

Journeying Together

**INTRACULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL
PROCEEDINGS REPORT**



JOURNEYING TOGETHER

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

APRIL, 2022

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Dear friend in Christ,

May the peace and joy of the Risen Lord be with you!

On behalf of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and of all who have made this journey possible, I am happy to present to you the *Journeying Together: Proceedings Report*, a preparatory document for the Alive in Christ: Young, Diverse, and Prophetic Voices Journeying Together conference that will conclude the visioning and action planning step of the Journeying Together process. The document also serves as proceedings of the intracultural conversations and intercultural dialogues that preceded it.

For more than two years, hundreds across the country—most of them young adults, but also ministry leaders who work with young people in a variety of settings and circumstances, as well as several dozen bishops—have been immersed in an eminently synodal process. We have listened to, dialogued with, and accompanied one another on this journey.

At times, we felt shame and sorrow for the hardships, difficulties, and humiliations some of our fellow journeyers, their families, and their communities have had to endure. Other times, we experienced great joy, drew hope from inspiring stories of faith and perseverance, and felt enriched by the variety of gifts being offered. Personally, I drew tremendous inspiration from our small-group conversations. It was such a privilege to be able to participate in these crosscultural and intergenerational conversations and to witness the young people and the ministry leaders engaging in candid conversation about matters of faith and life. Across traditions, cultural divides, and generations,

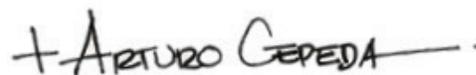
I found tremendous faith, love, hope . . . and leadership potential!

The Spirit of the Lord is moving us now to act on what we have seen and heard—to chart a new path forward together with renewed faith in him and in one another.

Whether you will join us in person for the Journeying Together national encounter in Chicago, or you plan to apply some of the learnings of this process in your local communities and ministries, it is my hope that you will find inspiration in these pages and a renewed sense that the Spirit of the Lord walks with us on this journey. I invite you to prayerfully read and meditate on each section and to ask the Lord for help discerning what is yours to do.

Finally, I entrust the remainder of this process—and all the good things that will come from it—to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who accompanies us on this journey. Mary’s constant presence reminds us—when we feel tempted to despair or quit, when we face the uncertainty ahead—that a single “yes” can make a world of difference and even change the course of humanity. Like St. Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac, let us be comforted by the words she also extends to us today: “Aren’t I here, I, who am your mother?” Our Lady of the Journey, pray for us!

En Cristo y María,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ARTURO CEPEDA". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Most Rev. J. Arturo Cepeda
Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit
Chairman, Committee on Cultural
Diversity in the Church

Beginning the Journey

INTRODUCTION

The Journeying Together process of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) originated several years prior to its official launch. In 2016, a worldwide invitation was sent by the Holy See to church leaders, youth, and young adults to begin a synodal process of reflection and dialogue to listen to the concerns, hopes, and desires of young people. The Holy Father, Pope Francis, invited a diverse group of individuals representing various parts of the world to this preliminary work. He was motivated by a belief that “taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission in history.”¹ In 2018 this belief led to the development of the Synod of Bishops’ XV Ordinary General Assembly on the theme “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.” During the Synod, young people from around the world were auditors along with the Synod fathers. Those who gathered agreed that the Church’s mission to young people must result from investing time, energy, and resources. They agreed that this mission is a “pastoral priority of epoch-making significance.”²

In 2019, as a result of this synodal process, the Holy Father issued the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* (*Christ Is*

Alive!).³ In its nine chapters, the Holy Father acknowledged the realities and challenges of young people that surfaced in the Synod’s listening sessions. He emphasized the importance of the call for dialogue and co-responsibility across generational lines in the Church and in society (see CV, nos. 38, 87, 206). He called for the advancement of new models for pastoral ministry and accompaniment with youth and young adults: “We need to make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people” (CV, no. 216). Pope Francis concluded his insights by reminding young people that the Church “needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith” (CV, no. 299). Throughout the exhortation he reminded young people that God loves them, that Jesus saves and suffers with them, and that Christ is alive and present in their lives (see CV, nos. 1, 112, 118, 124-125).

To prepare for and respond to the synodal process, the USCCB began in 2017 to gather material and to study the realities that face youth and young adults in the United States. A 2016 study conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) on cultural diversity in the Church and the engagement of youth and young adults had made clear that a dramatic change had taken place in the ethnic, cultural and racial makeup of Catholics

1 Synod of Bishops, XV Ordinary General Assembly, *Instrumentum Laboris* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018), no. 1, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html.

2 Synod of Bishops, XV Ordinary General Assembly, Final Document (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018), no. 119, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html.

3 Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit* (*Christ Is Alive!*) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2019). Subsequently cited in the text as CV.

in the United States.⁴ Although the Church in the United States has always been diverse, the CARA study showed that—especially among millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996⁵) and younger generations—the majority of youth and young adult Catholics in the United States were no longer of European ancestry. To respond to these shifts, the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church decided to revisit conversations from 2010 about leadership and ministry, this time widening and diversifying the participants in this new process and focusing on young people.

In 2018, the Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church invited representatives from the USCCB Secretariats of Catholic Education, Evangelization and Catechesis, and Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth, along with national Catholic organizations, to engage with this data in light of the Synod. From the start, young voices from the various cultural families in the Church clearly needed to be heard, and other people needed to be present at the table for this conversation. The goal was to listen attentively to the voices of young people and those who accompany them. This opportunity for the Church would provide a pathway toward a more inclusive, responsive, diverse, and just society, as well as an opportunity for transforming the way the Church engages in pastoral ministry with youth and young adults of all cultures in the United States.

With *Christus Vivit* as a guide, this group devised a multistep process that included an initial invitation and welcome extended to a broader group of diverse youth, young adults, ministers, and bishops. (The steps are described

at length in the appendix.) The original gathering, held virtually because of the pandemic, was followed by a series of virtual intracultural conversations for participants to gain self-awareness, build confidence, and both listen to and share stories with one another. The third step was a series of virtual intercultural dialogues that allowed each cultural family to introduce themselves to the others, speak to the issues that were important to them, share gifts and contributions to Church and society, and discuss concerns, all while discerning important pastoral goals and responses. That step will now be followed by a national in-person gathering in June 2022.

From this process, *Journeying Together: A National Catholic Intercultural Encounter for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults* was born. As the USCCB's response to the global Synod process and to *Christus Vivit*, *Journeying Together* seeks to translate and implement the challenges of *Christus Vivit* for the Catholic Church in the United States. The process took its name directly from Pope Francis' exhortation: "Youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve a 'journeying together.' . . . 'Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety. . . . No one should be excluded or exclude themselves.' In this way, by learning from one another, we can better reflect that wonderful multifaceted reality that Christ's Church is meant to be" (CV, nos. 206-207, quoting the Synod's *Final Document*).

The Church in the United States stepped out on this journey in July 2020. This process

4 Mark Gray, *Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States: Special Report* (Washington, DC: CARA, 2016).

5 Michael Dimock, "Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins," Pew Research Center, January 17, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins>.

was shaped by the COVID-19 crisis and was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Even with this virtual beginning, there was still hope that an in-person gathering could be celebrated within six months to bring the process to its final step. The pandemic persisted, and the delay created new challenges, possibilities, and adaptations that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, deepened the conversations. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the participants returned to cultural family conversations, embarked on “deeper dives” to explore emerging issues, developed resources to hold local conversations, and collaborated to compile what was learned throughout the process thus far. The present document serves as a foundation for the June 2022 in-person gathering in Chicago.

A sense of empowerment—born from the hard work of planning, dialogue, challenge, clarification, and consensus—has been the good fruit offered by the Holy Spirit to the cultural families making this journey together.

(For a more complete description of the steps of the Journeying Together process, please refer to the “Taking the Journey Together” Section in the Appendices.)



THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Three theological principles are shaping this process as it unfolds. First, all of us are made in the image of God. Second, young people are called to resolute witness: to stand firm in the living and sharing of their faith. Third, God has created us to live with and for others.

Made in the Image of God

First, because all of us are made in the image of God and share a common dignity and capacity for love, young people share a role in assisting the Spirit of God in unfolding the reality of the sacred. In our scriptural tradition, Samuel lived a life of dedication in the Temple with his mentor, a priest named Eli. As a young person, Samuel heard the call of God. With the help of Eli, Samuel was the first great prophet in Israel after Moses. This young man exhorted Israel to turn from idolatry and serve God alone. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he inaugurated the monarchy by anointing Saul as Israel’s first king. He was also sent in the Holy Spirit to the small town of Bethlehem, where he entered the house of Jesse. The Spirit told Samuel that he would anoint the next king of Israel from among Jesse’s sons.

The youngest of those sons was a “ruddy . . . youth with beautiful eyes,” and his name was David. As soon as David entered, God spoke to the prophet and said “There—anoint him, for this is the one!” (1 Sm 16:12). The Spirit rushed on David at that moment. This young person, open to the Lord and seeking to serve God’s people, brought victory to Israel by slaying Goliath the Philistine, united the tribes of Israel as one nation, established Jerusalem as the seat of faith and government, and sought to serve God with his life.

In the Christian Scriptures, the epitome of youth at the service of God is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The angel visited her at an age when she was considered a young adult in her culture. She was challenged to embrace mystery and to embrace a role in the salvation of the world with youthful joy and trust in the God who called her. The consequence of her “yes” was a mission to nurture the Word of God under her heart and bring that Word to birth for the salvation of the world.

Resolute Witness

Young people are called to stand firm in the living and sharing of their faith. This second theological principle of resolute witness follows from these examples. None of the young people empowered by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures came easily by their ability to serve God. David had to struggle with his king, Saul, and with his brothers, who did not believe he was sincere in his willingness to help Israel find victory over the Philistines. Later, he had to face the reality of his own limits as he himself humbly sought to serve God as Israel's king. He was still able to fulfill his call, making the difference God intended him to make among his people. Imagine, too, how Mary must have felt after the angel left her, a young woman, with the news of what God had done for her. One can only imagine fear, doubt, and hesitation wrapped into the "yes" she gave to a plan, still not fully known to her, to en flesh the Incarnate Word in the world.

The same is true for young people in the Church today. Offered gifts are not always readily accepted or acted on by leaders or groups, who sometimes hesitate to examine the types of things young people offer to help us better "reflect Jesus Christ" (CV, no. 39). The Holy Spirit has empowered young people to do God's work and to embrace a vision for the future. This part of our faith story inspired Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit* to remind all youth and young adults, "You are the *now* of God" (no. 178).

Dialogue and cross-generational co-responsibility, even in the face of challenge, caution, or hesitation, are nonetheless part of the mission and service of young people to the Church and to the world. *Christus Vivit* reminded the whole Church that we must "appreciate the vision but also the criticisms of young people" (no. 39). The pope further reminded young people that

part of their vocation is to "take risks, even if it means making mistakes. . . . Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you" (no. 143).

To Live with and for Others

Finally, God created us to live with and for others. The Gospel shapes us to find our fulfillment in self-giving love and in the service of others. Faith is lived not in isolation but in community. We share a responsibility to accompany each other on the journey of faith, utilizing our gifts to bring the message of Christ to the world and building a more inclusive, diverse, responsive, and just society. Woven into the very fabric of our lives are holy companionship and an accompaniment that makes us co-responsible for the proclamation of the Gospel. We come as we are from wherever we are to listen, learn, and encourage. In the dialogue of everyday life, we discover the invitation to convert our hearts and draw others deeper into the reality of God.

When Jesus stepped into his public ministry, he called together a diverse community of disciples who became his students and companions as they brought the Good News of salvation to others. Even more powerfully, at Pentecost, the Spirit fell in fullness on a community of believers who then took up a common mission not born of individual skills, but empowered by the Spirit they shared. Two friends journeyed, disillusioned and confused, from Jerusalem to Emmaus on a Sunday morning after their teacher had been crucified. They met a stranger who joined them on the road; and in sharing their story and receiving the encouragement of his words, they found hope, nourishment, and an encounter with the risen face of God.

Christ is revealed to us and we reveal Christ to others as we accompany one another on the pilgrimage of faith. The Second Vatican Council identified the Church—"a people

made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”—as a pilgrim people, a people on journey together to the fullness of God’s Kingdom.⁶ On this journey we bring our ability to listen, to encourage, and to stand in solidarity with others. Together we motivate and challenge each other as well as appreciate, understand, and care for each other. This work is as much a task for young people as it is for any believer.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A series of guiding principles were articulated early in the Journeying Together process. They ensured that the process has remained effective and that it can produce the “good fruit” that “communicates the joy of the Gospel” (CV, no. 205). From the beginning in 2018, Journeying Together has sought to gather many different voices from within and beyond the walls of the Church. Those involved in ministries with youth, young adults, and campus communities, as well as those who minister with and to them, all received an invitation. The invitation was also issued to the broad spectrum of ethnic and cultural communities that form the many different “cultural families” of the Church in the United States. This created a varied, profound conversation that celebrated the first guiding principle: inclusion.

Inclusion addresses the needs and supports the heart’s desires of people from diverse cultures and communities to empower them to share their gifts and dreams. Inclusion recognizes and values each unique contribution. To be inclusive means to practice a hospitality that is open and kind. When people are invited to bring their voices, everyone else must be willing to let each voice echo and be heard. Inclusion

means that status, experience, and position must give way to the honest encounter of one heart, any heart, with another. In Journeying Together, inclusion has meant an opportunity for all who have participated to express freely who they are, to participate fully in the process, and to feel safe from judgment or criticism in the environment the process created.

A second principle guiding this process was to ensure that everyone, in every large and small group gathering, could feel confident that each community’s story would be shared in its own unique voice, providing a platform for the resolute witness of participants. Young adults grounded in the Native American tradition could speak honestly from the sometimes confusing and wounded perspective of not being understood by elders or not always being appreciated in everyday Church life. Hispanic and Latino Americans could speak with joy about those elements of cultural integration that have nourished family relationships and given them a distinct place in Catholic life in the United States. Sharing “our story” with “our voice” has contributed to an authentic opportunity of encounter, encouraged empathy, and fostered a deeper appreciation of all we hold in common, even in our diversity.

When people journey together, they talk. Just as importantly, however, they listen. The final principle that guided this process was a commitment to nurture sacred listening. When Moses heard his name called from the burning bush in Exodus, chapter 3, he did not listen with just his ears. He approached the bush closely; he removed his sandals because he recognized that something holy was happening. He became still, opening his heart to God’s presence in that dialogue. Sacred listening implies the same. When we are willing to listen patiently,

⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Corpus Books, 1966), no. 4.

with empathy and compassion, and to listen for understanding when someone else tells us his or her story, we can discern the holiness being shared. During the Journeying Together experience, especially during the Step Three intercultural conversations, the small groups followed a dialogue process to give each person a chance

to share and to invite everyone else to listen deeply. Sacred listening allows us to hear the Spirit of God at work in the other and opens us to the deepening work of that same Spirit in our own heart. It is a necessary step before discerning a response and taking action.

Intercultural Conversations

AN ORIENTATION

The reports of each cultural family in this section are developed from the cultural family conversations and the intercultural dialogues. These narratives are the results of speakers' comments and participants' interactions during the gatherings for Journeying Together. Each report addresses the specific life, needs, and challenges of an individual cultural group and reflects the intention to honor the different approach and style of each group. The rich differences evident in these reports point to the depth of diversity among youth, young adults, and ministers who participated in each of these encounters.

The content of these reports was gleaned from young adults and ministry leaders sharing their stories, in their own words, through panel presentations. Bishops responded to panelists and participants by reflecting on what they heard in the process. Participants engaged in small-group discussions, offered comments and affirmations through the chat, and shared their experiences in large-group interactions. Themes were identified in each of the intercultural sessions by using a "word cloud" program, which helped to define priorities and surface language for content raised by the participants.

This introduction to the cultural family reports offers some explanation of specific terms that readers will discover in the subsequent material. The prayer for Journeying Together was used throughout the process and can be found in the appendices.

To prepare the reader for this document, the Editorial Team invites the reader to consider the practice of *lectio divina*, a "reflective reading

of Scripture" that invites contemplation. The practice "relies on the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the heart, as the person praying reads a passage and pauses to seek out the deeper meaning that God wants to convey through his Word."⁷ The subsequent cultural family reports are complex and insightful essays worthy of time and thoughtful consideration. At the conclusion of each cultural family report, as well as each lesson learned (in the section following the family reports), reflection questions guide a deeper exploration of the journey. The reader may want to journal responses to the reflection questions as a means of preparing for the in-person gathering or simply as a personal exercise.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

Who Are You?

The presence of Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Catholics in the United States of America is not well known because they usually are not included in the teaching of American history. Schools tend to neglect teaching about APIs in general, so children growing up in the United States, including API children themselves, do not know much about the API presence. Furthermore, if the API presence is mentioned, API histories and cultures are misconstrued. An example is an assumption

7 USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006), 474.

that APIs practice only other faith traditions and not Christianity. This was not lost on API young adults during the Journeying Together panel. API young adults now see a recognition of the presence of API Catholics, as well as the acknowledgment of the contributions and gifts of API Catholics to US society.

The ethnic diversity and geographic range of APIs underscore the complexity of the community. There are so many different ethnicities and cultures under one overarching API label. It is not uncommon, then, for many APIs to claim identity differently. For instance, over 62 percent of APIs identify themselves by their country of origin, such as Pakistani, Tongan, or Indonesian, rather than as API.⁸ This statistic suggests that API is not an agreed-upon identity but is rather one created for easy designation by the larger society. Also, the particular cultures among APIs are not easily interchangeable because people come from a variety of countries and backgrounds that are distinctive. There are hundreds of language groups, cultural differences, and histories that do not easily meld under one identity marker. Moreover, the identity of API was fashioned in the United States during the civil rights movement to bring together these communities in a united fight against oppression and inequality. The challenge many APIs face in identifying as an API is a reality that needs to be kept at the forefront of any conversation about API communities. This challenge is not lost on the young adults who want to claim their particular cultural identity given to them by their parents but also want to be part of a larger community of APIs.

The large number of ethnic communities included under the identity marker of API Catholics complicates inclusion and definition.

Many of these individual ethnic communities do not fit neatly under some of the attributes generally associated with API Americans, especially the experiences of immigration, colonialism, or war. While many do have these experiences, they do not represent each and every community. Hence, in defining the wider community of API Catholics, one must keep in mind that finding a common thread does not erase each community's uniqueness and its particular contribution to the overall Catholic experience in the United States. Additionally, different Catholic liturgical rites are practiced by some API Catholics, such as Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara. These are recognized liturgical rites that identify a cultural tradition as well as a particular worship ritual. These rites create a faith experience that is grounded in the rich history of the Church and the unique culture. The varied background of API Catholics, from ethnicity to liturgical rites, provides a very complex and intriguing story of faith, culture, and family for our young adults.

What Did You Learn?

The Journeying Together panel introduced listeners to the importance of ancestors through *kūpuna*, the Hawaiian word for ancestors. The ancestors are recognized because *kūpuna* have guided the young adults on their faith journey. Like the Communion of Saints, ancestors continue to be a part of the living through shared stories and traditions. These stories are rich; some are complicated, and some are not easy to retell. But they are being told in order to connect the generations. Many APIs have endured hardships and persecution for their faith, political upheaval in their respective countries, and devastating natural disasters that have displaced

8 "Asian American and Pacific Islander," National Alliance on Mental Illness, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Asian-American-and-Pacific-Islander>.

many people. Escaping these conditions pushed many to the United States of America. They came looking for security and a betterment of life. Some APIs sought the chance to worship freely without fear of persecution or execution for their beliefs. Some of the communities came to America directly from refugee camps, where they spent decades in some cases waiting for asylum. These immigrants and refugees have maintained their faith even as they have started over again with little or no knowledge of the customs or language of the United States. Other API Catholics claim many generations in the United States. For instance, Chinese and Filipino Catholics claim a strong presence in the United States going back to the nineteenth century. Many came for economic betterment, educational opportunities, and life under a different political system.

Other APIs never migrated to the United States but rather claim a presence here dating before the arrival of Europeans. These include the native Hawaiians, Chamorro, and Tongans, who were made citizens when the US government claimed their lands. Chinese and Filipinos arrived in the continental United States at the same time when explorers from Europe landed on US soil; several generations of Asian Americans have never stepped on Asian soil. Thus, APIs are more than just newcomers to the United States; they include those who helped build America from the very beginning. Nevertheless, the lack of awareness of API history ends up casting all APIs as foreigners or newcomers to the United States. The many generations' worth of API presence needs to be acknowledged in order to understand the fuller picture of API young adults.

In discussions about API Catholic communities, the panel highlighted some important contextual keys. First, the family is central to the faith journey of the young adults. This

stems from learning faith through parents and grandparents, which is strengthened by other extended family members. The young adults recognize the generational tensions that can occur when many generations live under one roof. The multigenerational family setting is also crucial in maintaining connection with cultural traditions, rituals, and faith practices. Second, APIs are still not fully accepted by the larger US society. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the bias that considers Asians to be "forever foreign" in the country. This bias has been exacerbated by violent attacks against and murder of Asian people or of anyone who looks Asian. This violence has made many Asian Americans fearful as they continue their everyday activities. However, these attacks have also galvanized the API communities to stand up against hatred and shed the stereotype that they are passive and completely subservient. Third, education is important for building up the future and passing on the faith. The young adults shared that educational choices are something that their families value and are an important part of their own spiritual and human development. Fourth, the culture and faith dynamic is an important part of the Catholic journey. While the young adults appreciated that their culture helps them learn and grow in faith, they also recognized that secular culture can be a challenge. It is by working through these challenges, with assistance from family and a strong prayer life, that the journey of faith will be sustained and strengthened.

Five Takeaways

Five important takeaways emerged from the API young adult discussion and their commitment to live out their Catholic faith. One is the need to recognize generational differences. Depending on when they arrived in the United

States, or which generation they were born into, faith experiences and practices may be different. This fact can create different expectations and tensions among the generations. Because the family is central to living out one's faith, these challenges can be worked out in ways to further support each generation.

Second, many young adults wrestle with education, especially if it is the desire of their parents rather than their own. This struggle is usually described as parents pushing a young adult toward a particular degree, such as medicine or law rather than the humanities. The importance of education makes it so crucial for many APIs.

Third, as API young adults decide to create, or have already created, families of their own, the consideration of marriage will be important. There are API families that desire that their daughter or son marry someone from their particular ethnic community or within their faith. Some still practice arranging marriage for their children. These desires can become points of contention when young adults raised in the United States have different expectations about whom they want to marry.

Fourth, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the racial tension within US society and beyond. Many API Americans have become victims of racist attacks, and the number of hate crimes rose nearly 150 percent during

this period.⁹ This harassment continues across the country. The wider Catholic community in the United States needs to acknowledge the past and current discrimination against APIs in order to halt the prejudice and harassment. This acknowledgment will include engaging with other minority communities and allies who will advocate for them. Young adults call on the Church to help them bring attention to the discrimination and hatred that the API communities endure.

The fifth and final consideration is passing on the faith to the next and subsequent generations. The young adults recognize that secular culture can be a challenge to their faith journey. But it is weaving their API culture with their faith that has strengthened their Catholic journey. Through this strong binding-together of culture and faith, API young adults engage with the Gospel and maintain a strong prayer life. Furthermore, API young adults need to be invited to leadership positions to help maintain the Church for the future generations. Current API young adults will carry on the faith that was brought to them by the ancestors. But as many API young adults acknowledged, passing on the faith requires the participation of all in the community. Relying on the power of God's love and the prayers of all the faithful, they will definitely lead the way on the journey of faith.

9 Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, "Fact Sheet: Anti-Asian Prejudice March 2021, Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism," accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.csusb.edu/sites/default/files/FACT%20SHEET-%20Anti-Asian%20Hate%202020%20rev%203.21.21.pdf>.

BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
That I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

This writing is offered in the memory of all persons of African descent who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, so that we, those of us on this side of Eternity, may continue the work they began. It is especially offered in the names of Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, OSP; Servant of God Julia Greeley; Venerable Pierre Toussaint; Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton; Venerable Mother Henriette Delille, SHF; and Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA. May their beatification and canonization come as we pray, “Lord, do not delay” (see Ps 70:1):

Come by here, my Lord, come by here.
Come by here, my Lord, come by here.
Come by here, my Lord, come by here.

If you only read the above and did not hum the words to a tune, what follows may not be as efficacious. It is fitting that most of our experiences as the Black and African American (BAA) cultural family are rooted in song and praise, and from time to time are accompanied by movement and dance. Our history as people of faith, our very lives, bear the joys and wounds of our experiences, and they are at best expressed in song. Whether the words are originally from St. Augustine of Hippo, it is true that he (or she) who sings prays twice! “Come by here, my Lord” is an invitation for you, the reader, to join in as we, the BAA cultural family, invite you and the Lord into this moment of reading, listening,

praying, and accompaniment.

Who are we? We are beautifully diverse men and women from all walks of life, generations, and experiences. We are all created in the image and likeness of God. In fact, when BAA cultural family members say, “I am Black and beautiful” (see Sg 1:5), it is not to deny other beauty, but to affirm what the psalmist says to the God of our praise: “I am [we are] wonderfully made; / wonderful are your works! / My very self you know” (Ps 139:14). When you hear or see the words that remind us that Black Lives Matter, it is an invitation to affirm the truth and, in solidarity, to stand with a people often denied the dignity of its meaning. It would not be necessary to express it if the dismissive rhetoric in secular society and within the institutional Church were not espoused.

We are Creole from southwest Louisiana, the Caribbean, and virtually every country in the continent of Mother Africa. We are from the midwestern United States, where a Catholic of African descent, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, settled in what is now Chicago, Illinois. For some of us, our first language may be English, French (Creole) or Spanish. We are traditional in our worship and expressive. Hallelujah! We are the hope and dreams of our ancestors, who made sure that our Catholic faith was passed on to us as a gift, that their stories of resilience entrusted to us were never forgotten, and that what they began, we must continue. We are monotheistic and Trinitarian, but we are not monolithic or one-dimensional. “There is a richness [and beauty] in our Black experience that we must share with the entire People of God. These are gifts that are part of an African past. For we have heard with Black ears and we have seen with Black eyes and we have understood with an African heart.”¹⁰

10 Black Bishops of the United States, “What We Have Seen and Heard”: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984).

There are an estimated three million BAA Roman Catholics in the United States, representing 4.9 percent of the sixty-two million citizens of the cultural family. BAA cultural family members may be found attending one of 798 Roman Catholic parishes considered predominantly African American, and some are immersed in multicultural parishes.¹¹ We are not inconsequential to Mother Church; we are her sons and daughters, and we bear the same indelible character on our soul by virtue of our Baptism. We love our faith, we live our faith, and some have given their entire earthly lives to our faith with joy and often teary-eyed hope in the resurrection to come. In the words of His Excellency Fernand J. Cheri III, OFM, the auxiliary bishop of New Orleans, uttered during the second Journeying Together intercultural dialogue in February 2021: “I am black. I am Catholic. I am here.” We are Black. We are truly Catholic. We are here!

During a Journeying Together virtual gathering led by the BAA cultural family, a word cloud activity revealed some prophetic responses. The most prominent word was “courage” tethered to other words like “truth,” “honesty,” and “solidarity.”¹² These words speak to a desire for belonging, unity of mission, and accompaniment. Revelation of the word “courage” is also a lamentation in response to hurt, pain, and suffering, with a hopeful expectation of what should happen. The role of the Holy Spirit was evident in the sharing of words, and it is the “Lord, the giver of life, / who proceeds from the Father and the Son”¹³ compelling all baptized persons, with courage, to foster true

communion in the Body of Christ. We believe that Communion is not only the gift we receive; communion is also the gift we are called to be with each other. Some words reflected pain, anguish, and frustration—not some sort of phantom experience, but rather an enduring pain dating back to the founding of the United States that remains with us generations later.

The BAA cultural family hungers not for food that perishes, but for the True Bread from Heaven and for the courageous love and accompaniment of the institutional leadership within the Church. There is a deep desire to heal the sin-sick soul of our world and our Church, intentionally or unintentionally scourged by racism and marked by its stain, with the balm of Gilead (see Jer 8:22). There is a need for a movement toward the Eucharist, toward Christ Jesus, in solidarity with all God’s children. The needs of the BAA cultural family are fundamentally a response to “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. . . . For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me” (Mt 25:40, 42-43).

Varied forms of unresolved trauma experienced by different generations exist within the cultural family and consequently have had a compounded effect felt by all. The young adult generation experiences the present-day effects of trauma within American culture and the Church and the blowback from pain and suffering experienced by elders. Does the Church

11 African American Affairs, “Demographics,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/african-american-affairs/demographics>.

12 Journeying Together is a process of dialogue and encounter focused on the Church’s ministry with youth and young adults that fosters understanding and trust within and across cultural families toward a more welcoming and just community of faith.

13 Profession of faith in the Roman Missal, *Order of Mass* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2011), no. 18.

hear the cry of the lambs yearning from a need to be tended by their shepherds? Our young adults, as Dr. Valerie Lewis-Mosely puts it, “are the [now] Church of the 21st Century, one that is authentic and radical about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ The latter often manifests as roadblocks to young adults responding to God’s call to serve. Elders may be resistant to sharing ministerial roles because they have struggled long and arduously to establish parishes and ministries within the Church, which has often left them feeling ignored and abandoned. There needs to be a generational atonement within the BAA cultural family so that elders, adults, young adults, and youth are not moving in different directions; rather they should move in the same direction guided by the Holy Spirit within their respective baptismal call.

These roadblocks manifest in the form of church elders being resistant to letting go of an ownership mentality within a ministry. What should happen is more of an invitation by elders to young adults to participate and collaborate, recognizing that in order to continue the work the elders began, the current generation of young adult leaders must be mentored, nurtured, and apprenticed. Young adults, through prayer and understanding, may be called to a spirit of continued patience with elders because accompaniment, within this cultural family, is two-sided. Elders need to accompany young adults and vice versa. One of the challenges in the early Church, evident in the New Testament, was the struggles in matters of table fellowship and neglect. Similarly, the BAA cultural family experience is fraught with echoes of the early Church’s treatment of Gentiles,

and the familiarity remains (see Acts 6:1; Gal 2:11-14). There is a resentment of persons who dismiss pain, suffering, and wounds as simply a notion of the past. This sentiment reflects a major disconnection with an understanding of what being Black and Catholic truly means.

Pastorally, the takeaways include the need for continued acknowledgment of the pain and suffering, past and present, experienced by the BAA cultural family, through perpetual healing of memory; and the need for a path forward facilitated through mutual and collective discernment, compassion, empowerment, communion, and prayer. Where do we go from here? The answer to this question begins with being intentional with communicating—through prayer, listening, and action—that the BAA cultural family belongs at the table, especially the current young adult generation. There is also the need to connect BAA young adults across the country for regular and frequent fellowship, worship, and dialogue. Intentional discipleship should not be reactive; it should be proactive, and this mission includes the accompaniment of others, especially our bishops, priests, deacons, lay ecclesial leaders, religious, and theologians from every cultural family. Because *Gaudium et Spes* says it best in its opening: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”¹⁵

In a reflection during the Journeying Together gathering, Bishop Cheri said, “We have work to do in the Kingdom, and the

14 Valerie Lewis-Mosely, lay associate, Order of Preachers (OPA) of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell, NJ, during Journeying Together, Step Three: Intercultural Dialogues, panel presentation, February 2021.

15 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Corpus Books, 1966), no. 1. Subsequently cited in the text as GS.

EUROPEAN AMERICAN

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

European American (EA) Catholics come from forty-five different countries, each with a distinct culture. Yet the EA experience is defined not just by country of origin, but also by the period and historical circumstances in which ancestors immigrated to the United States. EAs have been immigrating to what is now the United States since the first Spanish and English colonies were established in the early 1600s. The cultural experiences of families who immigrated to the United States in the earliest days of colonization are significantly different from those of EAs who immigrated to the United States in recent years. Many cultural families who immigrated to the United States were motivated by difficult socioeconomic conditions in their country of origin and arrived to encounter varying circumstances. A Polish American family whose ancestors came to the United States prior to or during World War II (1939-1945) would likely have a different experience than would an Irish American family who immigrated to the United States during the Potato Famine (1845-1852). EAs are diverse in age and economic status and make up a significant portion of the population in nearly every region of the United States.

Despite beautiful differences in ancestral languages, customs, and more, the EA cultural experience in the United States has been defined by a willing and contentious push toward uniformity, with many distinguishing features given up in the name of “being white” or “being more American.” This theme was repeatedly

identified throughout the Journeying Together process, mentioned in every part of the intercultural dialogues in Step Three. In the discussion during the EA presentation, several panelists specifically stated that they had trouble identifying as EAs given how far removed they were from their familial culture. These sentiments were affirmed in the virtual chat by others who expressed a deep sense of loss when reflecting on the distinct and beautiful cultural identities of their ancestors. For example: “Since I never really thought of myself as EA, it was very interesting for me to hear so many others say the same thing. It made me reflect on the fact that so many of us were raised with an emphasis on becoming Americans with very little emphasis on the culture of those who came before us. My grandparents were all from Ireland, yet we never made any effort to preserve traditions.” At the end of the discussion, a word cloud was created to reflect key experiences and emotions during the session, generating words like “discomfort” and “universal” alongside “solidarity” and “togetherness,” reflecting the challenging but necessary nature of this dialogue.

From the initial intracultural dialogue (Step Two), the EA cultural family was confronted with the idea that “whiteness robs”—the reality that many of the cultural groups which compose European Americans willingly, though in some cases reluctantly, gave up aspects of their cultural heritage in order to be white. There is a cost and an occasion for mourning when a group relinquishes aspects of its culture for the sake of mainstream acceptance; this is not a choice that any group should have to make. European immigrants gave up what made them unique to receive the benefits provided by conforming to American norms. This disturbing realization caused some participants to share that they felt robbed of their culture, but they also identified the accompanying

privilege; that is, those in other cultural families who assimilated were never fully accepted into the dominant culture.

EA Catholic young adults now seem to be largely (but not completely) untethered from their cultural communities. A recurring theme heard throughout the intercultural dialogues in Step Three was that many adults do not feel accepted in their parish communities and struggle to find any sort of community of faith. This was something that EAs had in common with all cultural families. Panelists and participants alike were also quick to note that—while not nearly to the degree experienced by non-white communities—many European migrants, such as Irish, Italian, and Polish migrants, were also on the receiving end of significant persecution. Participants recognized that the Church has struggled to welcome some immigrants of European origin, just as they struggle to welcome non-white immigrants today. In light of these experiences, some participants suggested that they would benefit from spending more time reflecting on our shared history as cultural families and exploring current opportunities for collaboration to forge a path forward. Some felt it was important for EAs to identify and unequivocally condemn any abhorrent behaviors—specifically racism and classism—of their ancestors, while building a strong foundation for moving forward in the spirit of dialogue, compassion, and mercy.

Some of those present from the EA community identified that willingness to have dialogue, that openness to discussion, as one of the gifts the EA cultural family brings to the Church. Others highlighted the diversity—in culture and experience—of the EA family, sharing that each of the included cultures have unique traditions, charisms, and experiences that enrich the life of our Church in a myriad of ways. Reclaiming or embracing one's own cultural

customs and inviting others into them is one of the greatest and most personal gifts anyone can offer to another. Some identified cultural expressions of food, gathering, or holiday traditions that could be enhanced by our different cultures. Others were proud of their cultural family's contributions to the liturgical life of the Church, including beautiful churches, statues, and devotional practices. There was a great deal of optimism that the gifts identified could help address the many needs expressed throughout the Journeying Together process.

Loud and clear, young adults and ministry leaders identified the need to acknowledge, in a strong and powerful way, the oppression, hurt, and systematic racism perpetrated by the EA family, both past and present. There was a concerted effort to confront this head-on—to listen to brothers and sisters from other cultural families and to help chart a course forward toward inclusivity, solidarity, compassion, and unity. Similarly, some identified that the EA cultural family faces significant challenges of unity. Far too many European Americans do not recognize the realities of systematic racism, or they think that we have moved beyond racism in our culture. There are also people in this community who are overtly hostile to ideas of unity, compassion, equality, and peace; and there are those who perpetuate microaggressions that make others feel inferior based on their cultural identity. With ignorance of the issues, they may be unintentionally participating in structures that perpetuate racism or xenophobia. Those present spoke emphatically: this disunity and lack of understanding must be quickly and definitively addressed by the institutional Church, ministry leaders, and everyone in the EA cultural family. Those present spoke clearly about the need to recognize how much there is to learn from other cultural families. Beyond that, others identified the need to continue

dialoguing and listening, as well as the need for concrete and actionable items to continue the work of fighting the sin of racism wherever it is found in the Church.

Several key pastoral takeaways emerged. The first was a profound tension. On the one hand, members of this cultural family felt immense pride for the historical institution building of European Catholic immigrants and their descendants. On the other hand, there is indescribable sorrow, anger, and responsibility for the hostility, racism, and exclusion that members of this cultural family have exhibited, both historically and today. Again, this is a profound tension, but it was one the participants found worth navigating.

The second takeaway is related to the recognition of racism within this cultural family. EAs described a sense of discomfort, often manifesting as awkwardness, embarrassment, or shame. What emerged for some, though not all, was coming to terms with their history and sitting with the discomfort, allowing them to enter honestly into authentic intercultural dialogue. Some ministry leaders brought this up and identified the need to observe and perhaps celebrate the mature and authentic ways younger generations recognize, examine, and own the discomfort with issues of race and culture.

A third takeaway, summarized beautifully by one ministry leader, was the clarion call for all those in ministry to understand that true diversity comes when people open their hearts and minds to appreciate that their walk in life

is enhanced by those on the road with them. It does not diminish just because we did not start our journey from the same place. This comment was seen by many to be foundational to this ministry of inclusivity and compassion moving forward. Can Catholics today discover that which unites us by first coming to know and recognize what makes each cultural family unique and integral to the Body of Christ?

The fourth and final takeaway was the observation that the younger generation in the Church both is positioned to lead and, in many cases, is already leading the charge against racism. It seems that young adult participants listen with more of an open heart, willing to enter into discomfort rather than closing their heart to feel more comfortable. There exists a real opportunity here for ministry leaders to involve young adults in the life of the Church, particularly on such critical issues. Young adults are poised to lead an effort to end racism in all its forms and to build a more intercultural Church, one that is truly universal. *Journeying Together* was created as a way to engage young adults through intercultural encounters. There have been many unexpected twists and turns along the way. The process has invited and fostered relationships, fueling hopes for the fruits which are still to come.

The fundamental takeaway comes in the form of a question: Recognizing our history and the Church's diversity, how can European Americans appreciate, encourage, and pursue the fullness of what it means to be Church?

HISPANIC/LATINO AMERICAN

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

¡Somos comunidad, somos familia! / We Are Community, We Are Family!

The Hispanic/Latino community in the United States comprises more than sixty million people¹⁶ and represents the combined identities of more than twenty countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain. The word “Hispanic” refers to the Spanish language spoken by a majority of peoples in the Americas. For historical and sociological reasons, the term is used to lump together these various ethnic groups into one large category. Many in our communities resent this labeling when done without consideration of the rich heritages that contribute to our collective identities. In general, the term “Hispanic/Latino” includes multiple generations of those born in the United States (the majority) along with immigrant populations.

We recognize diverse combinations of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* (mixed races), with heritages blended over various centuries: Native American, European, African, and Asian cultures converge in our social fabric. We speak

Spanish, English, Portuguese, Nahuatl, Mixteca, Quechua, Garífuna, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese, among other languages. While most are bilingual, fluent in English and Spanish, many young people express themselves in new “Spanglish” ways. We value family, language, elders, cultural traditions, popular piety, justice, service, and leadership. We work as grassroots leaders, *campesinos* (farmers), musicians, students, professors, entrepreneurs, pastoral leaders, teachers, hospitality, service, and health-care workers. We support Dreamers¹⁷ whose constant struggle to overcome adversity models for us perseverance and long-term goal setting. We support comprehensive immigration reform with a path for citizenship. Beacons of faith like San Juan Diego, Santa Rosa de Lima, Santa Teresa of Ávila, San Martín de Porres, and San Óscar Romero affirm our gifts for the whole Church. Our profound Marian devotion, under various advocations, compels us to integrate our cultural identity into a Catholic faith that experiences the maternal tenderness of God and into a sense of being one people, a Marian people, *un pueblo Mariano*.

Nuestra comunidad es expresión de nuestra fe

Our Community Is an Expression of Our Faith

More than thirty million Hispanics/Latinos in

16 Nicholas Jones, Rachel Marks, Roberto Ramirez, and Merarys Ríos-Vargas, “2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country,” US Census Bureau, August 12, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/improved-race-ethnicity-measures-reveal-united-states-population-much-more-multiracial.html>.

17 The Dream Act would permanently protect certain immigrants who came to the United States as children but are vulnerable to deportation. The first version of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced in 2001. In part because of the publicity around that bill, young undocumented immigrants have been referred to as “Dreamers.” Over the last twenty years, at least eleven versions of the Dream Act have been introduced in Congress. Despite bipartisan support for each iteration of the bill, none have become law. “The Dream Act: An Overview,” American Immigration Council, accessed April 1, 2022, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act-overview>.

the United States identify as Catholic,¹⁸ passing on the faith from one generation to the next through family, church, schools, and cultural and civic associations. We reaffirm our identity as *gente puente* (bridge people) who foster the theology of encounter. God sees in our hearts and from the depths of our souls moves us into action: *no hay puente sin Dios* (there is no bridge without God). Bilingual and multilingual HA Catholics are a great gift to the Church as bridge builders between two or more cultures, making rich contributions to society amid grave challenges to family, community, and diversity—embracing life and hope.

HA young adults show a deep concern for, and often themselves suffer from, the living conditions of undocumented immigrants, children at the borders, separated families, racial discrimination and violence, and exclusion of those who identify as LGBTQ+ in the United States. They see social justice as integral to ministry. The thirst for mercy moves young Catholics to follow the footsteps of giant figures in the *lucha* (struggle) for human rights, better living conditions, and humane treatment of workers. They expressed hope that more and more Catholics will respond to God’s call to be missionary disciples and joyfully walk with others who do not look like them.

Encontrarse es fundamental *To Encounter One Another Is the* *Foundation for Living Together*

To foster a culture of encounter, HAs embrace history, art, and popular devotions, combining

liturgy, music, religious education, theological reflection, and pastoral care. Music, drama, and the arts are key vehicles for learning, teaching, and even transforming our communities. We worship in centuries-old mission buildings as well as contemporary parishes; we walk in processions, celebrate Las Posadas, experience Our Lady of Guadalupe festivities, and celebrate more than twenty titles used for Mary in our rich Catholic heritage. We pray that our personal encounter with the crucified and Risen Christ transforms our hearts and moves us to love God and neighbor.

Young adults have expressed a need for more dialogue and identified a concern that the voiceless are often speaking to us, but we are not listening. Many shared that the Church often does not pay enough attention to inclusion and the promotion of unity in diversity. They want to be heard, seen, and recognized. They need support to gather as HA youth and young adults in groups and ecclesial communities; and they need to feel welcome not only as individuals but as a group, to develop a sense of belonging and ownership that will allow them to be protagonists in the life and mission of the Church. We need to be willing to have our hearts broken as we listen to the experiences of others. We show we are *familia* (family) when we offer radical solidarity, that is, active inclusion that stems from the practice of listening with the heart. Our Lady of Guadalupe,¹⁹ listening and talking with Juan Diego, set the example for a Church faithfully engaged in dialogue.

There is great concern that the loss of identity leads to deprivation of dignity. Hispanics/

18 V Encuentro, “Key Demographic, Social, and Religious Statistics,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://vencuentro.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/V-Encuentro-Demographic-and-Religious-Statistics-EN.pdf>.

19 Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared as a dark-skinned woman to an indigenous man, engaging in a series of dialogues recounted in the *Nican Mopohua*. A well-known line resonates powerfully today to comfort millions across the continent: “No temas. . . . ¿No estoy aquí yo que soy tu madre?” (Be not afraid . . . Am I not here your mother?).

Latinos actively struggle and work to continue cultural traditions without losing identity. One of the participants in the intercultural dialogue led by the HA family echoed these sentiments by proclaiming, “We are not a melting pot, because melting pots contribute to the loss of who we are. We are a patchwork quilt, where everyone is integral, and the thread that holds us together is God.” Pronounced discrimination leads many to believe that they do not fully belong in the Church; struggles at the local level generate most of the hurt and misunderstandings. The Greek root of the word “parish” refers to a “house where strangers meet,” and HA communities long for parishes that welcome, accept, embrace, appreciate, and invite their cultural identities to flourish as active members of the Church.

The global pandemic has tremendously affected HA communities, with most families hurting because of the losses they are experiencing: loved ones, jobs, and in some cases even hope for the future. Youth and young adult ministries have seen paid staffing levels diminished. The need to invest in and to accompany HA youth and young adults is both urgent and important. We must walk with young people before it is too late. Society and the Church renew themselves through emerging adults. Amid all this suffering, we learned from one of the HA panelists that “God does not wait to show off” when we are about to lose our way, and that HAs are indeed “passionate about faith and passionate about trust.” We do not walk alone! The Church is our extended family! We are gathered and sent as missionary disciples. We support one another, consult, collaborate, and share resources. Together we create new spaces for young people to evangelize their peers and change the world.

¡Somos Iglesia en salida! *We Are a Church That Goes Forth!*

The Journeying Together process has already yielded many pastoral insights for our cultural family. The concerns, challenges, experiences, and hopes shared among all participants call us to integrate faith and life, to put our faith into action as bridge builders at all levels.

Pastoral listening is the first step to becoming a bridge builder in our local parishes, neighborhoods, and communities. We naturally witness to our faith through storytelling at family gatherings, when cooking meals, or when celebrating First Communion, marriages, and Christmas. We share our own stories and listen to other people’s stories, expressing the joys and sorrows, with all their complexities, twists, and turns.

Active inclusion leads to radical solidarity with those who are hurting, oppressed, and at the margins. Pope Francis’s invitation to inclusion stems from the realities lived out in the peripheries and should always be the focus of the Church moving forward. One participant even challenged us to model solidarity as a concrete way of expressing our faith.

Intercultural competency is crucial for church leaders and young adults to grow in their skills and knowledge when working with the diverse body of Christ. Intercultural competencies implemented in pastoral training will reaffirm the heritage and validate various identities of the HA cultural family, and they are key to the collective well-being within the Church.

Protagonists with prophetic voices are called to speak up against injustice of any form and to transform the Church and society to be a more just and unified place where all can live and thrive. Every young adult is encouraged to exercise a prophetic voice for the common good, toward the building-up of a civilization of love.

Reflection Questions

1. What in this section resonated with or inspired me? What challenged me?
2. What steps can I take to better understand and appreciate the diversity within the Hispanic/Latino community?
3. How does the HA emphasis on bridge building inspire me to build bridges amid my own experiences of challenge and hope?
4. How does a more expansive notion of family and a posture of radical solidarity with those on the margins shape my Catholic identity and vocational call? What choices can I make in daily life to reflect this idea?

NATIVE AMERICAN

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
That I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

Who Are We?

Indigenous communities across the United States represent more than three hundred tribal nations with distinct cultural practices and languages. Indigenous peoples' cultures and spiritual beliefs often were rooted and shaped by the lands they dwelled in. While every tribal nation is distinct, great similarities appear among the nomadic bands of the Great Plains or among the agricultural Southwest desert nations. As communities rooted in their relationship to the earth, many tribal nations are greatly aware of the importance of the natural environment.

One significant historical fact that connects nearly all tribal nations is the shared experience of historic colonialism within the wider story of the birth and development of the United States. Each tribal community experienced a distinctly different relationship with the US government and the Catholic Church. Many were displaced, confined, and nearly eradicated in the attempts to assimilate them to US culture and ways of life. This includes the ways in which the US government built schools through its own actions or with assistance given to religious groups. Despite this history, Indigenous communities have survived and are resilient.

What Are Our Gifts?

Indigenous peoples bring many gifts to the Catholic faith. In the wake of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* the Church is slowly recognizing the value and importance of our care

for God's whole Creation. Indigenous peoples have, throughout our history, been people who are tied uniquely to the land. Land is recognized to be that which has provided us with life. Indigenous people's relationship to the land highlights the spiritual connection with the Creator in a more visible and meaningful way, especially when we think of the phrase "God in all things." This is something Indigenous people have recognized for centuries.

Indigenous people have often placed family at the center of their lives in all ways. The Catholic faith values family as the first teacher of the faith and the primary place of passing it on. Indigenous people bring a concept of family that is expansive and diverse and shows that family can be greater and stronger than the core nuclear family. Indigenous people developed a greater network of kinship systems; they have also, in many communities, valued adoption and the creation of new families. This gift allows us to always be welcoming of nontraditional families and open to the many ways families can be a powerful source of learning and sharing and providers of faith-filled lives.

Indigenous people have also produced saints, blessed, and servants of God over the centuries. In addition to the better-known St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the Martyrs of La Florida, Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá, and Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk are examples of those who merged their native culture with their Catholic faith. These figures have modeled the gifts of Indigenous people and how they have brought those gifts to deepen and enrich the Catholic faith.

What Needs Were Expressed?

Indigenous people's needs, especially when it comes to the Catholic Church, are certainly varied and individual. But collectively, there

are shared concerns and ways in which the overall challenges native peoples face could be addressed more directly by their faith community. These needs have become even more salient and relevant in the wake of the discovery in Kamloops, Canada, of a multitude of unmarked graves in the Indian residential school system.

There is a tension inherent in being a Catholic and an Indigenous person. That tension stems from the Church's history and involvement in Indigenous assimilation policy. There is a great need for the Catholic Church to acknowledge this in a meaningful way. To some non-Catholic Indigenous people, this history presents a fundamental barrier to their even considering the Catholic faith. For Indigenous Catholics, especially lapsed Catholics, this historic tension and lack of respectful engagement from the Catholic community can continue their struggle to remain Catholic.

One Indigenous Catholic person in our discussions spoke of the reality that the Catholic Church engaged in decades of trying to assimilate Indigenous peoples, yet today Indigenous peoples can feel forgotten by the greater Church. Inclusion means acknowledgment of the harmful history and a true seat at the table in determining the future of Indigenous Catholic ministry. This includes the importance of making sure Indigenous peoples are fully known by church leadership and communities that perhaps lack any regular engagement with Indigenous peoples.

What Did We Learn?

Indigenous peoples, including Catholics, have a complicated relationship with Catholicism. Many Indigenous Catholics face ostracization by the larger Indigenous community because of the Catholic Church's involvement

in eradicating Indigenous beliefs and cultures from those who were placed in religious boarding schools. Many were taught that they needed to assimilate by shedding their cultural identity in favor of the colonial oppressors. This history has led not only to widespread distrust of the Catholic Church among the Indigenous community, but also to Indigenous Catholics' being perceived as "less native" than the non-Catholics within their cultural family. Similarly, Indigenous Catholics are perceived as "less Catholic" at times by Catholics outside Native American culture. For some, Indigenous cultures are incompatible with the Catholic faith. For many Indigenous Catholics, however, incorporating their heritage into their Catholic beliefs is but one way they have expressed their identity. After all, they are both Indigenous and Catholic. For the number of those who are Catholic and native, an appreciation of being included and recognized is deeply important. Throughout *Journeying Together*, the inclusion of Indigenous people in this process moved the participants, and they shared a depth of gratitude.

In a community "on the Rez," everyone is family. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the Native American communities very hard. Living in close proximity to multigenerational families easily caused Indigenous communities to be COVID-19 hot spots early in 2020. Simply put, it is hard to isolate someone when many are living together. The lack of basic necessities in some parts of the reservations has also made it difficult for people without running water or electricity.

The Native American cultural family presentation in *Journeying Together* highlighted the need for reconciliation between the Church and Indigenous peoples. It is not enough to say "we're sorry." There is a need to grapple, to face our own past, and to feel the shame and horror

of the sins of the past that truly affect the present day and will always be reflected in the history of the native people and endless future generations. Healing this historic conflict remains the most important step for the Catholic Church to take with Indigenous peoples. Healing is possible and powerfully shown in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As a faith community, we admit our failures and seek penance and forgiveness. Indigenous Catholics have a unique opportunity to lead the way toward reconciliation and healing, and there is a need for the greater Church to actively engage in that process.

Takeaways from Journeying Together

The first takeaway was the need for increased awareness. Indigenous Catholics exist and are active participants and contributors in the Church and larger society. The second was the need for listening. The Church can cultivate active listening; this will allow the Church to become more aware of our Indigenous brothers and sisters along with understanding their needs. The third, as mentioned before, was reconciliation. The Church must confront the past in deep dialogue in order to apologize and be forgiven. This is necessary for the healing of our brothers and sisters and allows us to experience the sacramentality of reconciliation. Pope Francis's upcoming visit to Canada is a hopeful step in the right direction. A fourth takeaway was the need for inculturation. Indigenous peoples can be both traditional/cultural and

Catholic; the Church must allow them to be both and open itself up to their rich traditions. The final takeaway was the need for inclusion. The Church must include Indigenous people at decision-making tables, provide a space where they can speak, and encourage them to take the leadership among their own.

Conclusion

We have discussed the need to admit mistakes when they were made, no matter the intentions behind them. The Catholic Church could do well to find ways to move toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples regarding the history of boarding schools and the role the Church played in their destructive policies. As thousands of unmarked graves continue to be discovered in these school cemeteries, the pain of that history clearly lingers in the hearts and minds of many who experienced those days; and that pain now resonates in the descendants of those boarding school survivors as well. The sacramental nature of the Church always affords us the grace of finding nourishment, healing, reconciliation, and the promise of new life in our everyday journey. The Native American community believes together we can be a sign that these historical realities will give way to hope that transforms us all. This will mean dialogue, listening, learning, and changing as part of our work moving forward. For those of us who are Indigenous and Catholic, this is a time of reckoning and an opportunity to be leaders in the movement toward healing and reconciliation.

PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND TRAVELERS

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart Lord,
That I may see the
goodness of your Creation.*

The Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) encompasses a large number of unique and diverse communities that weave a multitextured and colorful fabric. Some cultural families have moved from one place to another for survival. Others have reconvened in new places for spiritual growth and the nurturing of family ties. Still others move regularly to make their living and to use their gifts in service of others along the way. The identified communities participating in this family include:

1. Ethnic families and recent immigrants to the United States: African, Brazilian, Caribbean, Haitian, and European immigrants; Eastern Catholic Churches, including Chaldean Catholics, Our Lady of Lebanon, and St. Maron—Maronite Eparchies of the United States and Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Eparchy
2. Refugees and victims of forced migration
3. Communities on the move, which include migrant farmworkers, circus and traveling show communities, seafarers and mariners (Stella Maris, or Apostleship of the Sea), airport chaplaincies, and Irish Travelers

The members of this cultural family have come from varied cultures and countries and live in diverse places here in the United States. They inhabit cities as well as rural communities. They include young and old. Some are

first-generation young adults, and others have roots that sink deeper into the American experience. Some live in close-knit ethnic or cultural communities, and others are immersed in a more multiethnic experience. Each of these communities is proud of the unique contributions it offers to the broader Church. They all represent diversity in culture and in liturgy, and they share a presence in the Church that challenges us to appreciate the breadth of our faith expression.

During the Journeying Together process, a series of important themes emerged. First was the need for acceptance that leads to inclusion. Participants identified a lack of representation in the decision-making process of parishes. Often a group might be sidelined or left out of the normal structures of the pastoral advisory process. One participant spoke of the refugee experience with gratitude for the resettlement support that the local church offered, but she also spoke of the confusion generated when that same church did not include her in its everyday life. This discomfort was augmented by images used in the church and the school that focused on the stereotyped labels of poverty, hunger, and desperation to raise money to “help refugees.” The experience of participants also revealed their frustration that they were often burdened with having to explain their roots and their faith to others. One panelist—a member of one of the sui iuris Eastern churches in Catholicism, whose family has roots in Iraq—stated that in sixteen years of Catholic education there was never a mention of other expressions of the Catholic faith apart from the experience of the Latin Church. He stated, “People weren’t even sure we were Catholic.”

Inclusion also means cultural integration. Participants spoke of the invisibility they often experience, especially as young adults. Exclusion from facility usage or restrictions on

where a group might meet or what relationship it might have to the overall parish make people feel they are strangers in their own Church. The Haitian Catholic experience for one young adult participant is one where culture and faith “is celebrated in song, language, and dance.” In her parish community, these expressions were tempered over time because the larger white community misunderstood these elements in ritual and were not comfortable with these particular expressions. The Haitian community experienced this as a lack of respect. This panelist noted, sadly, “Ignorance is not bliss. It hurts.”

A second theme that emerged explored the reality of bias and discrimination. Participants agreed that there is a lack of racial unity in the mainstream (white) church. There is a desire for the Church to be a leader in reshaping the racist environment participants sometimes experience. Participants identified this racism as the result of ignorance that everyday life and education in the faith have not dispelled. One panelist talked about the struggle “to find a sense of belonging.” When it comes to the bias born of racist behavior, participants said, the Church needs to be called to educate people to “appreciate that we are all made in the image of God.”

This bias is expressed in another way. Members of traveling communities find that because they are not regularly connected to parish communities, they are not valued when they need pastoral care or the sacraments. In the world of the traveling circus, for example, where individuals live on the road and have little opportunity to interact outside of their traveling community, young people encounter a lack of acceptance because they may not fit into the pattern of a parish’s programs. Sometimes sacramental needs are hard to meet because travelers simply cannot conform to already established

parish schedules. They experience this as a lack of acceptance. One participant stated that such behavior on the part of mainline parish churches convinces them that Catholics in the United States “don’t understand diversity.”

Even with the challenges that these varied communities experience, they are also quick to identify the gifts and the graces they bring to the Church in the United States. Along with the admission that the great diversity of custom and practice is a gift these groups bring to the broader Church, two other elements were identified:

1. **Pride:** Each community is proud of the unique perspective that it can bring to the larger Church. There is an eagerness to share, to reach out, and to educate so there may be mutual understanding. They believe such sharing will deepen an appreciation of the depth and breadth of our faith experience overall.
2. **Richness:** A second gift offered by these PCMRT communities is the recognition of our common riches. When one looks at and appreciates our cultural, liturgical, racial, and ethnic diversities, one can be invited into a deeper dialogue with what it means to be Catholic. The members of these communities who have had that “starting-over experience”—because of travel, displacement, or the need to live on the move—already experience the “constancy of God who is always there for us,” as stated in the panels. Encounters with and growth together in faith with these communities can produce the same rich home-
stead. Hope for them is planted there.

All of this group reflection surfaced certain needs that many of our PCMRT communities see as important in our unfolding faith journey.

- Beyond efforts to welcome youth from varieties of communities, there appears to be a gap in the Church's response to the pressures and issues of these youth in the preaching and practice of the Church. There is a need for vigilance on the part of church leaders to embrace youth from this cultural family who is seen sometimes as on the periphery. Efforts should be made to ensure that the Church is truly the second home this cultural family longs for.
- Awareness of the different rites and traditions of various groups is also an important need. Taking the further step of integrating these realities as much as possible into parish life will also show respect for the people who bring these unique realities to the Church.
- There must be a frank admission that racism is still a reality in our communities. In humility, the Church must make a commitment to identify areas of racist behavior and examine how each parish can move beyond the fears and the stereotypes that still restrict and divide us.
- Division is born from not knowing and not listening to the other. The Church needs to be a place that ensures that people can speak and listen together in a gratifying and life-giving way. At the same time, parishes' education programs must strengthen the specific faith of young adults and expand the broader Church's understanding of its diversity and beauty. These things will affirm the common dignity we share in Jesus.
- There is a need for the Church to be present to all sorts of people. The Church—especially bishops, other clergy, and adult leaders—must be present in service to those who because of

fear or other pressures have not darkened our doorways.

Our ability to build bridges and close gaps together relies on a few pastoral imperatives that surfaced in the group discussions.

1. **Accompaniment rather than assimilation:** More than encouraging mere presence in a parish structure, the Church must make efforts to reach into these cultural communities to cultivate parish leadership, to provide clergy and lay adults as mentors to help young adults to grow in faith and spirituality, and to help the community perceive that it is seen, heard, and welcomed in the parish and in the diocesan Church.
2. **Inclusion:** PCMRT young adults often struggle with an identity that says they are “part of two different worlds.” Recognizing these unique struggles and having the ability to address them in preaching and in spiritual development can assist young adults to strengthen the gifts of faith and heritage as a common point for belonging.
3. **Hospitality on a deeper level:** Hospitality must be grounded in openness. This means meeting groups of people where they are at a given moment on the journey. Hospitality relies on a realization that as Catholics we are called to live faith together not only when it is convenient for us and not only in its most typical, comfortable ways. The Church needs to reexamine how it speaks about these different cultural communities so that the language and images we use are affirming and supportive.
4. **Education that enriches and explains:** Young adults yearn to learn more about their faith so they can deepen it for

Lessons Learned

Journeying Together is an evangelical enterprise. In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis writes, “youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve a ‘journeying together’ that values ‘the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members, through a process of co-responsibility. . . . Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. No one should be excluded or exclude themselves” (no. 206, quoting the Synod’s *Final Document*).

Participatory. Spirit-filled. Co-responsible. Appreciating diverse gifts and experiences. Inclusion. These themes helped guide the process, and we are called to share the fruits of this journey. What follows here are the six central lessons that emerged over the two years of synodal conversation: embracing of historical memory, active inclusion, diversity and giftedness, practicing of accompaniment, formation possibilities, and enduring hope.

We invite the reader to prayerfully reflect on each one of these lessons learned:

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the Holy Spirit
at work in this lesson.
Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.*

EMBRACING HISTORICAL MEMORY

When we celebrate the Eucharist, we are met with the words, “Do this in memory of me.” We eat the bread. We drink the cup. We proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus Christ until he comes again. We do this often. This is a function of our memory as people of faith, what is called “anamnesis.” As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes, in anamnesis, “the liturgical celebration always refers to God’s saving interventions in history.”²⁰ Every Eucharist is a re-presentation of the Paschal Mystery; therefore, at every Eucharist we bring a historical mystery to bear upon our lived experiences. We continue to engage the history of our faith by living through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, Easter, and Ordinary Time that shape the liturgical year. These seasons connect our remembrance of the birth, life, death, and triumphant Resurrection of Jesus. Participation in life through the liturgical year invites us to “live his mystery in our own lives.”²¹ Our commitment to the Eucharist and the liturgical year indicates that we as a Church are no stranger to engaging our faith’s history and making space for it to shape and change our lives. The Catholic Tradition is rooted in acts of remembrance, yet members of our Church feel forgotten amid such remembrance.

The Journeying Together process revealed that some of the cultural families in our Church do not feel wholly seen because the Church has not acknowledged their histories. Instead, it

²⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, updated 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2019), no. 1103. Subsequently cited in the text as CCC.

²¹ “Liturgical Year and Calendar,” USCCB, accessed March 31, 2022, <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year>.

has sought to graft them into the family without reckoning with the ways that the Church sometimes participates in inflicting wounds. Therefore, we lift two significant areas of concern from the cultural families; they invite the Church to become full participants in the life of its members just as it expects its members to be full participants in the Church's life. These two areas of concern are (1) the Church's active embrace of history to connect to the trauma and wounds of its cultural families and (2) acknowledgment of the connection between cultural ancestors and saints as markers of history.

In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, the protagonist Sethe, introduces the concept of rememory when she says, "Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do."²² As Sethe remembers slavery's traumatic wounds, readers are invited to take a haunting journey with her, the ghost of her baby, and the new friends she makes along the way. This process foists itself upon readers and discomforts them as they relive that history. Rememory demonstrates the connection between the past and the present and how refusal to wrestle with painful memories infringes on freedom.

Through Journeying Together, we witnessed several cultural families sharing how they have experienced the Church's refusal to wrestle with the histories they bring with them. The BAA family asked for "continued acknowledgment of pain and suffering, past and present . . . through the perpetual healing of memory." The Native American family pointed us to the historical fact that many tribal nations are connected by the shared experience of colonialism, an experience that is not detached from how the Catholic Church was involved in Indigenous assimilation policy. Given this history, they

requested that the Catholic Church acknowledge this in meaningful ways. They suggested that we grapple with and face our own past and feel the shame and horror of the sins of the past that truly affect the present day. The HA cultural family gave us a sense of what this grappling could look like: "We need to be willing to have our hearts broken as we listen to the experiences of others. We show we are *familia* (family) when we offer 'radical solidarity,' that is, active inclusion that stems from the practice of listening with the heart." This cultural family reminds us that attending to each other's experiences, a part of which means paying attention to our histories, requires that we put our hearts on the line, to break our hearts with the things that have broken our brothers and sisters' hearts. In doing so, we begin to bridge the gap between us and dwell much more richly as a family unit.

The second area of concern lifted during the Journeying Together process is acknowledging the connection between cultural families' ancestors and Catholic saints. Many, if not most, of the cultural families, pointed to the significance of their ancestors as not only passing down cultural awareness but religious traditions. The ancestors walked by faith on this plane and still impart wisdom in the next place; therefore, they exist as people whom cultural families still esteem. The API cultural family made the connection explicit: "Like the Communion of Saints, ancestors continue to be a part of the living through shared stories and traditions. These stories are rich; some are complicated, and some are not easy to retell. But they are being told in order to connect the generations." The Native American family also lifted up that Indigenous people have ancestors who have become saints, blessed, and servants of God over the centuries. And closely linked

22 Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 43.

is how the BAA family offered their report in the memory of “all persons of African descent who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, so that we, those of us on this side of Eternity, may continue the work they began.” Whether their ancestors are beatified and canonized or simply live in the collective memory of the community, each cultural family recognizes a set of ancestors who give them some sense of the saintly and the sacred. These ancestors are not antithetical to the Catholic tradition of the saints; they are in communion with those saints and represent the cloud of witnesses that bring and sustain their descendants in the faith.

Attention to the continuity between cultural family ancestors and Catholic saints can help us better attend to the histories that cultural families share with the Church. Likewise, embracing the traumatic histories and historical wounds of the cultural families helps us to walk in solidarity and share the burdens they have carried. The pivot to the language of “share” is intentional because the purpose of *Journeying Together* is to bridge the real and perceived gaps between the cultural families and the Church. It seeks to obliterate a narrow sense of the Church as confined to “us,” which perceives other cultural families as “them.” *Journeying Together* moves us toward being reconciled and transformed into a fully inclusive Church family.

Reflection Questions

1. What of this lesson speaks to my own personal experience?
2. How does the Spirit stir in me given the notion of rememory, or given the role that ancestors and saints play in my life of faith?
3. What obstacles need to be addressed?
4. What response is necessary for me personally? For us collectively as Church?

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the Holy Spirit
at work in this lesson.*

*Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.*

ACTIVE INCLUSION

Journeying Together offers a story of faith; truly, it provides many stories gathered through a common experience of encounter, conversation, and dialogue. Over several months, we heard individual and cultural family stories. A consistent theme emerged through these stories: the desire for inclusion—to be warmly welcomed, given opportunities to participate in the life of the community, appreciated for gifts shared, acknowledged as sons and daughters of God, and recognized as contributors to the life of the Church in service to humanity.

Sadly, this theme is most clearly articulated as an absence. Each cultural family expressed in its own way a deep desire for belonging that often was not realized. Person after person, regardless of cultural family, wanted to be included, to be seen and engaged as full members of the community. This profound longing for Christian community was expressed through the retelling of countless experiences of not being welcomed, seen, or trusted. Sometimes the young adults felt relegated to limiting or nominal roles—like setting up for a meeting—but not asked to participate in preparing the agenda or other decision-making moments. Numerous participants voiced hurt and frustration about their gifts and desire to serve going unnoticed or, worse, being disregarded.

Inclusion is an essential aspect of the Catholic community. The book of Genesis tells us that every person is created in the image and likeness of God, referred to as *imago Dei*

(see Gn 1:26-27). Our existence as human beings stems from our relationship to God, our Creator, and secures for each and every one of us an inherent worth and dignity. The concept of *imago Dei* is the basis of human dignity and thus demands respect for every person. Building on human dignity, as people of faith, we are called to love one another as Jesus loved us (see Jn 13:34-35). This call to love sets the stage for inclusion, where care and respect are lived out in community. Journeying Together, from the very beginning, sought to gather young adults and ministry leaders across cultural families for substantive conversation in which the guiding principles of inclusion and respect for unique voices would provide space for resolute witness. The process led to an authentic encounter, encouraged empathy, and deepened our appreciation of one another.

In exploring this desire, we understand that inclusion is more than a sense of welcome, yet inclusion is not possible without a spirit of welcome. Hospitality reflects a stance of welcome and openness rooted in human dignity. The notion of welcome in the Journeying Together conversations raised significant questions among participants and ministry leaders. For example: Who is responsible for welcoming? Is it only the pastor, or do all the baptized bear some responsibility? Who has the authority to welcome? Who has ownership of a place or a ministry? Does the dominant culture welcome the newcomer? In whose name do we welcome? The complexity of community is illustrated in different approaches to inclusion. While we may readily welcome the stranger or the neighbor, how do we welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ? These questions become even more relevant in today's society, when that brother or sister speaks a different

language, comes from a different cultural background, or is part of a different generation.

We celebrate the inherent dignity and worth of each human person with unique gifts and experiences. Pope St. John Paul II wrote, "Being a person in the image and likeness of God thus also involves existing in a relationship, . . . a prelude to the definitive self-revelation of the Triune God: a living unity in the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. . . . It also means that man and woman, created as a 'unity of the two' in their common humanity, are called to live in a communion of love, and in this way to mirror in the world the communion of love that is in God."²³ The Trinity, as a communion of beings bound by love, offers participants and indeed the whole Church a model of inclusion that is grounded in holy unity. As we work to create a more inclusive Church, we must respect unique voices, provide safe spaces for stories to be shared, and embrace our brothers and sisters as a clear witness of what it means to be Catholic.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers guidance for our response, "The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good. Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life" (no. 1926). Journeying Together participants from various cultural families voiced real challenges that cry out for a response. For example, the Native American and HA cultural families noted the tremendous impact the pandemic had on their communities. Members of the API and BAA cultural families expressed concern about increasing numbers of acts of violence toward their communities. How can we as Church work to improve the quality of life for our brothers

23 Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988), no. 7, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html.

and sisters across cultural families?

The HA cultural family identified themselves as bridge builders reaching across cultures. Their report said that as a means to reach those on the margins, “active inclusion leads to radical solidarity with those who are hurting, oppressed, and at the margins. Pope Francis’s invitation to inclusion stems from the realities lived out in the peripheries and should always be the focus of the Church moving forward.” The principle of inclusion is more than a lofty ideal; it is grounded in respectful relationship, unity, and work for the common good as an expression of our Catholic faith.

True inclusion means claiming one another as family and supporting each other as brothers and sisters. Taking a stand for one another is taking a stand for human dignity and for the common good. Inclusion requires “defending and promoting fundamental and inalienable human rights.”²⁴ For the Body of Christ, inclusion means the unconditional embrace of our brothers and sisters, especially those in need. For this reason, the Church “maintains certain principles of justice and equity as they apply to individuals, societies, and international relations. In the course of the centuries and with the light of the gospel she has worked out these principles as right reason demanded. In modern times especially, the Church has enlarged upon them” (GS, no. 63). The intercultural encounter of Journeying Together reminds us of the Church’s long-standing commitment to uphold justice, right relationship, equity, and communion.

During a meeting with the Ministry Leader Advisory Group, a ministry leader reflected on the graces of Journeying Together. He spoke of the early Church, especially the tensions and divisions among them, as recounted by St. Paul: “each of you is saying, ‘I belong to Paul,’ . . . or

‘I belong to Cephas’” (1 Cor 1:12). The ministry leader’s prayer was that this experience of encounter with our brothers and sisters, combined with the gift of listening to their shared stories, would teach us how to be Church anew. While preserving cherished cultural traditions, Journeying Together helps diminish divisions among us. Imagine how the members of Christ’s Body living their call to love one another through a radical hospitality and compassionate care would revitalize the Church. The grace of inclusion leads to true communion and the fullness of unity. How can we, individually and collectively, foster the fullness of inclusion?

Reflection Questions

1. How did the personal stories heard through Journeying Together resonate with or challenge my experience of inclusion?
2. What keeps me from being more inclusive?
3. How is the Spirit calling me to attitudes of respect or work for the common good?
4. What response is needed to help the local and universal Church be more inclusive?

24 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2005), no. 388.

Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the Holy Spirit
at work in this lesson.
Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.

DIVERSITY AND GIFTEDNESS

The lesson of inclusion captures what binds these cultural families together and reflects the ontological reality of the Holy Trinity. This reality calls us to communion and invites members of every cultural family to full participation. The nature of the Holy Trinity, however, also reflects the beauty of diversity, which we are also called to acknowledge. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—these three distinct persons remain in perpetual, loving relationship with one another, fostering infinite goodness. Fr. Carlo Rocchetta has described the generosity within the Trinity as “communion of difference.” In “The Holy Spirit and Marriage” he demonstrates that diversity is a strength, writing that the Trinity is “a communion of persons that makes of difference a source of exchange and mutual wealth.”²⁵ Similarly, Fr. Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ, has noted that differences enrich relationships; they do not undermine them.²⁶ Finally, the XV Ordinary Synod applauded diversity, noting that God’s creative work “‘establishes distinctions’ within the chaos of the indistinct, imprinting on the cosmos the beauty of order and the harmony of diversity.”²⁷ Harmony is a vivid image; in harmony, distinct sounds come together to produce something

more beautiful than any single note could on its own.

Each cultural family’s report highlights the gifts of its community. As we acknowledge the diversity of gifts, we must also recognize the gift of diversity. Our differences expand our notion of Catholicism, helping us to see with a richer, more complete perspective. As Catholics, we treasure each of the notes the cultural families sing as well as the harmony we collectively produce. *Journeying Together* affords us an opportunity to more mindfully listen for the fullness of the harmony, to share our gifts with one another, and to grow as Catholics as we accept the gifts of others. When we open ourselves to recognize the insights and strengths of a particular cultural family and learn from it, we are able to move from “their gifts” to “our gifts.” It is in this spirit that this section encourages us not only to pause and reflect upon the many diverse gifts *Journeying Together* has lifted up, but also to consider how these gifts might form and expand our own Catholic imagination.

In the 1987 *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, the bishops of the United States wrote that with true integration, distinct “cultural values and religious traditions are to be respected. Beyond that we must work towards mutual enrichment through interaction among all cultures.”²⁸ *Journeying Together* has allowed us to celebrate and honor our differences as well as recognize opportunities in which we may learn from others. Before any integration of another cultural family’s gifts can happen, we need to first raise questions about cultural appropriation. One of the members of

25 Carlo Rocchetta, “The Holy Spirit and Marriage,” *Marriage, Families & Spirituality* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 1998): 179.

26 Allan Figueroa Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome: The Gospel for the Third Millennium* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2016), 70.

27 Synod of Bishops, XV Ordinary General Assembly, *Final Document*, no. 79.

28 USCCB, *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1987).

the editorial team remembered a lay master of divinity student raising this issue in class. The student had witnessed liturgical practices that did not come from her own culture but nonetheless deeply moved her. She wondered whether it would be cultural appropriation to employ a Catholic practice that was religiously hers, but not ethnically hers. And what about those she ministered to? Could she bring this practice to them with integrity? How do we ensure that we avoid cultural appropriation, but embrace cultural appreciation?

It is our hope that all may have an experience of Catholicism that, while culturally not their own, moves them closer to God. Perhaps we experience this at a Mass that celebrates the Feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs. Maybe we hear a descendant's story about boarding schools and realize the anger, grief, and need for healing that many Native Catholics continue to grapple with. Perhaps we participate in a parish's St. Patrick's ceili dance or Oktoberfest event. We may have been touched by a story of a recent migrant to the United States or by a refugee who recounts the ways Catholics and Catholic organizations helped his family to create a home in a new country. Or maybe we process with others, sing songs, pray, and join the feast for Las Posadas. The occasions for intercultural encounters are many, given the ethnic diversity of the Church in the United States, and the experiences of our sisters and brothers in the faith, regardless of ethnicity, should move us.

While we cannot offer an in-depth response to all of the nuances and complexities of cultural appropriation, we offer some considerations. First, is the contextual depth of the object, practice, history, saint, or other place of intercultural encounter fully understood? Make sure conversations are held with Catholics within that cultural family so that the significance of

the encounter is fully grasped.

Second, prior to taking this practice, saint, story, or other artifact elsewhere, consider how the home community feels about this. Someone shared an anecdote of a community of Catholics from West Africa who invited a woman to a festival. When she arrived in her Western-style pantsuit attire, her colleagues and friends commented that it was customary to dress in a special "gown" for that type of gala; she confessed she did not own an African outfit appropriate for the occasion. A few weeks later, she received a gift from the community: a traditional outfit from their region. She was invited to wear this for future pan-African celebrations. A short time later, this same woman was invited to the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. She consulted with native leaders to inquire whether she should wear native attire appropriate for the special occasion or attend in her Western-style clothing; they asked that she arrive in her Western attire. Staying in dialogue with each host community signals mutual respect and will likely lead to deeper appreciation.

Third, when appropriate, make the sharing of culture a mutual process. In some situations, it is appropriate simply to listen, such as when a group's experience has been marginalized and moving forward requires a recentering of this experience. However, it is also important to have times when mutual sharing can occur. *Journeying Together* hoped to ensure that Catholic youth and young adults of all ethnicities, experiences, and countries of origin entered into dialogue, which includes courageous speaking as well as humble listening. Please keep in mind that these three guidelines are meant to be a beginning approach to discernment and are not simple tests or ensuring of cultural appreciation; as with all things, proper prudence must always be exercised. With this caveat to avoid

cultural appropriation and instead engage in a formative cultural appreciation, we can turn to the abundant gifts that are present within and across these six cultural families.

Our Journeying Together process illuminated the giftedness of the various communities in the Catholic Church in the United States. And with this illumination, we should feel our own sense of Catholicism expanded as these gifts are seen no longer as “their gifts” but as “our gifts.” After all, no one takes a lamp and hides it under a basket; instead, we place it on a stand where it can bring light to everything (see Lk 11:33-36; Mt 5:15-16; Mk 4:21-22). A variety of experiences—some painful, some joyful—have shaped the way our particular ethnic group has informed our Catholic identity. Each cultural family has come to different insights about what it means to be Catholic. These insights, when freely offered and wholly received, are a grace for the Church as a whole as well as for individual persons beyond our cultural family.

We are called to share the gifts of our own personal community. The Black bishops of the United States said this very well in 1984 in *What We Have Seen and Heard*. Referring to Pope Paul VI’s 1969 homily in Kampala, Uganda, the bishops wrote, “We believe that these solemn words of our Holy Father Paul VI were addressed not only to Africans today but also to us, the children of the Africans of yesterday. We believe that the Holy Father has laid a challenge before us to share the gift of our Blackness with the Church in the United States.”²⁹ Amen! Each is called to share the gifts of his or her cultural family with the Church in the United States. We are all likewise called to

“open wide our hearts” to the witness of our fellow Catholics.³⁰

In their 2018 pastoral letter *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the bishops of the United States called us to recognize the racism within our hearts, our history, and our current society. We begin by being vulnerable to the pain and suffering that people have experienced, that is, being willing to see how any of us, as good people, unwittingly act in a way that goes against our beliefs, or to recognize occasions when we remained silent in the face of personal or social sin. We can see our own errors and become more aware of our sisters and brothers.

Journeying Together is one effort to promote healing and relationship in our Church and world. In focusing on the gifts that those outside of our cultural family offer us, we see the beauty, wisdom, and richness of other communities’ experiences; we celebrate our differences and grow in the sharing. Through thoughtful dialogue, prayer, and learning, “their gifts” truly become “our gifts.” In the end, we not only work to heal wounds and end the sin of racism, but also become more deeply, broadly, and authentically Catholic.

Reflection Questions

1. When has an experience of cultural appreciation brought me closer to God?
2. Where do I see courageous speaking and humble listening taking place in my ministry?
3. When have I experienced the graces of diversity in my own life?
4. How has Journeying Together expanded my sense of Catholicism?

²⁹ Black Bishops of the United States, “What We Have Seen and Heard,” 3, referring to Pope Paul VI, Homily at the Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium Organized by the Bishops of Africa, July 13, 1969.

³⁰ USCCB, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love—A Pastoral Letter Against Racism* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2018).

5. What actions are needed to heal the wounds and end the sin of racism?
6. What actions are needed to realize “their gifts” as “our gifts”?

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
that I may see the Holy Spirit
at work in this lesson.
Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.*

PRACTICING ACCOMPANIMENT

The whole experience of Journeying Together could serve as an excellent example of what is implied when we speak of accompaniment and how it is experienced in the life of the faithful. Young adults representing the different cultural families in the Catholic Church in the United States shared their gifts and talents, the vibrancy of the lived practices of their faith, the richness of their cultural values, and their appreciation for diversity. They also shared their experiences of pain, disillusionment, racism, and disrespect demonstrated by church leaders and others. Yet they encountered each other, listened to one another, and became companions.

Accompaniment is one of the central themes in Pope Francis’s vision for the Church, as one characteristic in the transformation of the Church into a missionary Church, a “Church which ‘goes forth.’”³¹ Journeying Together participants responded to Pope Francis’s insistence that we should be companions of all and live the “art of accompaniment,” characterized by the delicacy with which the Church approaches the “sacred ground of the other.” Thus our walking together will have the

healing rhythm of proximity, with a respectful and “compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life” (EG, no. 169).

During the Journeying Together process, young adults expressed an overriding desire, a need, to be accompanied spiritually, pastorally, and yes, humanly. Amidst a deadly global pandemic—exacerbated by the social unrest of more prominent and frequent acts of racism, and by frustrations of not being taken seriously in church structures—young adults voiced the need to be accompanied so they can navigate these and similar challenges with people who genuinely intend to journey with them in faith. At the same time, youth and young adults want to be seen as equal companions on the journey of elders, children, and church leaders.

Their honest and sacred encounters with one another showed the Church in the United States how to be an accompanying Church, where time spent with one another is important, where unity prevails over conflict, and where diversity is celebrated without lacking mercy, closeness, listening, discernment, and patience.

How can the Church live out this universal call of being an accompanying Church in the United States? Namely, it does this by recognizing that accompaniment entails journeying side by side with the people of God, not reducing or equating pastoral accompaniment to directing or to hierarchical responsibility. It means making the journey together, as companions for one another by being with “people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be” (EG, no. 24). Some more concrete ideas were mentioned:

- Creating spaces where cultural diversity is shared, honored, uplifted, and promoted

³¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2013), no. 24. Subsequently cited in the text as EG.

- Attending to the concerns of the young, which must be the concerns of the Church (see GS, no. 1)
- Trusting in the gifts and talents of young adults for the service of faith communities
- Empowering young adults to make the decisions that affect their pastoral and spiritual journeys
- Materializing this trust by inviting young adults into decision-making structures and by assigning adequate budgets to respond to their human, pastoral, and spiritual needs

In the end, one could affirm that *Journeying Together* is an example of the evangelizing mission of the Church in the United States that brings people closer to God and to one another in a diverse context. Young adults have given us the model and the mindset to be companions of one another.

Reflection Questions

1. When and how have I felt pastorally and spiritually accompanied?
2. When have I accompanied someone in the journey of faith? Whom did I accompany? What did I do? Why is this memorable to me?
3. How could I replicate the *Journeying Together* experience to foster more accompaniment in my faith community? In the Church at large?

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart, Lord,
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at work in this lesson.
Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.*

FORMATION POSSIBILITIES

One clear voice, spoken across many different cultural families, called the Church to be more focused in various aspects of our human and spiritual formation. This particular call encompasses many different facets of educational programming and accompaniment. It is seen as an opportunity to nourish not only the cultural communities themselves but also the Church.

Education in the faith was seen by many as a means to ground their Catholic identity while empowering youth and young adults to be evangelizers. At the same time, presenting the breadth of Catholic teaching in a way that encounters the human experience affords opportunities for personal spiritual growth and clarity in a world of many different mixed messages.

Young people believe that the Church, too, must be open to a deeper educational experience that allows parishioners and parish leaders to encounter the lives, the stories, and the religious experiences of the various cultures that compose our faith communities. Some approaches to this type of encounter include listening sessions at the parish or diocesan level, panel discussions that allow the various cultural families to describe their experiences of the Church and society, and other bridge-building activities. This kind of listening, dialogue, and relationship building can be transformative; it deepens the Church's self-understanding and allows the storyteller to find acceptance and an authentic place within the life of a faith community.

Because some people today are on the move from country to country, job to job, opportunity to opportunity, formation in the faith must also take advantage of social media and other electronic forms that allow certain portability of information, support, and spirituality. Formational opportunities that provide greater access to varied groups of people would assist this population by providing specific education and a deepening sense of the Church's presence to all her people.

As much as youth and young adults demand the use of media to broaden their understanding of the faith, they also long for opportunities to find companionship that offers both support and a mentoring spirit to assist them in the explicit journey of faith. The availability of fellow travelers on the journey who are more seasoned, who are patient, who may exercise some form of lay or clerical leadership, and who are willing to listen is necessary to deepen formational experience in a sensitive and inclusive way.

Along with explicit educational encounters, young people from varied cultural communities ask for opportunities to have their stories heard by the rest of the Church. They long for companionship and for a mentorship that moves beyond a classroom or other formal setting to provide a nourishment that is personal. Additionally, they long for communication in and about the faith that utilizes the various means of social communication so that they may be assured of moments of mentoring, spiritual support, and greater access to the Word dwelling in our midst and journeying with us along the way.

Reflection Questions

1. What role has formation played in my own spiritual and human journey?
2. What are the obstacles to deep and transformative formation?

3. What pastoral and strategic responses are needed to better companion, mentor and nourish young people?

*Open my eyes, open my ears,
and open my heart Lord,
That I may see the Holy Spirit
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Help me discern how you are
calling me to do what is mine to do.*

ENDURING HOPE

This Journeying Together process has been marked by an enduring hope. Yes, sin, pain, anger, and suffering are parts of this story. But consistently, hope has had the last word. In the cultural family reports we hear a hope for true reconciliation between the Church and native peoples. The PCMRT family hopes for deeper encounters that lead to authentic appreciation and greater belonging. We hear a hope of recovering traditions from ancestors as well as standing firm against racism within the EA family. The HA family witnesses to hope through its "thirst for mercy" and commitment to bridge building. The BAA family expresses a hope for healing the sins of racism that mar our Church and world. The API American family hopes for full inclusion and a greater appreciation of the diversity within its community from those within the community as well as those outside it. Finally, hope is implicit in the Journeying Together process itself; simply gathering to discuss our experiences is a statement of hope, a recognition that something greater is possible.

Colloquially when we speak of hope, we are referring to a desire for a particular outcome. Although desiring holy, grace-filled outcomes is good, Christian hope as a theological virtue goes beyond outcomes and is more about trust.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that desiring true happiness is a longing placed in us by God and is a good; hope is our response to this longing (see no. 1817). Hope is about putting aside our own strength and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. This response points us to our own growth as well as that of others. It helps us to persevere and respond with creativity when we face challenges. Hope is sometimes all we have in the most difficult moments in our lives; still, this hope can sustain us. It buoys us even when we face formidable obstacles and brings us a determination and a gladness (see CCC, no. 1818). Hope, captured well in Jesus's Beatitudes, will "trace the path that leads through the trials that await the disciples of Jesus" and bring us to the Promised Land (CCC, no. 1820).

The Spanish word *esperar* can provide insight into Christian hope, where the English understanding falls somewhat short. *Esperar* can mean "to hope," and it can also mean "to wait." When we couple these understandings, *esperar* is not just to desire something, but to anticipate its arrival. It is a hope that includes trust, a faith that what has been promised will come to fulfillment. The coming of the Messiah is a vivid illustration of the ways hope and waiting are intertwined. The holy women and men of the Hebrew Scriptures lived lives that were just, merciful, and humble (see Mi 6:8). Each showed expectant hope for the promised Messiah whom the prophets foretold. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men witnessed angels or a star heralding the arrival of the child: a child not just hoped for, but expected. And every Advent we wait and we hope—that is, we joyfully anticipate God's faithful assurance in the promise of the Incarnation. This is the ongoing drama of hope from the earliest stories of the Bible: God promises and we trust.

Hope, for Catholics, is ultimately grounded

in the assurance of God's promises, in a deep and abiding faith that God is with us and is leading us into a life more beautiful and true than we could ever imagine. It is a gateway to other virtues. Hope allows us to endure events that frustrate us, it grants courage when we are riddled with doubt or lack confidence, it can spark gladness when we are weary, and it evokes justice and compassion in the face of another's suffering. Hope buoys us when we might otherwise sink into despair, sin, fear, or hate.

Importantly, hope is more than a desire; it is a choice. It is a brave choice. It is a choice to keep going when the obstacles are many. It is a choice to reach out when it is easier to close ourselves in. It is a choice to work toward love, peace, justice, mercy, and Christ's in-breaking rather than to go about business as usual. When we act in hope, we witness to our anticipation that God's promises will be fulfilled. This expectant nature of hope demonstrates much of its power. When we choose hope, we do not just dare to dream differently; we declare that God's promises are in the process of becoming.

Hope was illustrated in a vivid way on Easter Sunday morning, when Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome were walking to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. It was just after sunrise, and as they walked they realized that they had no way to enter the tomb. A heavy stone blocked the entryway, so they asked the obvious question: "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" (Mk 16:3). Rather than turning back in discouragement, they kept going. They had a job to do. They were not sure how exactly everything would fall into place; but hope, even in their grief over Jesus's death, prodded them to keep walking. This story illuminates hope as well as demonstrating the importance of having friends on the journey. Although we can commit to hope on our own, it is much easier to

sustain hope when we are supported by a community of believers.

Hope has been a hallmark of the Journeying Together process. When we share our identity and the historical memory of our cultural families, we join the hopes of our past to those of our future. When we come together to discuss the hardships our cultural family has endured, our willingness to identify the experiences that still cause pain proclaims God's promise that reconciliation is possible. When we name the gifts of our cultural family—gifts that persist despite the many reasons to give up—we show the resilience and the sense of being buoyed that our community enjoys. When we are vulnerable to those beyond our cultural family and are willing to extend love in places of pain, we witness to the enduring love of God. In vulnerability, in hurt, in beauty, in humility, in courage, in inclusion, God's hope abides.

As the women walking to the tomb experienced, Journeying Together also provides an opportunity for community, bringing challenge and encouragement to youth and young adults and their ministers. We buoy one another as we actively engage questions surrounding racial and ethnic experiences in our Church and world. As we gather, whether in person or virtually, we gather in the presence of God and the grace of one another. As we speak boldly and listen humbly, we learn, we foster relationships, and we grow in faith and love.

The Journeying Together process is not yet finished, and it should not be seen in isolation.

Many who are participating in Journeying Together understand this as part of a larger effort. It is our hope that the work done here will bear fruit in the participants' lives that will form the wider world as well. We have inspired one another, and we know that this inspiration will extend into our Church, friendships, families, workplaces, communities, and more. We conclude by recalling the hope-filled final wish of *Christus Vivit*:

Dear young people, my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful. Keep running, "attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters. May the Holy Spirit urge you on as you run this race. The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith. We need them! And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us." (no. 299)

Reflection Questions

1. How have I witnessed God's promises in the process of becoming through the Journeying Together program?
2. How has the Holy Spirit buoyed me with hope in the past year?
3. Considering the sacred stories heard through the Journeying Together process, what personal response is needed? How might my local church respond?

Appendices

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PRAYER FOR JOURNEYING TOGETHER

God of Our Journey,
as we gather together
we lift up our voices
to give praise and thanksgiving to your name,
the God of encounter
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,
makes us one in Christ, our Savior.

God of Our Journey, Dios de nuestra jornada [Spanish],
as we journey together with Christ, your Son,
who walks alongside us day by day,
may we embrace your presence within us
and discover your presence in the people
whom we encounter along the way.

God of Our Journey, Diyos ng ating paglalakbay [Filipino],
as we journey together in the power of the Holy Spirit,
enlighten our minds and our hearts in our intercultural encounters
with one another and with all cultural families,
so that we may become better listeners
and the bearers of your faithful Word.

God of Our Journey, Wakǵaŋǵaŋka oomani awaŋuŋkičiyankapi kinj [Lakota],
as we journey together with all members of the Body of Christ,
instill in us the presence of your love and compassion,
so that we may persevere in faith,
trust in your goodness,
and place all our hope in you.

God of Our Journey, Dieu de notre voyage [French],
as we journey together as disciples of Christ,
set our missionary hearts ablaze
and transform our lives by your grace,
so that we may go forth into the world
to proclaim the Good News
and to build up the reign of your love
through our acts of justice, compassion, and mercy.

We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,
brings forth a world of harmony and peace,
One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Optional/Alternate Languages for “God of Our Journey”

- Chinese (Mandarin):
我们旅途的天主； Wǒmen lǚtú de tiānzhǔ
- Creole: Bondye nan vwayaj nou an
- German: Gott unserer Reise
- Igbo: Chineke onye ndu anyi
- Korean: 우리의 여정 이신 하느님 ;
Uli yeohaeng-ui sin
- Polish: Bóg Naszej Podróży
- Portuguese: Deus da nossa jornada
- Swahili: Mungu wa safari yetu
- Vietnamese: Thiên Chúa của đường đời
chúng con

“Prayer for Journeying Together” was composed for Journeying Together: A National

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2020 United States Conference of Catholic
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COLLABORATORS

USCCB Secretariats

- Cultural Diversity in the Church
 - The Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church works collaboratively with USCCB committees, bishops, and their dioceses to bring Catholics from various culturally diverse communities into a fuller participation in the faith, life, and evangelizing mission of the Church.
 - The mandate includes the following areas of responsibility: pastoral care of Hispanic Catholics, African American Catholics, Native American Catholics, Asian Catholics, African Catholics, Pacific Island Catholics, Catholic migrants and refugees, and people on the move.
- Catholic Education
 - The Committee on Catholic Education provides guidance for the educational mission of the Church in the United States in all its institutional settings. The Committee guides, directs, and coordinates this task, working closely with the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis.
 - The mandate includes the following areas of responsibility: Catholic elementary and secondary schools; federal advocacy on private school policy issues; Catholic higher education and Catholic campus ministry; and certification standards for lay ecclesial ministry.
- Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations
 - The Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations promotes, supports, and educates about the Church's pastoral needs and concerns for the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life within culturally diverse communities of the United States. The committee develops foundational documents and appropriate resources that promote the effective ministry of the clerical state, consecrated life, and vocations. The Committee collaborates with other USCCB committees and national organizations in matters related to the clerical state, consecrated life, and vocations.
- Evangelization and Catechesis
 - The Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis assists the bishops in fulfilling their role as evangelizers and chief catechists in their dioceses by addressing all aspects of evangelization and catechesis for adults, youth, and children. This includes fostering the distribution and implementation of foundational documents related to evangelization and catechesis, the development of guidelines for both, and especially the evaluation of catechetical materials for their conformity to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The committee supports initiatives that focus on the Church's world mission mandate and on stewardship.
 - This mandate includes the following areas of responsibility: evangelization of all persons, including outreach to the unchurched and to inactive Catholics; catechesis for adults, youth, and children; use of the *Catechism*; world mission awareness education; stewardship awareness education.
- Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth
 - The Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth advances the vocation and mission of the lay faithful, of married couples and families, of lay

ecclesial ministers, and of young people. Through emphasis on the articulation and application of anthropological and theological principles, founded on magisterial teaching, the Committee assists the bishops as they promote—in a culturally diverse Church—the evangelization, faith formation, and public witness of these persons, leading them toward a deeper commitment to Christ and his Church so as to transform culture and society.

- This mandate includes the following areas of responsibility: laity in the world and the Church, including the concerns of women and men; the promotion and protection of marriage and family life; natural family planning; lay ecclesial ministry; lay apostolates and movements; and advancing the Church's ministries with youth and young adults.

Collaborating Organizations

- National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)

NFCYM, as a membership organization, seeks to support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ. NFCYM commits to advancing the field of pastoral ministry to young people by forming, equipping, and supporting ministry leaders in their service to young people and their families; modeling and fostering a ministry of *acompañamiento* among young people of all cultures, languages, socioeconomic and geographic realities; and partnering with parents and equipping families of young people as they witness to Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

Cultural Families

- Asian and Pacific Islanders (API)

The API cultural family consists of individuals of Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Indian, and Japanese descent, as well as members of other communities. APIs now make up 6 percent of the overall US population. As migration increases their numbers each year, APIs are among the fastest growing minority groups impacting American society and the Catholic Church.

- Black and African American (BAA)

For the purpose of the Journeying Together process, the BAA family consists of individuals who self-identify with an African American heritage. For pastoral care purposes they are grouped under the USCCB's Subcommittee on African American Affairs. The subcommittee attends to the needs and aspirations of BAA Catholics regarding issues of pastoral ministry, evangelization, social justice, worship, development of leaders, and other areas of concern. There are more than three million African American Catholics in the United States.

- European American (EA)

For the purpose of Journeying Together, Catholics of European descent in the United States were convened primarily through ministries with young adults coordinated by the Secretariats of Catholic Education and of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. This process provided an opportunity to reflect on the cultural, religious, and immigrant heritage, some of which is known and some of which has been lost over generations. European immigrant families came to this country at different times, for different reasons, and settled in varied regions across this country.

- Hispanic/Latino American (HA)

In Journeying Together, the HA family

seeks to affirm the gifts and contributions of HA youth and young adults, accompanying them in their faith journey and generating opportunities for their ongoing leadership development and formation as protagonists in the life of the Church and its evangelization mission. Under the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, the HA family is directly responsible for reaching out to HA youth and young adults and for working closely with the Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers, while encouraging collaboration with the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM).

- Native Americans and Alaska Natives (NA)

In *Journeying Together*, the Native American family brings together individuals that self-identify with diverse original peoples native to the U.S. and its territories. They include descendant of many and diverse Native American/Indian tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian peoples, as well as Mayan natives from Central America who have recently emigrated to the United States. These groups fall under the pastoral care of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs. The mission of the (NA) Subcommittee is

to enhance the relationship of the Catholic Native American/Alaska Native communities with Jesus Christ and His Church in the United States.

- Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCMRT)

Often described as a community of communities, the PCMRT family includes three groups of peoples:

1. Ethnic families and recent immigrants to the United States, including African, Brazilian, Caribbean, Haitian, and European immigrants; and members of Eastern Catholic Churches, including Chaldean, Eritrean and Ethiopian Ge'ez Rite, Our Lady of Lebanon and St. Maron—Maronite Eparchies of the United States, and Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Eparchy
2. Refugees/victims of forced migration
3. Communities on the move, including circus and traveling shows communities, migrant farmworkers, seafarers and mariners (Stella Maris, Apostleship of the Sea [AOS]), and Irish Travelers.

TAKING THE JOURNEY TOGETHER: A SNAPSHOT OF THE PROCESS

Journeying Together is a process of dialogue and encounter focused on the Church's ministry with youth and young adults that fosters understanding and trust within and across cultural families to achieve a more welcoming and just a community of faith.

The Journeying Together planning team, with the support of the bishops of the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, discerned a process that has unfolded as circumstances and needs emerged. The six steps build upon one another as the journey continues.

Step One: Beginning the Journey

In this introductory kickoff, the bishops, young adults, and ministry leaders engaged directly on this important effort and envisioned the process ahead. The kickoff took place in July 2020 over a virtual platform because of the conditions imposed by the pandemic. More than 390 people stepped forward for that first meeting and said "yes" to embarking on an intercultural and intergenerational journey.

Step Two: Intracultural Conversations

Each cultural community met to begin discussing some common questions and raising issues that it would like to bring to the intercultural table. These conversations were also a chance for each cultural community to gain the self-awareness and confidence (and in some cases, humility) to share their cultural stories with others. These sessions took place from August to December 2020. Cultural communities were grouped in six distinct families:

- Asian and Pacific Islander (API)
- Black/African American (BAA)
- European American (EA)
- Hispanic/Latino American (HA)
- Native American (NA)
- Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCMRT)

Each cultural family had one or more intra-cultural conversations during this period. Some, like the PCMRT communities, held multiple sessions with distinct subgroups before meeting as a "family," given the great diversity of communities grouped under them.

Step Three: Intercultural Conversations

In the intercultural conversations, all cultural families met together once a month for a brief presentation (led by one of the cultural families) and small cross-cultural group discussions about each community's contributions, unique issues and areas of concern, and discernment of adequate pastoral responses. Monthly intercultural dialogue sessions as part of the USCCB's *Journeying Together* intercultural encounter process took place as follows:

- NA community: January 13, 2021
- BAA community: February 21, 2021
- API community: March 6, 2021
- PCMRT community: April 21, 2021
- HA community: May 27, 2021
- EA community: June 24, 2021

Step Four: Deepening the Dialogue

This step consists of five concurrent components:

- Going local: Developing resources to replicate the journey on the local level
- Intracultural conversations, part 2:

- Reflecting with cultural family
- Deeper dive: Deepening the dialogue (on particular topics of interest that emerged during the process)
- Proceedings and preparatory document: Analyzing and developing the narrative
- National event planning (for Step Five)

Step Five: Gathering Together

In a live, in-person event, bishops and representatives from each cultural family will gather to formulate action steps, strategic collaborations, and chart a path forward together in the Church’s ministry with and engagement of young people in this country. It will also be a celebration of each cultural community’s

gifts and contributions and of our “journey together.” The Journeying Together national intercultural encounter event is scheduled to be held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 23 to 26, 2022.

Step Six: Proceedings and Implementation

The proceedings and conclusions of the Journeying Together process will be collated and published and offered to dioceses, schools, Catholic organizations, and apostolic movements for follow-up and implementation.