD, 14).

As the *modus vivendi* and the *modus operandi* of the Church, synodality goes beyond mere consultation. It’s about listening and learning from one another, discerning together what is the will of the Holy Spirit at this time and in this moment, informing the decision making and taking action together. Again, it is about the Shepherds and the People of God entrusted to their care “journeying together,” and never one without the other (the bishops without the People of God, or the people without their shepherds).

The opening words of the preparatory document for the upcoming Synod on Synodality are: “The Church of God is convoked in Synod.” It does not say, “The *Bishops* are convoked,” but the *whole Church of God* is convoked. Sure, an important part of the synodal process will be the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in October of 2023. But to get there, and for that assembly of bishops to be fruitful, for it to fulfill its mandate, a churchwide consultation of the People of God needs to

take place first, beginning with the consultation of the local/diocesan churches and ending with their involvement again in the implementation phase.

With this convocation, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church’s “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission.

Our “journeying together” is, in fact, what most effectively enacts and manifests the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God (PD, 1).

For the greater glory of God, let’s be part of a Church that journeys together towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God.



*What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together”? [...] Synodality is at the service of the Church’s mission, in which all her members are called to participate.*

Preparatory Document for the Synod, 26, 30, V



*The synodal journey unfolds within a historical context marked by epochal changes in society and by a crucial transition in the life of the Church, which cannot be ignored: it is within the folds of the complexity of this context, in its tensions and contradictions, that we are called to “scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.”*

**Preparatory Document for the Synod, 4**



# Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church



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**Most. Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, Archbishop of Philadelphia**

Term: November 2018–November 2021

## Chairman-elect

**Most Reverend Arturo Cepeda**

*Chairman of the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs*

## Committee Members

**Most Rev. Joseph Perry**

*Chairman of the Subcommittee on African American Affairs*

**Most Rev. Oscar Azarcon Solis, D.D.**

*Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs*

**Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson**

*Chairman of the Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, & Travelers*

**Most Rev. James S. Wall**

*Chairman of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs*

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*Committee Chairman with Executive Director and Assistant Directors of the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church. From left to right: Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Mar Muñoz-Visoso, Archbishop Nelson Pérez of Philadelphia, Sr. Joanna Okereke, Fr. Mike Carson, Donna Grimes and Sr. Myrna Tordillo. Photo Credit: Tyler Orsburn, CNS*



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# RESOURCES

Visit <https://store.usccb.org/> to browse and order your resources or call 1-800-235-8722 or [css@usccb.org](mailto:css@usccb.org). Remember to have the product code number ready when placing your order.

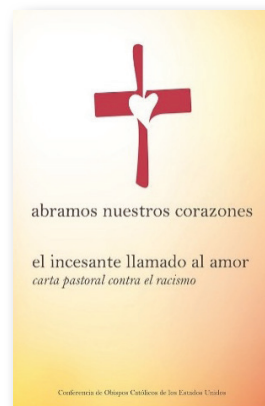
## ***A Treasured Presence: Filipino American Catholics*** (7-656)

Treasured Presence details how Christianity took root in the Philippines—beginning with the arrival of missionaries and priests who came alongside the Spanish expedition led by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. It then explores the subsequent process of Filipino migration to the United States: Filipinos were first recorded as arriving in the present-day United States at Morro Bay, in present-day California, in 1587.



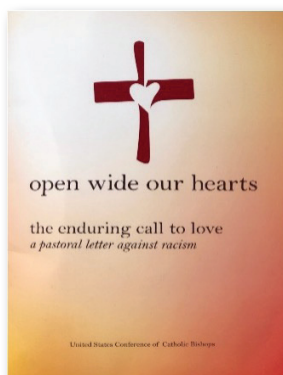
## ***Abramos Nuestros Corazones: El Incesante Llamado Al Amor*** (7-915)

En *Abramos Nuestros Corazones: El Incesante Llamado Al Amor*, los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos invitan al lector a reconocer las formas en que el mal del racismo impacta profundamente las vidas de muchas personas en los Estados Unidos. La carta pastoral reflexiona sobre la dignidad de toda persona humana y establece el imperativo moral de la Iglesia de combatir el racismo como cuestión de vida.



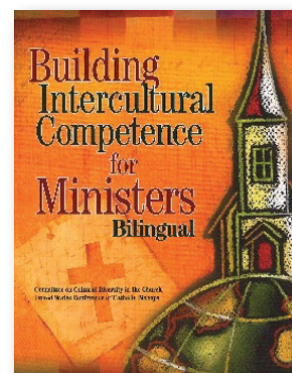
## ***Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*** (7-606)

In *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, the Catholic bishops of the United States invite the reader to recognize the ways in which the evil of racism profoundly impacts the lives of many people in the United States. The pastoral letter reflects on the dignity of every human person and establishes the Church's moral imperative to combat racism as a life issue.



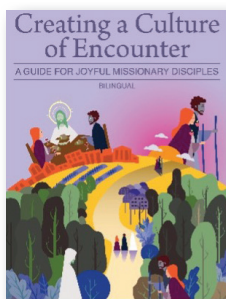
## ***Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers, Bilingual*** (7-887)

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 through the five guidelines recommended by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.



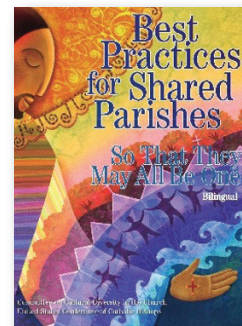
## ***Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples*** (7-629)

The resource offers an organized five-week parish encounter process to help small groups to dig deeper into the Church's evangelizing mission. In each session, participants take up a new aspect of Jesus' encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and focus on a different element of the evangelical call to spread the Gospel, inspired by Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*. The five-week guide invites participants to See, Judge, Act, Celebrate, and take Missionary Action each week.



## ***Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They All May Be One*** (7-389)

A guide to assist pastors of culturally diverse parishes in the challenging yet rewarding task of building unity in diversity. This bilingual English and Spanish guide identifies pastoral responses and proven best practices in relation to intercultural competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. It helps parishes discern pastoral planning strategies and opportunities that will lead to a higher level of stewardship.





***Cause for Sainthood Prayer Cards*** (SH-113)

This bundle includes a six-pack of prayer cards honoring six African American Catholics who are on the formal path to sainthood in the Catholic Church: Mother Henriette Delille (d. Nov. 16, 1862); Mother Mary Lange (d. Feb. 3, 1882); Sr. Thea Bowman (d. March 30, 1990); Venerable Pierre Toussaint (d. June 30, 1853); Julia Greeley (d. June 7, 1918); and Fr. Augustus Tolton (d. July 9, 1897). The cards can be individually purchased as well.



# CCHD

## WORKING ON THE MARGINS FOR 50 YEARS

For over 50 years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has worked on the margins by supporting groups that defend worker rights, promote responsible environmental practices, advocate for people with disabilities and immigrants, and support employee-owned businesses. On November 20-21, many dioceses across the United States will take up the collection to support CCHD. When you participate in this collection, you help fight poverty nationwide and in your community because 25 percent of your contribution stays in your diocese to help local antipoverty initiatives.

*To learn more about CCHD, please find collection resources and the most current annual report here: <https://www.usccb.org/cchd/collection>.*



# JOURNEYING TOGETHER

A NATIONAL CATHOLIC INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTER  
FOR MINISTRIES WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

**Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, Archbishop of Philadelphia**  
**Presentation to the USCCB General Assembly on Journeying Together**  
**November 17, 2021**

*Brothers,*

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you an update on Journeying Together. Journeying Together is a synodal and intercultural process of dialogue and accompaniment of young Catholics and those who minister to them. It was inspired as a response to Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, and the 2018 Synod on Young People.

For the last 18 months or so, amidst a pandemic, the social unrest, the racial reckoning, and the polarization affecting U.S. society, and even the Church, the Journeying Together process has provided a "sacred space" and an opportunity for bishops, young adults, youth ministers and campus ministers, and leaders of various other ministries with young people, to engage in respectful yet honest dialogue in matters of faith, culture, racism, inclusion and the issues that affect them as young people.

Since the official kickoff in July last year, thousands of young adults and ministry leaders, accompanied by dozens of Catholic bishops and eparchs, have been Journeying Together virtually, learning to listen to one another, to walk in each other's shoes, to dialogue in large and small group settings, and to contemplate matters of faith and life both from intra-cultural and intercultural perspectives. The planning and the consultation began much earlier, as part of the Committee on Cultural Diversity's last strategic plan. A consultation with teens of diverse cultural backgrounds attending the NCYC 2019 conference was also part of this conversation.

Providence and the COVID-19 pandemic determined that what was to be dialogued and discerned over a long weekend turned out to be a two-year long (and counting) process, mostly carried out virtually. Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit's way of telling us bishops that we really needed to take time to listen to young people, those who minister to them and, especially, those who are in the peripheries, feeling unimportant and unloved, and often alienated from the Church.

The social unrest and lack of civism, the violence and the racism we have witnessed, as well as the desperation and isolation brought about by the pandemic also made us realize that this was not a time to quit on dialogue but to double down on it, to continue to accompany each other, to seek reconciliation and understanding, and to

empower young people to guide us along a different path.

And engage they did! Young adults in particular, who form about 50 percent of the more than 1,600 people nationwide that have participated in the process thus far, not only accepted the challenge, but have been instrumental in shaping and leading this process. Participants hailed from 147 dioceses and eparquies. As we mapped participation, we were amazed to discover that not only every episcopal region is represented but also every ecclesiastical province.

I want to thank the hundreds of volunteers and USCCB staff from various departments that have worked uncountable hours behind the scenes to make this experience happen, despite our initial doubts that a virtual process could have such an impact or create the intimate atmosphere needed for some of these conversations to be fruitful. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

I am also grateful to the more than 60 bishops—63 to be exact—that have accompanied the process thus far, at one point or another. You have been exceedingly generous with your time. Personally, I have participated in over 20 of these dialogues. Some of you have been persistent in your commitment to listen and walk with young people. If I could give you an award, I would probably nominate a few of you for the “Official Companions of the Journey” award. You know who you are. Please receive my gratitude on behalf of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church and the entire Journeying Together team. And please continue to walk with us.

I want to give a special shout out to our Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who has also been along for the ride from the very beginning and did not miss one of the six intercultural dialogues from January through June. Your Excellency, you have made us feel the presence and spiritual nearness of the Holy Father on this journey. But I must say, your own insights, closeness, approachability and sense of humor have not gone unnoticed by the participants.

As a bishop, I have been deeply touched by the testimonies of the young adults participating in this process. I admire their resilience, and their faith, despite the many challenges they face; I have witnessed their love for the Church and a yearning for inclusion and for finding a space and their voice in the Church. I have also been inspired by the love, dedication, care and concern of the ministry leaders who have participated and helped us identify such a diverse and remarkable array of young adults from every cultural family.

Although the journey is not complete, it has already been tremendously fruitful in many ways. Rather than attempting to summarize the many learnings and ideas exchanged, we decided to bring you along for the journey, even if for just a brief moment. And so, I would like to share the following video with you:

Brothers, as you just witnessed, this truly has been an amazing journey thus far. We have shared painful experiences and had honest and, at times, hard conversations. We also had joyful moments of hope and celebration. We have learned so much about the richness and diversity present in our Catholic Church. We have met promising young leaders from multiple ethnic and cultural communities who give me so much hope for the present and the future of the Catholic Church in this country. Young people and ministry leaders who take seriously the mandate to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28, 19).

An important next stop on the road will be



the national in-person Journeying Together Encounter, planned for June 23-26, 2022 in Chicago. I thank His Eminence, Cardinal Cupich, for welcoming us with open arms to the Archdiocese.

The aim of the national gathering is to bring these leaders together in person, after two years of virtual meetings, to experience the joy of encounter, to celebrate our unity in diversity and the many new friendships in the Lord created by this process. There are some things that are simply better achieved in person!

The National Encounter in Chicago will also be the moment in which we turn input into action, ideas into concrete actionable steps, recommendations and commitments, as we complete the journey towards a ministry that is more welcoming of everyone's gifts; one that inspires and propels young people of every cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic background to be fully alive for Christ, for the Church, and for one another. Or as Pope Francis states in *Let Us Dream*, it will be the time to "propose" that comes after the "contemplating" and "discerning".

Making honor to its name, this Journeying Together process has been eminently synodal in nature. The bishops' presence and accompaniment at this pivotal stage in the process is also very important. So, how can you help?

1. First, join us in Chicago. I am happy to issue a very cordial, joyful and strong invitation to attend the national event in Chicago. Bishop registration for the national Journeying Together Event is now open. Registration information has been posted on the bishops' portion of the USCCB website.

2. Second, you can support current participants from your area so they can attend the national gathering; and also encourage additional local young adults, youth ministers, campus ministers and others working with young people in various fields, to engage in the process at the local level. It is not too late! Inquiries can be sent to [journeytogether@usccb.org](mailto:journeytogether@usccb.org).

3. Third, you can help by sponsoring a meal, a session, or a group of individuals to attend, or simply by donating to our scholarship fund, so that we can help those who need it the most. The pandemic has increased the requests for assistance exponentially. Let's not forget that the success of this process and its long-term impact hinges on our ability to ensure participation and representation of diverse cultural, ethnic and ministry voices throughout, including at this in-person event.

4. Finally, and very importantly, you can pray for the successful completion of the Journeying Together process and for all who are participating in it. Without prayer, we can do nothing!

Brothers, I am convinced that the recommendations and tools, currently under development, that will come out of the Journeying Together experience are sure to benefit the Church's ministry and outreach to young people for years to come. In the wake of the V [Fifth] National Encuentro for Hispanic Ministry, and the 2018 Synod on Young People; and in light of efforts such as the National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults, and the findings of the Pew and CARA studies on young people and religion; it is imperative for the Church in the United States at this time to listen to all of the voices that form the rich mosaic of youth, young adult and campus ministries in our country and to involve them in charting a path forward together, in and with the Church.

Journeying Together has been working closely with those in charge of developing the National Pastoral Framework for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults, and it is our hope that the Framework will be heavily impacted by the Journeying Together conversations. We are also joining the Eucharistic Revival efforts during the national Journeying Together event and beyond.

So, come along for the journey. And we hope to see you in Chicago!



### *Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus*

#### **Prayer of invocation to the Holy Spirit for an ecclesial assembly of governance or discernment (thus synodal)**

Every session of the Second Vatican Council began with the prayer *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*, the first word of the Latin original meaning, “We stand before You, Holy Spirit,” which has been historically used at Councils, Synods and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years, being attributed to Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560 - 4 April 636). As we are called to embrace this synodal path of the Synod 2021-2023, this prayer invites the Holy Spirit to operate within us so that we may be a community and a people of grace. For the Synod 2021-2023, we propose to use this simplified version, so that any group or liturgical assembly can pray more easily.

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.  
All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever. Amen.

*To download this prayer and other Synod resources, please visit:*  
**<https://www.synod.va/en.html>**