

Missionary Disciples Going Forth with Joy



NATIONAL PASTORAL PLAN FOR HISPANIC/LATINO MINISTRY

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



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The document National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry, *Missionary Disciples Going Forth with Joy* was developed by the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of the USCCB at its June 2023 General Assembly and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

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PART I

Pastoral Vision for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

At this moment of grace, we the bishops of the United States affirm, once again,¹ that the Hispanic/Latino² presence among us is a blessing from God for the Church and for our country. The richness of the Hispanic/Latino community has been present in our lands for more than five hundred years.³ Such blessing, such richness, has become more evident over the past few decades. We have witnessed how our Hispanic/Latino community has reinvigorated the life and mission of thousands of parishes and other Catholic institutions and organizations. God in his mysterious ways has called Hispanics/Latinos to embrace their vocation as joyful missionary disciples to the Church in the United States. Their many gifts and blessings include

- A profound faith in God's providence
- Appreciation of life as a gift from God
- Love for the family
- A sense of community
- An authentic Marian devotion
- Popular religious devotions and traditions
- A sense of hospitality and solidarity
- Ecclesial movements⁴ and apostolates

The Hispanic/Latino presence also manifests a profound love for the Church, as well as an increasing leadership role in Catholic institutions and organizations.

We are deeply grateful for the evangelizing presence and many gifts of the Hispanic/Latino community. We are also grateful for the process of the Encuentros,⁵ with their emphasis on listening, dialogue,

1. See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment: A Pastoral Letter on Hispanic Ministry*, November 1983, in USCCB, *Hispanic Ministry: Three Major Documents* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1995).

2. In this plan we use the term "Hispanic/Latino." The term "Hispanic" has been used historically to refer to people of Spanish-speaking ancestry. It was adopted by Church leadership to help define a people with a common identity, faith tradition, values, vision, and mission. Despite these commonalities, we must also recognize and respect the special identities of people from, or with roots in, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and their respective racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, including those of African, European, Asian, and Indigenous ancestry. The term "Latino" is a self-identifying term for people of Latin American ancestry that has emerged from the community and has become widely used by church and community leaders, particularly in urban areas.

3. USCCB, *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1987), no. 7.

4. In this pastoral plan, the term "ecclesial movements" refers to groups that have received canonical recognition as an association of the Christian faithful. This plan also acknowledges the existence and evangelizing contributions of other associations of Catholic laity, apostolic movements, groups, and apostolates.

5. The I Encuentro, which took place in 1972, was a spark that brought to sharper awareness the presence of Hispanics/Latinos in the Church. In the II Encuentro (1976–1978), Hispanics/Latinos identified themselves as a People of God in the journey (*Pueblo de Dios en marcha*). The III Encuentro

discernment, and accompaniment. The encuentro process has been an effective means to generate the vision and mission for Hispanic/Latino ministry by living out a model of Church that is more missionary and evangelizing, a model that strengthens the sense of community.⁶ This vision has led to the establishment of Hispanic/Latino ministry in thousands of parishes and in most dioceses. This model has also been fertile ground for the growth of vibrant ecclesial movements, apostolates, and other Catholic organizations. Without a doubt, Hispanic/Latino ministry has been a fruitful experience in the life of the Church in the United States. Yet much more remains to be done.

We have reached a moment of *kairos* (or an opportune time) to articulate a new national pastoral plan for Hispanic/Latino ministry, in direct response to the priorities, recommendations, and pastoral insights generated during the V National Encuentro for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. We have heard the voices of the People of God through the synodal process of the V Encuentro and through the 2018 Synod on Young People, Synod 2021–2024: For a Synodal Church, the National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults initiative (2017–2020), the Journeying Together national intercultural encounter, and Raíces y Alas 2022, and we have articulated their insights and ideas through a process of discernment.

This *National Pastoral Plan* addresses the entire Church in the United States and seeks to strengthen the Church's response to the Hispanic/Latino presence, while embracing and fostering the contributions of Hispanic/Latino Catholics as missionary disciples serving the entire People of God.

We wholeheartedly affirm the V Encuentro's urgent "call for comprehensive and systematic pastoral planning for Hispanic/Latino ministry with a strong focus on evangelization and the formation of missionary disciples."⁷ We invite the entire Church of the United States to respond together as one Body in Christ. Our generation has a unique opportunity over the next decade to prepare to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Guadalupan apparitions and their evangelizing impact in 2031, as well as two thousand years of our redemption in 2033.

We are keenly aware that the Church in the United States will implement this plan within the shifting financial landscape using diminished resources, factors that have further exacerbated economic hardships. Increasing xenophobia and discrimination based on race or ethnic origin are also part of this new reality.

Even though the challenges are many, Pope Francis reminds us that the overflowing creative love of the Holy Spirit propels us to go forth without fear to encounter one another and animates the Church "to become ever more evangelizing and missionary through a process of pastoral conversion."⁸ Many Catholic dioceses, parishes, ecclesial movements, institutions, and organizations have already generated creative responses to these new realities. Many Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino communities, organizations, and ministries have also developed their own plans and pastoral strategies to strengthen Hispanic/Latino ministry, in direct response to the pastoral priorities and recommendations of the V Encuentro and other synodal processes. We recognize these efforts. We have been inspired by them as we developed this pastoral plan. At the same time, we strongly encourage that this pastoral plan be used as an impetus and resource for ongoing developing, updating, and implementing of pastoral plans and strategies in diverse pastoral settings.

(1982–1985) recognized the prophetic presence and voices of Hispanics/Latinos in our midst. In the IV Encuentro — which became Encuentro 2000 — Hispanics/Latinos identified themselves as bridge builders (*gente puente*) in a culturally diverse Church. For the V Encuentro (2017–2020), Hispanics/Latinos affirmed themselves as joyful missionary disciples. Responding to the urgent need to strengthen ministry among Hispanic/Latino young people, a national *encuentro* for *pastoral juvenil hispana* took place (2002–2005) in which young people affirmed their role as protagonists called to weave together the future of the Church and of society. These expressions are more than just slogans for events or conferences in different places and dates. They are poignant expressions of the maturity developed by Hispanic/Latino people over the decades and their desire to offer their leadership in service of Church and society for decades to come.

6. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2019), 19–21, www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/v-encuentro-conclusions/.

7. USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 74.

8. Pope Francis, Message to Participants in the Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, November 22, 2021, press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/11/21/211122e.html.

This *National Pastoral Plan* includes the following:

1. The vision and pastoral guidelines that lay a strong foundation for Hispanic/Latino ministry intended for pastoral ministers and educators
2. Pastoral strategies and priorities for dioceses, parishes, regions, and other pastoral settings for pastoral ministers at various levels of experience in Hispanic/Latino ministry
3. National objectives and activities, led by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), for implementation over the next ten years

To provide vision and direction for every pastoral activity with the Hispanic/Latino community, together we have discerned this **general objective**:

To live and promote a model of Church that

- corresponds to the lived reality of the Hispanic/Latino people, in the context of a culturally diverse society;
- walks as a community of missionary disciples in synodality, solidarity, and mutual engagement;
- is leaven for the Reign of God in the world.

We, the bishops, seek to achieve this general objective of fostering encounters with the living Christ by

- Reaching out to the peripheries
- Creating a culture of encounter
- Accompanying one another
- Getting involved as a promoter and example of justice and mercy
- Inspiring hope with the Word of God, providing integral formation
- Being nourished and transformed by the Eucharist
- Being sent forth to joyfully proclaim the good news of the Gospel and bear fruit in every human situation and in our common home

We strongly believe that this general objective for Hispanic/Latino ministry responds to Pope Francis's call for us to be an evangelizing Church that follows the example of Christ on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32) by reaching out to people who find themselves on the peripheries of the Church and of society. Our objective is also faithful to the missionary spirit of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In a unique way, Hispanics/Latinos find God in the arms of Mary, the Mother of God, where they experience her goodness, compassion, protection, inspiration, and example, particularly under the advocacy of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Pope St. John Paul II says the American continent "has recognized in the *mestiza* face of the Virgin of Tepeyac, 'in Blessed Mary of Guadalupe, an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization.'"⁹ We need this same missionary spirit to continue creating a culture of encounter and to animate our pastoral ministries over the next ten years, helping us journey together as joyful missionary disciples going forth in solidarity and mercy.

9. Pope St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America)*, January 22, 1999, no. 11, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america.html.

PART II

Pastoral Guidelines for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

1) A community of missionary disciples, nourished and transformed by the Eucharist, that is sent forth to joyfully proclaim the good news of the Gospel and bear fruit in every human situation

“It happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight ... they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem.” — Luke 24:30–33

The **Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit, the “fount and apex,” of the Christian life**, by which the faithful are nourished, “transformed into that which we consume,” and strengthened for our mission as the Body of Christ in the world.¹⁰ Hispanic/Latino ministry needs the Holy Mass and other services to be available and accessible in Spanish, and also needs the Church to welcome and celebrate those spiritual devotions and cultural traditions that are distinctive and important for the local community.¹¹ Through the National Eucharistic Revival of the Church in the United States,¹² we have issued an urgent call for a renewed appreciation of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and for **a more profound participation** in this sacrament. We encourage pastoral leaders to use all the means available to the Church to ensure full and active participation by Hispanics/Latinos in the liturgy, which is worship offered to God the Father, through Christ the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

From the Eucharistic celebration, we are sent forth to bear fruit in the world. All the baptized are called to full participation in the life and mission of the Church. That call includes a need for advocacy and action to

10. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, nos. 11, 26. See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, nos. 2, 10; Pope St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World)*, December 30, 1988, no. 19, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood As Communion*, May 28, 1992, no. 3, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communionis-notio_en.html.

11. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 39.

12. The National Eucharistic Revival is a three-year initiative we are sponsoring, as the bishops of the United States, “to inspire and prepare the People of God to be formed, healed, converted, united, and sent out to a hurting and hungry world through a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist. ... The Revival officially launched in June 2022, and its milestone event will be a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17–21, 2024. ... This Eucharistic movement seeks to bring together clergy, religious, laity, apostolates, movements, and parish and diocesan leaders to spur momentum, collaboration, and lasting impact for the renewal of the Catholic Church in the United States over the next three years [from 2022 through 2025]. Each year will have a strategic focus for formation and missionary discipleship.” National Eucharistic Revival, “Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed January 17, 2023, www.eucharisticrevival.org/faqs.

bring about the participation of all people in the life and goods of society.¹³ Therefore, genuine efforts must be made to ensure we include those at the margins or those who feel excluded.¹⁴

We affirm the vision articulated by the V Encuentro that “Hispanic/Latino ministry prioritizes the young, families, women, and those in the peripheries — including undocumented immigrants, DREAMers, diverse generations, families with insufficient economic resources for a dignified life or who are suffering in countless ways, as well as the professionals in our midst who sometimes are neglected amid a sea of urgent pastoral needs — always with a focus on justice and human development.”¹⁵ We also recognize that “the Hispanic/Latino community faces many violations and threats against human dignity, including attacks on the right to life, which is the ‘fundamental right and condition for all other personal rights.’”¹⁶ Hispanic/Latino ministry must also prioritize those at the margins within the Hispanic/Latino community itself, those whose lives are under particular threat — for example, persons with disabilities, preborn children, those who are elderly, and those with serious illnesses.

We invite pastoral leaders “to exercise their prophetic role without fear” and to develop or promote specific pastoral responses to the issues that pervade their local communities,¹⁷ while also inviting the faithful to promote the common good on the national and global levels. We urge that our pastoral responses include a wide range of social justice issues and that they comprise both direct services through charitable works as well as advocacy “to address the root causes of problems facing our communities.”¹⁸ In this way we will actualize¹⁹ and inculturate²⁰ the Word in our communities, as the words of Psalm 126:5-6 proclaim: “Those who sow in tears, / will reap with cries of joy. / Those who go forth weeping, / carrying sacks of seed, / will return with cries of joy, / carrying their bundled sheaves.”

2) A prophetic Church, animated and formed by the Word, that is a promoter and an example of justice and mercy

“Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.” — Luke 24:27

Throughout the history of Hispanic/Latino ministry in the United States, concern for the poor, the marginalized, and the suffering has been at the forefront of pastoral planning and accompaniment.²¹

13. See Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 33; Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14; and Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*), no. 31, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

14. See Synod of Bishops, Secretary General, *Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, September 2021, no. 1.4, www.usccb.org/resources/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf.

15. USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 26. “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, www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act-overview.

16. USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 142, quoting Pope St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 38.

17. *Ibid.*, 80.

18. USCCB, “Two Feet of Love in Action,” accessed January 17, 2023, www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/two-feet-of-love-in-action.

19. See Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, in *Origins*, January 6, 1994, sec. IV.A.

20. See Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* (*Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*), September 30, 2010, nos. 114, 116, www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini.html.

21. See USCCB, *Hispanic Presence*, 30; USCCB Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, *Prophetic Voices: The Document on the Process of the III Encuentro Nacional Hispano de Pastoral* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1986), 6.

According to the Second Vatican Council, the pastoral role of the Church in the world includes promoting justice and the common good.²² Pope St. Paul VI called the interplay between faith and culture “the drama of our time,”²³ evoking the guiding image of building a civilization of love (“*la civiltà dell’amore*”).²⁴

The Church exemplifies its commitment to justice and mercy within its own pastoral activities by making concrete commitments to support a privileged and preferential religious care for and accompaniment of those who are poor and suffering.²⁵ The prophetic voice of the Church calls for just and humane immigration reform, denounces discrimination and racism, promotes marriage and family, and defends the life and dignity of every person. This prophetic voice is essential for interpreting the challenges of our world today and envisioning a better future for tomorrow.

Just as Jesus gave hope to the disciples on the road to Emmaus by interpreting Sacred Scripture for them, the Word of God continues to serve as a fountain of life for the Church and its mission; the Word is a privileged means for encountering the living Jesus Christ. Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets call our attention to the connection between right worship and right relationship with God and with others. They call our attention to God’s preferential love and care for the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. In the Gospels, Jesus models justice and mercy, calling “blessed” those who are poor, meek, and merciful as well as the peacemakers and the persecuted (Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-22). Jesus reminds us that when we attend to the needs of those who are hungry, naked, or imprisoned, we attend to him (Mt 25:31-40).

We call for the biblical animation of Hispanic/Latino ministry — that is, letting the Bible inspire “every ordinary and extraordinary pastoral outreach.”²⁶ The Word of God announces, heals, guides, encourages, transforms, and instructs. “It goes to the very heart and identity of Christian life. The word has the power to transform lives.”²⁷ Among Hispanic/Latino Catholics, the consultation of the V Encuentro found a great interest in getting to know Sacred Scripture more deeply.²⁸

We echo the V Encuentro delegates’ call for faith formation and catechesis that inform a lifelong process of learning and personal conversion, always rooted in the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, with a clear emphasis on biblical literacy.²⁹ Transmission of the faith in the Hispanic/Latino community is supported by strengthening the domestic church; by empowering families to bring the faith to life at home and in their communities; by nurturing the religious expressions and celebrations of the Hispanic/Latino people as gifts for the Church, both in English and in Spanish; and by ushering them ever more deeply into the sacraments and the mysteries of the faith, calling and sending them forth as missionary disciples to boldly share this gift with all they meet.

For the faithful to take on their role of protagonists in the life and mission of the Church, they need an integral pastoral formation for ministry that forms the person as a whole, covering the four areas of formation — human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral — and including the three dimensions of identity, knowledge,

22. See Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 42–45, 60, 73.

23. Pope St. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*Apostolic Exhortation on Proclaiming the Gospel*), December 8, 1975, no. 20, www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

24. Pope St. Paul VI, Homily for the Close of the Holy Year, December 25, 1975, www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1975/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19751225.html.

25. See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (*Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World*), November 24, 2013, nos. 197–201, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

26. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 73.

27. Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (*Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today’s World*), March 19, 2018, no. 156, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html, quoting Conference of Catholic

Bishops of India, *Final Declaration of the Twenty-First Plenary Assembly*, February 18, 2009, 3.2.

28. USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 144.

29. See *ibid.*, 75.

and know-how, with a special emphasis on intercultural competency training. We cannot overemphasize the importance of taking to heart the V Encuentro recommendations to make formation and leadership development accessible and flexible and to ensure they correspond to the lived reality of those being formed.

3) A pastoral model of encounter with Christ, accompaniment, and reaching out

“It happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them.” — Luke 24:15

In his encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus modeled accompaniment and the pastoral actions of a missionary disciple. This Scripture passage — as well as Pope Francis’s description of an evangelizing community in *Evangelii Gaudium*³⁰ — laid the foundation for the five movements of the V Encuentro process: (1) taking the first step, (2) getting involved, (3) accompanying, (4) bearing fruit, and (5) rejoicing. One priority identified through the V Encuentro consultation process was the need for a strong focus on evangelization and the formation of missionary disciples.³¹

To proclaim Christ more authentically and deepen our missionary discipleship,³² we call on all the faithful, especially pastoral leaders, to prioritize ongoing conversion and daily personal encounter with Christ. Personal encounters with Jesus Christ need to be at the heart of every ministry and every gathering, thereby “allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire and lead all ministries toward witness and discipleship.”³³ Pastoral leaders can foster this intimate encounter with Christ in many ways: “through prayer, the sacraments, [Eucharistic] adoration, Scripture, and the works of mercy.”³⁴ For Hispanic/Latino ministry, evangelization also requires a deep appreciation for the gift of the living popular piety in our communities,³⁵ a spirituality understood as *mística*, referring to “the motivations, profound values, traditions, prayer, music, art, and methodologies that give life to a process of the people, create experiences of faith, and generate a spirituality that incentivizes faith and ministry.”³⁶

Among Hispanics/Latinos, “small ecclesial communities have been and continue to be a valuable expression of the evangelization efforts of the Church.”³⁷ In them, the faithful accompany one another, share the Word of God, and bring it to life in service.³⁸ Ecclesial movements and apostolates also play a key role in the work of evangelization in the Hispanic/Latino community by attracting more people to resume their

30. See no. 24.

31. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 74.

32. See USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2017), 1.

33. *Ibid.*, 3; see also 9-14. See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 3.

34. *Ibid.*, 10.

35. See Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, December 2001, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html; Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to Young People and to the Entire People of God), March 25, 2019, no. 238, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html.

36. USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 226. See also Pope St. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 48; USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 71; USCCB, *National Pastoral Plan* (1987), 28; USCCB, *Hispanic Presence*, no. 5; Conferences of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), *Aparecida Concluding Document* (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 2007), no. 264, www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf; quoting CELAM, *Documento de Puebla III Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano* (January 1979), sec. 3.1, no. 446.

37. USCCB, *Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002), no. 41.

38. See Pope St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 26; USCCB Committee on Hispanic Affairs, *Communion in Mission: A Guide for Bishops and Pastoral Leaders on Small Church Communities*, March 1995, in *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998).

spiritual journey, to have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and above all to commit themselves to sharing their witness of faith with others. We encourage movements to be ever faithful to the unique missions for which they were founded, following where the Holy Spirit leads them while strengthening their ecclesial ties and mutual accompaniment.³⁹

As the People of God journeying together, we are called to accompany one another. To do so, all of the faithful, particularly pastors and other pastoral leaders, are called to master the “art of accompaniment.”⁴⁰ Following the model of Jesus, accompaniment begins by meeting people where they are and listening to them and then moves into encouraging, guiding, supporting, uniting, and advocating for their needs.⁴¹ The many bishops, priests, religious, deacons, and committed lay pastoral leaders who have shepherded the development of Hispanic/Latino ministry since its beginnings have embodied this accompaniment. They have also been blessed in turn by the accompaniment of Hispanic/Latino communities whom they have shepherded, as Hispanics/Latinos have offered pastoral leaders new ways to live out their baptismal calling and priesthood. The profound faith of Hispanics/Latinos and their trust in God’s providence have been transformative for many.

Accompanying and encountering the “other” also extends the hand of friendship to the many other religious traditions, including Judaism and Islam, that exist in our country. Even if relations with some of those groups have been hostile in the past, the time has come to break down the walls by reaching out to them and also to our fellow Christians, inviting them to participate in these activities whenever feasible. Indeed, as Pope St. John Paul II puts it, “Ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian unity, *is not just some sort of ‘appendix’* which is added to the Church’s traditional activity. Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does.”⁴²

Flowing from our personal encounter with the living Christ and his Church, all the baptized are called to go forth and to reach out to the peripheries. This reaching out involves following Jesus’ example by encountering the other and, through this experience, encountering the living God. In this way we move from “us-them” to “we” language. Pope Francis calls us to move away from a culture of indifference and division and toward a culture of encounter.⁴³ This encounter is an opportune time for us to intensify the spirituality of mission embodied by the V Encuentro process, a vision that goes beyond the business-as-usual mentality. May we be transformed by a “missionary impulse” so that everything we do is done for the sake of “the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her [the Church’s] self-preservation.”⁴⁴

39. See Pope St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 30.

40. Dicastery for the Clergy, *Instruction: The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*, July 20, 2020, no. 26, press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html. See USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2022), nos. 44, 367, 374, 382; Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 44, 99, 169–173; USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Living as Missionary Disciples*, 14–17.

41. See Archbishop Christophe Pierre, “The Joy of Being Missionary Disciples,” unpublished address given at the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Grapevine, Texas, September 20, 2018. See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 31; Pope Francis, Address at Meeting with Clergy, Consecrated People, and Members of Diocesan Pastoral Councils, Cathedral of San Rufino, Assisi, October 4, 2013, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131004_clero-assisi.html.

42. Pope St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (*Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism*), May 25, 1995, no. 20, emphasis in original.

43. See Pope Francis, “Morning Meditation for a Culture of Encounter,” September 13, 2016,

www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2016/documents

[/papa-francesco-cotidie_20160913_for-a-culture-of-encounter.html](http://papa-francesco-cotidie_20160913_for-a-culture-of-encounter.html); Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 220; Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (*Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship*), October 3, 2020, nos. 215–217, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003

_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

44. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 27.

4) A pastoral vision and practice that seeks ecclesial integration and inclusion in the context of a multicultural Church

“To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews. ... To those outside the law I became like one outside the law ... to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.” — 1 Corinthians 9:20, 21-23

At the heart of the success story of Hispanic/Latino ministry is the Church’s ability to engage the faithful in their lived realities, following the missionary example of St. Paul. This ability stems from the principle of ecclesial integration and inclusion, through which we bring individual communities into an established faith community through a process of welcome, belonging, and co-responsibility.⁴⁵ This profoundly human and grace-filled process requires intentional and loving accompaniment by pastoral leaders.

Ecclesial integration and inclusion begin with reaching out and offering an authentic welcome to communities such as new immigrants and people in the peripheries. They also entail pastoral care of US-born and US-raised Hispanics/Latinos as they face generational challenges and opportunities. By providing pastoral care in these communities’ language, cultural contexts, and social situations, we equip them to interact and engage with the broader ecclesial community from a position of strength. The Catholic Church’s efforts to form Catholic immigrants in the faith while encouraging them to fully engage US culture and society, in all its diversity, are a wonderful gift. Mutual enrichment and collaboration among communities — as well as leadership development, intercultural competency focus, and inclusion in advisory bodies — all lead to a sense of belonging. Increased leadership and involvement in the broader ecclesial community generate a sense of co-responsibility, higher levels of stewardship, and a going forth as *gente-puente* (bridge builders) to reach those still on the peripheries.

This process has served Catholic immigrants from all over the world, both documented and undocumented. It has given them an opportunity to adapt to the new realities of the Church in the United States and to integrate into US society while maintaining their rich cultural heritage and their Catholic identity. In the context of Hispanic/Latino ministry, ecclesial integration and inclusion also entail integration and inclusion within the Hispanic/Latino community itself. This effort requires recognition of and respect for the special identities of people who have come from (or whose roots are from) the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and for their respective racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, including African, European, Asian, and Indigenous ancestries. This process also calls for creative pastoral accompaniment among US-born Hispanics/Latinos and subsequent generations, as they forge their unique cultural identity within the Church in the United States. The growing number of marriages between people of different cultures and religious traditions is an important part of this reality. We also recognize the presence of Hispanic/Latino Catholics who are members of Eastern-rite churches.

This principle of ecclesial integration and inclusion is lived out within a culturally diverse Church, particularly in thousands of shared parishes across our country — that is, where communities from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds share the same parish. At its very heart, this process of integration and inclusion seeks to promote communion. This process has led to healthy interaction among different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in a spirit of communion.⁴⁶

However, even within the Church, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and exclusion continue to be experienced by so many of our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters and other racial, ethnic, and cultural

45. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2013), 11, 22-30.

46. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 79.

groups, whether they are immigrant or US-born.⁴⁷ Addressing this destructive cycle of evil makes it imperative that we train all leadership in the Church — including our Hispanic/Latino ministry leaders — to navigate the complexity and diversity of all races, ethnicities, and cultures as well as to advocate on behalf of equity and racial justice.⁴⁸ As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms: “Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace.”⁴⁹

Christ came and was crucified “so that they may all be one” (Jn 17:21). This desire for unity needs to be the starting point for deep and meaningful encounters among diverse peoples. “Through communion with Christ, Head of the Mystical Body,” and by living in communion with all believers, we are profoundly changed by the gift of God’s grace, and so we build in Christ the beloved community.⁵⁰ We recognize this process of being transformed by the grace of God and of growing in Christ’s love as the fruit of ecclesial integration and inclusion. Such fruit of communion is best expressed and nurtured in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We invite all Catholics to be bridge builders in this endeavor. To that end, we bishops recommend the study and implementation of six central lessons that emerged from our intergenerational Journeying Together process of intracultural and intercultural dialogue with six cultural families: (1) embracing historical memory, (2) active inclusion, (3) diversity and giftedness, (4) practicing accompaniment, (5) formation opportunities, and (6) enduring hope.⁵¹ These ideas initially came from the insights of young adults, yet all six apply to all generations and cultures.

To foster ecclesial integration and inclusion, pastoral leaders must be willing to become all things to all people, like St. Paul, and to adopt new attitudes and increase our knowledge and skills in order to build unity in our diversity.⁵² Thus we strongly encourage church leaders to undergo training in intercultural competency and to incorporate these competencies into formation programs and continued education for clergy, religious, and lay pastoral leaders. Increasing intercultural competency will increase the Church’s internal capacity to effectively foster the process of ecclesial integration and inclusion of those who have not yet felt the embrace of the Church.

5) A synodal and missionary Church that is leaven for the Reign of God in the world

“That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” — John 17:21

Under the pastoral guidance and vision of Pope Francis, the universal Church has gone forth on a synodal journey that brings to life the teachings of the Second Vatican Council for ecclesial renewal at every level and in every place throughout the world. For Hispanic/Latino Catholics in the United States, this journey is a tremendous affirmation of the pastoral discernment and priorities that have been at the heart of

47. See *ibid.*, 41–42, 111, 118, 142.

48. See USCCB, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2018).

49. USCCB, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2000), no. 1938, quoting Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 29.

50. See Pope St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, no. 33.

51. The six cultural families participating in the Journeying Together process are African Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders, European Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Native Americans, and Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Journeying Together: Intracultural and Intercultural Proceedings Report*, April 2022, part 3, www.usccb.org/resources/Journeying%20Together%20Proceedings%20Report%20May%209%202022_0.pdf.

52. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers: Modules for Training Workshop* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2014). See also the website for the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism at www.usccb.org/racism.

Hispanic/Latino ministry, most expressly through the processes of the five Encuentros and in the 1987 *National Pastoral Plan*, with its emphasis on a model of Church that is “communitarian, evangelizing, and missionary.”⁵³ Although the words “missionary disciples” and “synodality” are relatively new in our pastoral lexicon, their meaning has been lived in the encuentro processes, forging a common pastoral vision for ministry among millions of Hispanic/Latino Catholics who call the United States home.

The guiding image that defines the concept of synodality envisions the Church walking or journeying together.⁵⁴ In a synodal Church, missionary disciples — called, gifted, and ordered in their diverse charisms and united by the Spirit — accompany one another on the journey. This journeying involves coming together as a people and then going out as missionary disciples, sent forth on mission guided by the Holy Spirit — *la Iglesia en marcha*, or *en salida*.⁵⁵

The Encuentros of Hispanic/Latino ministry have embodied the synodal journey guided by the Holy Spirit. Each has been a deeply ecclesial process of listening, consultation, dialogue, conversion, and pastoral discernment, with a spirituality of mission permeating every level. The encuentro model for ministry and mission has strengthened Hispanic/Latino Catholics’s sense of belonging and co-responsibility in the life and mission of the Church. The model is itself also formational, forging a new, capable, and committed leadership from among the people consulted themselves. In addition, the encuentro model constitutes an effective methodology of strategic planning — following the pastoral circle method of See-Judge-Act⁵⁶ — that generates creative pastoral responses based on an authentic analysis and assessment of pastoral challenges. A key element of this methodology is to “plan *with* the people, not *for* the people,” because how we do things is just as important as what we do.⁵⁷

Another fundamental aspect of synodality has been expressed in Hispanic/Latino ministry as *pastoral de conjunto*,⁵⁸ which in English could be articulated as co-responsible collaboration and coordination as we work together toward a common goal. It is in this context that we believe that responding to the Hispanic/Latino presence is the responsibility of the entire Church — and at the same time, the Hispanic/Latino community has the responsibility of assuming its role in the life and mission of the entire Church. We are all called to be protagonists in the life and mission of the Church by virtue of our baptism. Our journeying together as bishops, priests, deacons, religious men and women, and laymen and women — and the mutual engagement among racial, cultural, and ethnic groups — all strengthen the bonds of our ecclesial communion and transform us along the way.

We echo the call from the V Encuentro to move away from competition, among other challenges, and toward increased collaboration among diocesan offices, ministries, movements, organizations, and all pastoral leaders (whether clergy, religious, or lay; paid or volunteer; Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino).⁵⁹ In our decision making, planning, and pastoral practice, let us be united in our common goal: building up the Reign of God.⁶⁰

In all of this journeying and collaboration, parishes remain at the center of our pastoral action, which aims to bring about the communion and participation of the Hispanic/Latino people in the Church. Understanding

53. USCCB, *National Pastoral Plan* (1987), 8.

54. See Synod of Bishops, *Vademecum*, no. 1.2.

55. *Pueblo de Dios en Marcha* was the theme of the II National Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry in 1977. See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 20–24.

56. The See-Judge-Act method was developed by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers movement. It is also known as the Cardijn method.

57. USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence*, 32, emphases added.

58. The term *pastoral de conjunto* emerged from CELAM. The 1987 *National Pastoral Plan* translated *pastoral de conjunto* as “communion in mission” and defined the term as “the harmonious coordination of all the elements of the pastoral ministry with the actions of the pastoral ministers and structures in view of a common goal: the kingdom of God. It is not only a methodology, but the expression of the essence and mission of the Church, which is to be and to make communion” (28).

59. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 60, 80–81, 122–125, 147–149.

60. See *ibid.*, 60.

a parish as a community of communities fosters this communion and participation, particularly in shared parishes. The leadership of the pastor and of the community is of the utmost importance in generating communion among the diverse members of the parish community.⁶¹ This communion is not without its challenges. Pope Francis reminds the Church that although parishes possess great flexibility, many have not yet become “environments of living communion and participation ... [nor have they become] completely mission-oriented.”⁶² In that light, we view this call as an integral part of our continuing efforts to bring about the pastoral conversion of our parish communities.⁶³

At the same time, we recognize that the Church’s communion, participation, and mission are also lived beyond the parish structures. They exist through Catholic schools, colleges, universities, and hospitals; ecclesial movements and apostolates; chaplaincies, outreach to, and pastoral care among those in the periphery; and the advocacy for and direct services provided to those who are poor and vulnerable by organizations like Catholic Charities, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, state Catholic conferences, parishes involved in organizing work funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), and the Church’s many other charitable and advocacy efforts. We affirm each of these as leaven for the Reign of God in the world. We call them into co-responsible collaboration and coordination with each other and with the local church and invite them to engage more fully with the Hispanic/Latino community, as outlined in this pastoral plan.

61. See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 28.

62. *Ibid.*

63. See Dicastery for the Clergy, *Instruction: Pastoral Conversion*, no. 29.

PART III

Considerations for Dioceses, Parishes, and Regions

We offer the following considerations for the structuring and ongoing development of Hispanic/Latino ministry in dioceses and parishes. These considerations are based on our previous USCCB statements and on best practices identified through the V Encuentro process. We also articulate a regional structure for Hispanic/Latino ministry that will accompany the implementation of this plan over the next ten years.

1) Hispanic/Latino Ministry at the Diocesan Level

Pastoral ministry at the diocesan level plays an important role for the greater success of parish ministry with the Hispanic/Latino community. Diocesan offices provide pastoral planning, coordination, resources, and formation that parishes could not provide alone. In addition, the diocese needs to advocate for the Hispanic/Latino community and continually assess their needs and aspirations in order to seek the resources necessary to better serve them.

Various models and structures can fulfill these functions at the diocesan level. The most common is a dedicated diocesan office for Hispanic/Latino ministry. An alternate model places the coordination of Hispanic/Latino ministry under another department, with offices for cultural diversity and evangelization being the most common. However, as we noted in 2002 in *Encuentro and Mission*, we must be careful.⁶⁴ A diocesan multicultural or cultural diversity office cannot be a generic model that dilutes ministry by expecting that one person can single-handedly coordinate a comprehensive ministry for multiple cultural communities. A third scenario places personnel dedicated to serving Hispanics/Latinos among various diocesan offices.

Whatever model a diocese follows, it must periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the structure according to population growth and the development of Hispanic/Latino ministry across the diocese.

Three indicators impact the effectiveness of diocesan leadership in Hispanic/Latino ministry:

1. Direct access to the ordinary
2. A dedicated budget to conduct projects, initiatives, or programs in which Hispanic/Latino ministry is the lead agent
3. A *pastoral de conjunto* approach (co-responsible collaboration and coordination) among staff from various diocesan offices⁶⁵

When diocesan staff who are dedicated to serve Hispanics/Latinos are placed within various offices and Catholic agencies, effective coordination becomes increasingly important to avoid a siloing effect. Here we expand upon the roles and responsibilities of diocesan offices regarding ministry among Hispanics/Latinos. The functions will evolve as the Hispanic/Latino population grows, demographics shift, and the ministry

64. See USCCB, *Encuentro and Mission*, no. 69.

65. See USCCB Committee on Hispanic Affairs, *Study on Best Practices for Diocesan Ministry Among Hispanics/Latinos* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006).

matures; however, these functions never cease to be necessary. The five responsibilities that we see as necessary for diocesan offices with regard to Hispanic/Latino ministry are as follows:

1. Continually assess the pastoral reality
2. Advocate on behalf of and with the community
3. Coordinate ministry efforts
4. Develop specific resources and programming
5. Form and train pastoral leaders

A successful way to attend to these five functions is to conduct periodic pastoral planning processes to consider the local reality and resources available following the pastoral guidelines of Hispanic/Latino ministry described in part II of this plan — especially the pastoral guideline of planning *with* the people, not *for* the people. Then, in a process of *pastoral de conjunto*, discern the steps the diocese needs to take to continually improve and expand Hispanic/Latino ministry. In this way, the local church will have a better chance of generating effective and creative pastoral responses for the challenges that our Hispanic/Latino sisters and brothers face, as well as empowering their many gifts in service of the entire Church.

Components and Considerations to Develop a Diocesan Pastoral Plan

A. Assess the pastoral reality of the Hispanic/Latino community at regular intervals.

An initial step to gain important insight into pastoral planning at the diocesan level is to identify the stage of development of Hispanic/Latino ministry, further described in Appendix A: initial growth, organic expansion, structural development, and diocesan-wide shared responsibility.⁶⁶ These four stages are based on the development of Hispanic/Latino ministry at the parish level across the diocese, combined with the diocese's internal capacity to support Hispanic/Latino ministry.

Analyzing the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community at regular intervals is crucial, given the constant flux of the community in most places in the country. This process includes studying the population, demographics, and socioeconomic situation of Hispanics/Latinos across the diocese, as well as conducting consultations similar to those carried out by the V Encuentro and the Synod 2021–2024: For a Synodal Church. This process creates space for members of the Hispanic/Latino community, including those on the peripheries, to voice their concerns, hopes, and dreams and for parish and diocesan pastoral leaders to listen attentively to better understand the issues at hand.

B. Advocate on behalf of and with the Hispanic/Latino community for the necessary resources.

A next step in pastoral planning is to evaluate how resources are currently allocated based on analysis of the reality. This reality includes the number and location of parishes with Hispanic/Latino ministry and prioritizes access to the Sunday liturgy in Spanish, in terms of distance, scheduling, and capacity. Equally important is the allocation of diocesan resources, including budgets, clergy assignments, structure, staffing, and programming. We strongly recommend that communications platforms — such as websites, written statements, and resources — be offered in both English and Spanish, ensuring that materials are not merely translated but are also culturally appropriate and that graphics represent the diversity of the local community.

66. These stages were initially identified and described briefly in the USCCB Committee on Hispanic Affairs' 2006 *Study on Best Practices* with slightly different titles.

The Hispanic/Latino community is often underrepresented in advisory bodies within diocesan and parish structures. Many times, pastoral leaders are unaware of or unwilling to recognize the needs of Hispanics/Latinos within their geographical boundaries.

So advocacy is essential for making sure that our Hispanic/Latino sisters and brothers have equal access to parish and diocesan resources, while also promoting the internal capacities of the diocese and the parishes to provide a comprehensive ministry. Our communities need formation on social mission and Catholic social teaching principles to create change, so that Hispanics/Latinos become protagonists of their own development. As Hispanic/Latino ministry develops, we strongly recommend that the diocese make an intentional effort to prepare Hispanic/Latino leaders, including young adults and women; to hire them as staff; and to include their voices in councils and other advisory bodies.

The advocacy role also entails working with the vocation director, local seminaries, and ongoing formation programs to ensure that priests, deacons, and seminarians have the necessary language skills and understanding of Hispanic/Latino spirituality and culture. Advocacy may also include helping to recruit, orient, and accompany international priests and religious men and women to assist parishes. We strongly recommend that this accompaniment include opportunities for building intercultural competency and access to support systems to help clergy and staff to avoid burnout.

C. Coordinate and collaborate in Hispanic/Latino ministry efforts at the diocesan level.

The third step in the planning process identifies pastoral priorities and strategies to address unmet needs, to support the development of Hispanic/Latino ministry at the parish and diocesan levels, and to provide the resources needed to implement them. We encourage diocesan leaders to consider the priorities, objectives, and pastoral approaches listed in part IV of this plan. The most effective way to implement them involves a spirit of *pastoral de conjunto* across diocesan offices, while engaging with parishes, ministries, movements, schools, universities, hospitals, and other Catholic institutions and organizations operating within the diocesan boundaries. The specific roles and expectations of each person, office, and institution need to be clearly defined, and formal channels of communication need to be developed for this collaboration to be most successful. Of particular importance is the ministry of the diocesan bishop who, as a successor of the apostles, has primary responsibility to teach, sanctify, and govern the people entrusted to his care.

A common misconception holds that if the diocese has an office of Hispanic/Latino ministry, then its director is responsible for pastoral care across all ministerial areas for the Hispanic/Latino population. A Hispanic/Latino ministry office may undertake some programs and initiatives on its own, especially during the early stages of development. However, as ministry with Hispanics/Latinos becomes more comprehensive and the population grows, other diocesan offices need to increase their internal capacities to minister among Hispanics/Latinos. The coordinating role of a director of Hispanic/Latino ministry becomes more crucial at this stage of development to achieve greater impact.

D. Develop specific resources and programming for the Hispanic/Latino community.

Although parishes are the main pastoral setting in which the faithful participate in the life and mission of the Church, parish ministry is strengthened and most successful when it is strongly supported at the diocesan level. A successful diocesan office is perceived to be a valuable resource by pastors and parish staff. It can direct parish leaders toward trusted resources and provide expertise in areas related to ministry with Hispanics/Latinos, including the development of resources, initiatives, and projects that respond to the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community.

As Appendix A describes, in the early stages, many parishes with Hispanic/Latino ministry and other diocesan offices may not have sufficient staff with the linguistic and intercultural skills to engage with Hispanics/Latinos. Therefore, those directly responsible for Hispanic/Latino ministry in the diocese become an important resource to help pastors engage their Spanish-speaking parishioners in various areas of ministry and formation. This support will evolve as the ministry develops and parishes increase their internal capacities. As other diocesan offices increase their own internal capacities, they may take on the role of leading programming specifically for the Hispanic/Latino community.

E. Form and train pastoral leaders for effective ministry and mission.

Recognizing, discerning, calling forth, and forming the gifts and talents of the Hispanic/Latino community for service in the Church are all crucial tasks of the diocesan offices. Pastoral formation has continued to be one of the top pastoral priorities for ministry among Hispanics/Latinos. Parishes rarely have the personnel, expertise, finances, and space to provide comprehensive formation at the local level without significant support from the diocese. To meet this need, many dioceses provide formation programs in Spanish for catechists, other lay leaders, and lay ecclesial ministers, as well as diaconate formation and certificate programs. We applaud this best practice and the increased collaboration among parishes, dioceses, universities, and pastoral institutes to provide these programs of formation and continuing education. We call on more dioceses to make pastoral formation for ministry a priority.

The following components have been identified as key for successful formation programs:

- Faithfulness to the message of Jesus Christ, deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture and our baptismal call, including the principles of mission and evangelization
- A solid foundation in the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Understanding and appreciation of the sacraments
- Flexible, accessible, high-quality, integral formation that addresses the person as a whole — emotions, imagination, will, heart, and mind — and covers the four areas of formation for ecclesial ministry: human (or personal), spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral⁶⁷
- Formation addressing the dimensions of being (identity), knowledge, and know-how⁶⁸
- Content that correspond to the lived reality of participants, including their preferred language and cultural context, with respect for and appreciation of the cultural and religious expressions of the community
- Valuing of and support for popular Catholic devotional practices
- A synodal approach to fulfilling the Church's evangelizing mission, grounded in experiences of encountering, listening, and discerning what steps to take at the local level
- A sense of unity, community, mentorship, and mutual accompaniment
- Formation encompassing the diverse ministerial areas within the life of the Church
- Formation on a stewardship way of life and on discernment of unique gifts and charisms for service in the Church and society
- A sense of deep respect for the dignity of each person, and an active commitment to Catholic social teaching that inspires and prepares participants for social action for the common good

67. See USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 34.

68. See Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (PCPNE), *Directory for Catechesis* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2020), nos. 136–150.

- A focus on the intercultural skills needed for working in the broader ecclesial community, *pastoral de conjunto* (co-responsible collaboration and coordination), and the process of ecclesial integration and inclusion
- A variety of instructional techniques, including experiential learning and the effective use of technology
- A particular investment in young people and women
- Strong ties between those in formation and their pastors and parishes, built through a process for discerning, calling forth, sending, accompanying, and supporting them

As a related and complementary component, successful programs provide formation for all pastoral leaders in all levels of the local church regarding how to collaborate effectively with and minister to our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters.

We feel an immense gratitude for the thousands of Hispanic/Latino pastoral leaders and for the leaders from other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups who have responded to the call to serve our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters. Their openness to ministry and their investment in acquiring language skills and intercultural competency has prepared them for a fruitful ministry. Countless Hispanic/Latino families have benefited from the gift of their ministry.

However, the V Encuentro emphasized the importance of having more seminarians, priests, deacons, religious men and women, and lay ecclesial ministers become more interculturally competent. A deeper understanding of the ecclesial integration and inclusion process will also help them carry out their ministry to the Hispanic/Latino people in a more fruitful and rewarding way.

F. Give attention to vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, and welcome those coming from other countries.

The Church in the United States has an ever-increasing need to effectively engage and inspire Hispanics/Latinos — both immigrant and US-born — to become priests, deacons, and religious women and men. Increasing the Church’s capacity to create a culture of vocations with Hispanic/Latino families is paramount in this endeavor. In addition, we need to create a culture of welcome and belonging in our seminaries and houses of religious formation if we are to accompany Hispanics/Latinos who are discerning and preparing for a priestly or religious vocation, so that they can thrive and reach ordination or make their final vows.

Currently, numerous dioceses rely on priests and men and women religious from other countries to come and minister in the Church in the United States. To ensure their success, we strongly recommend that dioceses give attention to their intercultural formation and process of integration into their new culture and ecclesial reality.⁶⁹ Parish priests who welcome ministers from other countries play an important role in helping them integrate.

2) Hispanic/Latino Ministry in Parishes and Other Local Pastoral Settings

The parish typically forms the primary point of entry into the life and mission of the Catholic Church for individuals, families, and their racial, ethnic, and cultural communities. The parish is a community of

69. See USCCB Committees on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations; Cultural Diversity in the Church; Protection of Children and Young People; and Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, *Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2014), especially part 2 on reception and orientation. See also the accompanying video series at USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, “Workshop Videos,” accessed January 18, 2023, www.usccb.org/committees/clergy-consecrated-life-vocations/usccb-guidelines-receiving-pastoral-ministers-us.

communities through which the People of God build the community of disciples, gather to hear the Word of God, are nourished by the Eucharist, and are sent forth to be God's presence in the world. Through parish ministries, pastoral care, and outreach — as well as through small ecclesial communities, ecclesial movements, and many other Catholic institutions, organizations, and apostolates at the local level — the Church “walks forward in *communio* to pursue a common *mission* through the *participation* of each and every one of her members.”⁷⁰

We invite leaders in all pastoral settings, particularly pastors and those who serve with them in parishes, to consider the pastoral guidelines, priorities, and strategies presented in this plan. Such consideration will help parishes move from a maintenance model to a missionary model.

In the United States, the parish has been of singular importance in providing Catholics with a place where they can live their Catholic faith. Particularly for immigrant communities, the parish is not only a place for worship but also a much-needed center for their cultural and social life. The parish is where they tend to feel a sense of safety and trust that is often lacking in their places of work, schools, and neighborhoods. In fact, experiencing this safety and trust in their faith community helps them to better relate to other institutions in the United States. Although we have used parish models like the national parish and other personal parishes to address particular challenges and opportunities at different times in our history, the most common and most effective parish model at this time is the territorial parish that is shared by more than one cultural or ethnic group.⁷¹

The term “shared parishes” was coined to describe ecclesial communities in which two or more languages or cultural groups form an integral part of the ministerial life and mission of a particular parish, each according to its own linguistic and cultural context.⁷² As parish mergers or other forms of parish structure renewals become more common, they will undoubtedly have an impact on Hispanic/Latino ministry. We are aware that establishing and shepherding a shared or merged parish may present significant challenges for pastoral leaders, yet we have also found that shared parishes can foster profound conversations about life and faith across cultures. It is in shared parishes that we have “opportunities to worship and pray together, to learn from each other, to be there for one another, to forgive one another and be reconciled, to acknowledge our unique histories, and to discover ways in which we can be one Catholic parish, yet come from diverse cultures and ethnicities.”⁷³

We strongly recommend that pastors be mindful that their territorial parish is entrusted with the mission to proclaim the Good News and to provide pastoral accompaniment to all the people within its boundaries,⁷⁴ regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, language, or immigration status. At the same time, we understand that Catholics in some places affiliate with another community in addition to their territorial parish for reasons of language, spirituality, or community relationships. Yet this does not preclude pastors from fulfilling their responsibility to provide pastoral care and accompaniment for all throughout their territory. Pastors also play a crucial role in fostering unity and *pastoral de conjunto* in shared parishes.

It is prudent to examine the various ways in which dioceses are clustering parishes due to population shifts and limited availability of priests to lead them. Some dioceses refer to this clustering as a “family of parishes,” while others use different terminology. Considering the Hispanic/Latino presence in parishes involved in this process, a diocese needs to ensure that they do not lose access to the celebration of the Eucharist and other aspects of parish life. On the contrary, we strongly recommend that such access increase, so that they feel welcome and are fully engaged in parish life.

70. Synod of Bishops, *Vademecum*, no. 1.3, emphases added.

71. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*, 10.

72. See *ibid.*, 1.

73. *Ibid.*, 10.

74. *Code of Canon Law* 518, 528–529, www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html.

Given the ongoing growth of the Hispanic/Latino population across the country, the establishment of Hispanic/Latino ministry in more parishes and other pastoral settings is a high priority. As bishops, we believe that every parish with a significant number of Hispanics/Latinos living within its geographical boundaries needs to establish ministries for them in all dimensions of Christian life, beginning with the liturgy, faith formation, and reception of the sacraments. We strongly recommend that other ministries give special attention to young people, families, and those on the periphery.

By their very nature, parishes are called to help all baptized people be missionary disciples and active protagonists in the life and mission of the Church. The following pastoral approaches were identified by the V Encuentro process as key actions to carry out that mission and to achieve a greater degree of pastoral conversion:

- Provide opportunities to encounter the living Christ and to be transformed by his grace in the linguistic and cultural context of the people, particularly through the Eucharist and other sacraments, supported by popular devotions and religious practices, including outreach to encounter those on the peripheries, both in person and in the “digital continent.”⁷⁵
- Recognize the common impediments to participation in the Eucharist for member of the Hispanic/Latino community, accompany people with pastoral sensitivity, and offer pathways to return to the table of the Lord and full sacramental life.
- Support the domestic church, small ecclesial communities, and movements that all play a decisive role in evangelization and mission. Collaborate, coordinate, and carry out joint projects among Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, ecclesial movements and other Catholic institutions, organizations, and apostolates operating in the area.
- Cultivate skills in discerning and recognizing gifts, and provide formation in faithful stewardship, inspiring and equipping the faithful to be good administrators of the gifts God has given them in service of the Church and society.
- Facilitate the participation of all pastoral leaders, paid and volunteer, in comprehensive formation programs to strengthen the ministries in which they serve. Increase their intercultural competence and mentoring of all the faithful to respond to the call to be missionary disciples.
- Promote ecclesial integration and inclusion by identifying what is needed to increase the level of welcoming, belonging, and co-responsibility among all the faithful, as described in *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*.⁷⁶

We recommend that parishes and other local pastoral settings periodically carry out pastoral planning processes that follow the pastoral circle of See-Discern-Act (or See-Judge-Act) described below. We strongly recommend that the diocese offer significant support in this process.

SEE

The first step in pastoral planning at the local level is analyzing the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community. This step includes studying relevant demographic information, consulting with the People of God, and assessing the current level of development of Hispanic/Latino ministry.

As we described earlier in this plan regarding the principle of ecclesial integration and inclusion, the growth of Hispanic/Latino ministry in parishes and other local pastoral settings is often organic. Yet it follows a logical progression from welcoming to belonging, leading ultimately to co-

75. Pope Benedict XVI used the scholarly term “digital continent” to refer to online networking spaces such as social media and online communications.

76. USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*.

responsibility for its life and mission.⁷⁷ When developing plans for expanding and strengthening their ministry, pastoral leaders must consider the demands of accompaniment at the current stage along this journey.

DISCERN

The next step in pastoral planning is to look at the reality through the lenses of the Gospel, our Catholic tradition, USCCB pastoral statements, and other church documents to assess present pastoral practices, to discern better ways to respond to that reality, and to identify or develop the resources needed to do so. All discernment needs to be done in a context of prayer with the explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit. We suggest using the general objective of this pastoral plan and the pastoral guidelines in part II as a good starting point. Using the V Encuentro's *Proceedings and Conclusions* document permits a broader consideration of the priorities as well as the successful practices and resources given for all twenty-eight ministerial areas.⁷⁸ Diocesan pastoral plans and guidelines need to be followed and applied to the local Hispanic/Latino community as well. Participants in the discernment process need to ask themselves: What is God asking us to decide in light of the Church's mission and the realities on the ground?

ACT

In light of the pastoral reality and the priorities discerned, the third step is to identify objectives and pastoral approaches that can help the faith community grow and carry out its mission in the world. We strongly recommend that these be carried out through *pastoral de conjunto* — co-responsible collaboration and coordination — among Catholic parishes, dioceses, schools, ministries, organizations, ecclesial movements, and all pastoral leaders: whether clergy, religious, or lay; paid or volunteer; Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino. It is helpful to spell out the objectives, the activity, the responsible agents and collaborators, and the criteria for evaluation at scheduled intervals.

3) Regional Dimension and Structure for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

Regional structures have been an important part of the development of Hispanic/Latino ministry for several decades. The development and implementation of the V Encuentro process had the benefit of regional teams, which were created to accompany the V Encuentro process in the fourteen territorial episcopal regions. These teams, known as the V Encuentro Regional Teams for Accompaniment (or ERAVE, by its abbreviation in Spanish), functioned to strengthen the level of coordination and engagement of dioceses within a particular region. They were also responsible for providing training and formation to dioceses in the V Encuentro process and for organizing and implementing the regional Encuentros. Regional Encuentros took place in the fourteen episcopal regions with the participation of 131 bishops and thousands of delegates, representing practically every diocese in the country. Regional teams were also responsible for coordinating in-services and accompaniment strategies during the follow-up to the V Encuentro process.

In addition, regional teams proved to be a great resource during the difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath by providing accompaniment and support within their regions while engaging in pastoral consultation and discernment with the USCCB staff and our Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs.

Because of the sustained excellent work of ERAVE, and after extensive consultation with the regional chairs and lead bishops, the Subcommittee for Hispanic Affairs decided to maintain ERAVE through the development and rollout of this *National Pastoral Plan*. These regional teams will be those first responsible

77. See *ibid.*, 21–34.

78. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 73–152. See also professional pastoral leader development materials covering twenty-eight ministerial areas at V Encuentro, “V Encuentro Ministry Series,” accessed January 18, 2023, ms.vencentro.org.

for coordinating and implementing in-services in their regions to assist dioceses in developing or updating their plans. The teams will work together with existing regional institutions and organizations for Hispanic/Latino ministry.

Each of the fourteen episcopal regional teams will also maintain a lead bishop who convenes and accompanies the team and secures the support of an anchoring institution to provide certain services to the work of the team. The chairs of regional teams will be convened by the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs to discern, coordinate, and implement events and resources designed to assist dioceses in the development and implementation of their own pastoral plans for Hispanic/Latino Ministry.

During 2024, a discernment process will be conducted with regional teams to see how they will continue their work and what their role would be for the duration of the ten-year plan. The regional structure for Hispanic/Latino ministry proved to be a great asset during the V Encuentro process and the development of this plan. We strongly recommend that they continue their work of coordination, collaboration, training, and implementation, work that is much needed at this time.

Note that the membership of each episcopal regional team calls for a representation of the dioceses of the region and the inclusion of as many diverse ministries as possible, particularly diocesan leaders and staff working with youth and young adult ministry, evangelization, catechesis, family ministries, vocational discernment, and social justice and advocacy. Regional teams will also work in *pastoral de conjunto* with Hispanic/Latino ministry regional structures already in place and with Catholic membership organizations involved in implementing this plan.

Part IV describes the ten pastoral priorities for Hispanic/Latino ministry in the United States over the next ten years.

PART IV

Pastoral Priorities

The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel, bring people to Jesus Christ, and build the Reign of God. All the baptized have the responsibility to join in this mission of the Church as missionary disciples. We strongly encourage parishes and other local pastoral settings to prioritize inspiring, preparing, and empowering their members to do this effectively.

In response to what we heard from the People of God during the V Encuentro process, to continue strengthening the Church's response to the Hispanic/Latino presence, and to embrace and foster the contributions of Hispanic/Latino Catholics, we invite the Church to focus on the following ten pastoral priorities:

1. Evangelization and Mission
2. Faith Formation and Catechesis
3. Pastoral Accompaniment of Hispanic/Latino Families
4. Youth and Young Adult Ministries (*Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*)
5. Immigration and Advocacy
6. Formation for Ministry in a Culturally Diverse Church
7. Pastoral Care for those in the Periphery
8. Liturgy and Spirituality
9. Promotion of Vocations
10. Catholic Education

We strongly recommend as well that existing USCCB plans or pastoral frameworks for each of these priorities be considered when crafting specific local, regional, and national responses.

1) Evangelization and Mission

We have reached millions of Hispanic/Latino families over the last fifty years through our commitment to being a more evangelizing and missionary Church. Encountering them with a homecoming message has strengthened their Catholic identity. We need to continue such evangelizing and missionary action to ensure that our Hispanic/Latino sisters and brothers feel at home in the Church and become missionary disciples for all peoples. The more effective our efforts are, the less vulnerable Hispanics/Latinos will be to the proselytizing activities of evangelical Christians and other religious groups. Equally important is reaching out to those who now no longer identify with any particular religious denomination or tradition (often called "nones").

Objective: To develop or enhance pastoral practices that give priority to encountering people on the peripheries with a message of welcome and hope.

Pastoral Approaches

- Evaluating the vision, objectives, and activities of existing pastoral programs and practices to determine their level of commitment to missionary discipleship

- Discerning objectives and activities that strengthen the missionary and evangelizing activity of the Church, with an emphasis on reaching out to those on the peripheries
- Forming missionary disciples through collaboration among clergy, lay leaders, and leaders from ecclesial movements
- Infusing a missionary perspective into the liturgical and cultural celebrations of the parish and into every catechetical setting
- Using social media to enhance communication for evangelization
- Utilizing the USCCB's resource titled *Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples* to form leaders and parish missionary teams, promote dialogue, and engage in missionary activity to reach the peripheries using processes that are grounded in a synodal approach to ecclesial life and ministry⁷⁹

2) Faith Formation and Catechesis

The peoples of Hispanic/Latino descent who have lived in the United States for generations, as well as those originating from the many nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, have a long history of transmitting the Catholic faith to the next generation and integrating Gospel values and Catholic devotions into their cultural and spiritual life.⁸⁰ Yet contemporary life in the United States presents a challenging environment in which today's families and their children can receive and transmit the faith. Parents have a very important role in the formation of their children's faith, but they are not always prepared to undertake and fulfill that responsibility. We have seen a clear decline in Hispanic/Latino religious participation between the immigrant generation and later generations, indicating a need to help parents navigate this cultural and linguistic transition. New faith formation models and materials are needed that respond to the current diverse and generational reality of Hispanic/Latino individuals and families by welcoming and preparing them to share their gifts in the Church and society.

Objective: *To support the lifelong process of learning and ongoing conversion.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Providing opportunities to learn about the Catholic faith at all ages and stages of life, in ways rooted in the personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the Word of God, according to learners' languages and cultural needs
- Fostering the identity of all the baptized as missionary disciples by forming them through encounters with the living Word of God in Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the sacraments, and actions that bring to life a Church that goes forth in mission
- Consulting with and visiting individuals and families to find out what obstacles they find most challenging in the local community, including persons with disabilities, the Deaf community, and other people on the periphery; identifying needs for adaptive instruction, to accommodate learning or ability differences, or needs to reach specialized settings such as care homes, community centers, or detention facilities
- Incorporating the value of each vocation — including marriage, the priesthood, consecrated life, the permanent diaconate, and the beautiful Catholic vision for marriage, human sexuality, chastity, and the universal call to holiness — in age-appropriate ways into faith formation at all levels

79. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples* (Washington DC: USCCB, 2019).

80. See USCCB, *Encuentro and Mission*, no. 4.

- Integrating the vision, principles, and values of Catholic social teaching and the personal moral life — as well as experiences of applying them to the most pressing social concerns in Hispanic/Latino communities — into faith formation programs for Catholics of all ages⁸¹
- Including opportunities to reflect on the moral choices of daily life and apply what is learned to achieve ongoing conversion, reinforced through experiences of God’s saving love, mercy, and forgiveness, especially in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation⁸²
- Partnering with parents, extended families, godparents, and pastoral leaders
- Collaborating, coordinating, and carrying out joint projects among Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, ecclesial movements, and other Catholic institutions, organizations, and apostolates operating in the area

Objective: *To provide sacramental preparation and mystagogical catechesis in the lived reality of the people.*⁸³

Pastoral Approaches

- Providing opportunities to learn about the sacraments as real encounters with the risen Lord Jesus
- Providing a comprehensive liturgical catechesis in support of sacramental preparation that also highlights the sacramentality of daily life, builds on the living traditions and devotions of the local community, includes a period of mystagogy, and connects people to lifelong learning
- Facilitating comprehensive formation and mentorship for those providing catechesis for all stages of life, emphasizing biblical literacy, lifelong formation, instructional techniques, a dynamic experiential approach, experiential learning, effective use of technology, and intercultural skills
- Recruiting and forming more bilingual catechists, with intentional outreach to young adults who are called to teach in English, Spanish, or both

Objective: *To assist Hispanic/Latino parents and extended families in transmitting the faith to their children.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Implementing the recommendations from the V Encuentro in catechesis for children to bridge the linguistic divide between children and adults, while forming and equipping parents to exercise their role as the primary catechists of their children
- Forming and commissioning bilingual catechists by utilizing bilingual catechetical materials — even when the instruction is given primarily in English — and by developing bilingual, family-based catechetical programs and activities⁸⁴ to facilitate immigrant parent participation and equip the child to review the materials in their preferred language, either at home or with their peers
- Directing faith formation efforts to include the whole family, in English and Spanish as required, so that families can more effectively nurture the faith of their children
- Incorporating popular religious practices in the catechetical process, making connections between those practices and the content of the faith

81. See Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, nos. 74c, 389–391.

82. See *ibid.*, nos. 57–60.

83. See *ibid.*, nos. 35, 61–65, 74, 98, 113b, 291.

84. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 75, 98–100.

3) Pastoral Accompaniment of Hispanic/Latino Families

Members of the Hispanic/Latino community bring the richness of their faith traditions, family-centered worldview, and profound sense of God’s presence in their daily life. This gift should not be taken for granted, as the erosion of these values and traditions is undermining the cohesiveness and unity of families and their Catholic identity. Many Hispanic/Latino families are also impacted by economic pressures that threaten family stability. Couples and families need the support of the local faith community to thrive and pass on the faith to the next generation.

As we stated in *Called to the Joy of Love*, our 2022 national pastoral framework for marriage and family life ministry, “We must ‘seek new forms of missionary creativity’ to reach hearts and heal wounds in all families, Catholic and non-Catholic, with a particular sensitivity to the increasingly diverse cultural and ethnic communities in our midst and to those families that are farthest from the Church.”⁸⁵

Objective: *To strengthen marriage formation in the Hispanic/Latino community.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Providing Hispanic/Latino couples with proximate and immediate marriage preparation that takes their reality into consideration, responds to the contemporary social and cultural challenges facing marriage, and offers corresponding options that allow them to live and celebrate their faith fully
- Offering a variety of marriage enrichment opportunities for couples that can provide practical knowledge, tools, and resources for strengthening their relationship as well as renewing their loving commitment and spiritual life as a couple; and training experienced couples in accompanying younger couples and families
- Implementing a variety of marriage restoration opportunities to help couples overcome serious marital difficulties and build a healthy marriage
- Raising awareness about the Church’s teaching about marriage and cohabitation, and accompanying couples in irregular situations, particularly those in the process of convalidating their marriage or of obtaining a declaration of nullity
- Collaborating, coordinating, and carrying out joint projects among Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, ecclesial movements, and other Catholic institutions, organizations, and apostolates operating in the area
- Recruiting Spanish-speaking providers and teachers of natural family planning to work with married couples
- Translating and culturally adapting the Third Option program and similar programs that help build healthy marriages and assist marriages in crisis

Objective: *To form and equip Hispanic/Latino parents to be leaders in the domestic church amid the challenges of the contemporary world and the complexities of family life.*

85. USCCB, *Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2022), 6, quoting Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family), March 19, 2016, no. 57, www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf; see also nos. 36, 201, 230, 291. See also USCCB, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, November 17, 2009, www.usccb.org/resources/pastoral-letter-marriage-love-and-life-in-the-divine-plan.pdf.

Pastoral Approaches

- Involving parents and grandparents in the faith formation and catechesis of children as well as providing ongoing opportunities for lifelong catechesis and conversion, emphasizing the use of Scripture and prayer in family life, incorporating Hispanic/Latino religious traditions, and sharing their faith with others
- Seizing baptismal preparation and other key moments as opportunities to strengthen the understanding of the baptismal call and families' responsibility to be communities of life and love⁸⁶
- Creating a culture of vocations in Hispanic/Latino families by providing information on each vocation that is linguistically and culturally relevant, as well as tools to help parents foster vocational discernment in their children
- Ensuring that parish events or gatherings are family-friendly by involving parents, children, and older generations in a planning process; or including activities for children and young people when gathering is not feasible
- Organizing a variety of small communities for families, spaces where they can support one another and be encouraged to go forth to encounter other families, especially on the peripheries
- Identifying and developing materials for children at different ages that support the mission of parents as ministers in their domestic church
- Offering psychological, spiritual, and practical tools to accompany families in their domestic church

Objective: *To pastorally accompany all families, particularly those facing challenges.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Assessing current ministries for couples and families to provide more comprehensive accompaniment, paying particular attention to (1) those facing challenges (e.g., immigrants, refugees/asylum seekers, migrant workers, the military, and all those affected by racism and xenophobia, violence, domestic violence, unexpected or difficult pregnancies, challenging parenting situations, trauma from participation in an abortion, mental and physical illnesses, lack of healthcare, addictions, and poverty) and (2) those in unique situations who may not feel welcome currently (e.g., those affected by infertility, divorce, detention, deportation, disabilities, serious illness, gender discordance, same-sex attraction, single parenting, or abortion). We strongly recommend that the Church also advocate legislatively for public policies that help families thrive, such as paid family leave, just living wages, and protections for the rights of immigrant workers against abuses such as wage theft, risks to health, or other mistreatment in the workplace.
- Providing formation for all pastoral leaders in the “art of accompaniment,”⁸⁷ and empowering more lay leaders to provide this accompaniment while giving guidance on when to refer someone for professional assistance.
- Collaborating with community services to better provide practical assistance and healing to families facing financial, mental, or physical health challenges, including trauma, grief, addictions, care for the elderly, conflict, and abuse.

86. See Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World), November 22, 1981, no. 17, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.

87. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 169.

4) Youth and Young Adult Ministries (*Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*)

Hispanic/Latino young people are a great treasure to the Church — as both recipients and protagonists of accompaniment and pastoral care — and they are uniquely situated as bridge builders among cultures, languages, generations, and ecclesial experiences. They provide the essential link between the Church of today and the Church of tomorrow.⁸⁸ Our faith communities need to be a privileged place for welcoming, engaging, forming, and accompanying Hispanic/Latino young people through a variety of youth and young adult groups, ministries, and initiatives (both in English and in Spanish) that empower them to be young missionary disciples in the context of their culturally diverse communities. This priority requires the entire church community to value, support, and devote a significant proportion of its time, human capital, and financial resources to the young people in the Church.

Objective: *To reach out to Hispanic/Latino young people, responding to their needs and concerns, accompanying them in their hopes and dreams, and forming them as missionary disciples who are protagonists in the life and mission of the Church.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Encountering young people living in the peripheries of Church and society, including engaging in the digital continent, creating authentic and relevant messaging and invitations, and offering them spaces where they can engage, feel heard, and develop a sense that they belong
- Offering comprehensive ministries to foster integral personal and spiritual growth based on the lived reality of families and young people,⁸⁹ in their linguistic and cultural context, through a variety of youth and young adult groups and other opportunities to encounter Christ, build community, witness to their faith, and engage in the life and mission of the Church
- Coordinating and carrying out joint projects among Catholic parishes, schools, colleges, universities, campus ministries, small ecclesial communities, and ecclesial movements, all of which play a crucial role in transmitting the faith to forming and accompanying young people
- Incorporating ongoing faith formation and catechesis as described in the pastoral priority above, with special emphasis on mystagogical catechesis, a Christian vision of human sexuality, and living the baptismal vocation in the world
- Fostering family and community-based approaches that affirm the value of community and extended family in the formation and accompaniment of young people
- Advocating for public policies that meet the needs of Hispanic/Latino young people in areas such as access to quality education, mental health services, and affordable vocational and university-level education, as well as a path to citizenship for DREAMers
- Accompanying those experiencing transitions, whether between stages of life (e.g., graduating, becoming engaged, becoming a parent, entering religious formation), after the reception of a sacrament (e.g., confirmation, matrimony, ordination), or between ministry settings (e.g., ministry with teens, campus ministry, young adult ministry)
- Forming, equipping, and accompanying young people in embracing and living the Gospel of life from conception to natural death
- Connecting young people with their peers across the diocese, region, nation, and world, especially through participation in youth days at each level, with due regard for welcoming the cultural and linguistic diversity of the young people

88. See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 133.

89. See Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, nos. 74, 213.

- Accompanying young adults who show leadership potential to World Youth Day to invigorate their faith in Christ and their calling as missionary disciples
- Helping young people and families to improve local public education, encouraging Hispanic/Latino parents to send their children to Catholic schools (and providing the financial help to do so), leveraging the resources of Catholic educational institutions to chart a path to higher education, and engaging young people in tutoring and mentoring younger members of the Hispanic/Latino community⁹⁰

Objective: *To provide ongoing spiritual and pastoral formation to Hispanic/Latino young people and pastoral advisers and ministers who accompany them.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Incorporating opportunities into all ministries to help young people develop a meaningful prayer life — building on the community’s traditional spiritual practices and popular devotions — to strengthen and guide their discernment and witness of faith
- Including integral pastoral formation in all programming for young people so that as they mature they can take on a more active role as protagonists of ministry
- Identifying young people with leadership skills and more bicultural and bilingual parish leaders — especially those who can intentionally accompany second- and third-generation Hispanics/Latinos; and facilitating and investing in their participation in pastoral formation for ministry programs

Objective: *To draw Hispanic/Latino young people into responsible leadership in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.*⁹¹

Pastoral Approaches

- Providing young people with relevant and transformational opportunities to utilize their gifts in the Catholic community as well as to live out their faith as active members of their civic societies and builders of a society cemented in Gospel values of justice, peace, and fraternal love
- Partnering with vocation directors and marriage ministers to support young people’s vocational discernment, provide spiritual direction, support their call to holiness, and encourage the faithful stewardship of their gifts and talents in the Church, at work, and in society⁹²
- Empowering the growing development of young people as protagonists in the life and mission of the Church,⁹³ which includes peer-to-peer evangelization, under the guidance and mentorship of experienced adults
- Building relationships of spiritual accompaniment with parents, grandparents, other extended family members, godparents, pastors, lay pastoral leaders, consecrated religious, and other trusted adults
- Preparing and integrating young adults to participate in advisory bodies and parish leadership organizations (e.g., parish council, Hispanic/Latino ministry council, or liturgical committee)

90. See USCCB Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, *Proceedings and Conclusions*, 78, 106, 137–138.

91. See USCCB, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1997), 11.

92. See Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, nos. 248–277.

93. See *ibid.*, nos. 174, 175–178, 203–207.

5) Immigration and Advocacy

Immigration continues to lie at the heart of Hispanic/Latino families. The harsh reality of deportation, family separation, anxiety about the future, and living in the shadows impacts millions of Hispanics/Latinos across this country, disrupting their lives.

The Church has historically been the strongest advocate for immigrants and has actively advocated for just and humane laws and policies. The prophetic voice of the Church is needed more than ever as we live through a time of renewed xenophobia, racism, and discrimination. The work of missionary disciples is urgently needed amid the inhumane and immoral treatment of asylum seekers, families, and unaccompanied minors, particularly at the US southern border. The Church's long-standing support for immigration reform is not merely a humanitarian gesture or a struggle to achieve a justice unfulfilled. Rather, our support signifies our efforts to accompany communities that too often remain at the margins and demonstrates our solidarity with them. Committing our time and resources to address the concrete needs of those living in these communities will draw them closer to the heart of the Church, thus making our pastoral efforts more effective and compelling.

Objective: *To provide pastoral care and accompaniment, especially to families separated by deportation or detention.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Facilitating visits and communication by connecting families to community organizations and Catholic service providers, such as Catholic Charities, that offer legal immigration guidance or social services
- Establishing funds to assist migrants in their legal process to obtain a visa with a work permit, asylum, or permanent residence
- Working with conferences in other countries and CELAM⁹⁴ to identify means of offering legal assistance to migrants and refugees in transit
- Further engaging the root causes of immigration and concrete ways in which we as a Christian community — including internationally — can serve these countries to better the lives of their residents before they resort to migration
- Establishing platforms — directed and organized by trained lay Hispanic/Latino immigrant leaders and supported by the USCCB — to accompany, educate, and defend the social, civic, and spiritual needs of the documented and undocumented immigrant community
- Creating bonds of solidarity among all the members of the Body of Christ — immigrants and US-born alike

Objective: *To take a more prominent role in advocacy for a comprehensive and just immigration reform, both individually and in dioceses, parishes, and organizations.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Preaching on behalf of immigrants and refugees, and forming the consciousness of the faithful on Catholic social teaching principles related to immigration

94. See Appendix B for full list of abbreviations of Catholic organizations, departments, major ecclesial movements, and initiatives.

- Advocating for a comprehensive and just immigration reform at the local, regional, and national levels, based on our 2004 joint pastoral letter issued with the Mexican bishops' conference, titled *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*⁹⁵
- Highlighting racism and discrimination against immigrants as a life issue
- Working to overcome racism and harsh enforcement policies that separate families and leave many people to die in the wilderness or subject themselves to the dangerous influence of human traffickers
- Building solidarity and compassion for the acceptance and welcome of immigrants and refugees in the United States
- Using social media to highlight the stories of immigrants and refugees seeking asylum, thereby humanizing their plight and demonstrating the need for a comprehensive and just immigration reform

6) Formation for Ministry in a Culturally Diverse Church

Hispanics/Latinos are called to provide leadership in the life and mission of the Church in significant numbers. Investing in their formation as leaders and forming them for service in different ministerial areas are of paramount importance to the Church, with particular attention given to Hispanic/Latino young adults. It is also crucial for all leaders in the Church, including seminarians and pastors, to receive formation in Hispanic/Latino ministry and culture so that they can successfully engage Hispanics/Latinos in the context of their ministries.

Objective: *To form collaborative leaders — Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino; lay, ordained, consecrated women and men, and seminarians — who can pastorally respond in a spirit of synodality to the demands of a culturally diverse Church.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Creating flexible, quality, comprehensive formation opportunities that are accessible both on-site and online in terms of culture and language
- Offering trainings on *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers* and *Best Practices for Shared Parishes* in seminaries, dioceses, and other Catholic institutions⁹⁶
- Strengthening the collaboration among dioceses, parishes, ecclesial movements, pastoral institutes, seminaries, and Catholic universities to maximize access to pastoral formation programs for ministry for Hispanic/Latino pastoral leaders and those who serve Hispanics/Latinos in ministry

Objective: *To accompany Hispanics/Latinos in discovering their gifts and discerning for ministry in the Church and service in society.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Recognizing and calling forth gifts of Hispanics/Latinos and facilitating their development and practice of those gifts in ministry and in society

95. See USCCB and Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2004).

96. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*; USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*.

- Investing in the formation of Hispanics/Latinos for successful leadership in the Church
- Including Hispanics/Latinos in diocesan and parish councils, finance councils, school boards, and boards of local Catholic organizations, including seminaries and universities
- Hiring Hispanics/Latinos, particularly young adults and women, in parish and diocesan positions across a variety of ministerial areas
- Reaching out to all Catholics, to those preparing for or currently in public service, and to all engaged in the public square to introduce them to Catholic social teaching principles, with a focus on understanding the common good

Objective: *To continue to increase Hispanics/Latinos' access to graduate programs in theology and ministry.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Increasing the number of programs specializing in Hispanic/Latino ministry
- Continuing to invest in scholarships for Hispanic/Latino students, and hiring Hispanic/Latino women and men as faculty and staff, especially those who can teach courses on Hispanic/Latino ministry
- Building stronger collaborations between theologians — Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino — and pastoral leaders
- Developing partnerships among Catholic and secular higher educational institutions to create and promote pathways and academic accompaniment for the Hispanic/Latino community's graduate studies and degree completion

7) Pastoral Care for Those in the Periphery

The Church is a promoter and example of justice and mercy. We strongly recommend that priority be given to discerning responses to urgent and vital needs at the local level, especially as pastoral conditions evolve, avoiding the temptation to focus on one at the expense of others.⁹⁷ The responses need to include both works of charity (direct services) and legislative advocacy for justice, always working for the common good in harmony with Catholic social teaching. Hispanic/Latino Catholics not only benefit from these very important ministries but are also called to be protagonists in building a *society based on social friendship* — a just society that respects human life and dignity from conception to natural death, protects our common home,⁹⁸ and is rooted in social friendship and the common good.

Some common peripheries identified in the Hispanic/Latino community include immigrants (both documented and undocumented), refugees and asylum seekers, migrant workers, Indigenous peoples, those who are detained or incarcerated, the military, the Deaf community, people with disabilities, preborn children, victims of domestic violence or human trafficking, those who are seriously ill, those who are elderly, women who become pregnant in difficult circumstances, those affected by unexpected pregnancy, and those experiencing same-sex attraction or sexual identity incongruence. In addition, environmental degradation and toxic chemicals have harmful effects on the health of agricultural and industrial workers, many of whom are Hispanic/Latino. Pollution of the environment is therefore a serious problem in most low-income communities where many Hispanics/Latinos live. Other peripheries include people suffering from poverty,

97. See Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 101.

98. See Pope Francis, *Laudato Si' (Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home)*, May 24, 2015, no. 1, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

hunger, domestic and community violence, crime, racism and xenophobia, mental and physical illnesses, tendencies toward suicide or self-harm, lack of healthcare, and addictions, among others.

Objective: *To empower the Catholic faithful in their role of building a society based on social friendship.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Incorporating formation for living and promoting Catholic social teaching in all pastoral formation for ministry — lay and ordained — as well as in catechetical materials for people of all ages
- Encouraging Catholic leaders to be active in all sectors of the local community, helping to address a wide variety of social justice issues, and providing experiences of encounter with those on the periphery
- Listening and responding to the prophetic voice of Hispanic/Latino Catholics, particularly those on the periphery who are most affected by the issues named above
- Engaging in grassroots organizing to facilitate community-based solutions
- Bringing attention to the concerns that are most urgent and vital for social justice and advocacy — locally, nationally, and globally
- Creating accessible programs to form, protect, and help Hispanics/Latinos promote respect for life from conception to natural death

Objective: *To increase access to social services that are needed to advance human flourishing among Hispanic/Latino individuals and families.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Establishing or deepening partnerships among diocesan offices, parishes, ministries, schools, Catholic Charities, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic health services and other Catholic organizations, grassroots organizations, and community partners in Hispanic/Latino communities, in a spirit of *pastoral de conjunto*
- Improving communication with the Hispanic/Latino community about services that are available, and equipping clergy and other pastoral leaders to connect people with the services they need, such as help finding work, mental health resources, financial assistance, community services, healthcare, legal representation, and education
- Reinforcing and expanding services that are lacking, in collaboration with other agencies and service providers, ensuring financial and geographic accessibility

Objective: *To advocate for the material, spiritual, emotional, and relational or psychosocial well-being of Hispanic/Latino families within a context of social friendship.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Engaging pastoral leaders and the faithful in working with community organizations, public schools, mental health and healthcare providers, jails, prisons, detention centers, and other institutions

- Providing formation for Hispanic/Latino Catholics on political systems in the United States, including ways to engage in the public square, community organizing, legislative advocacy, and current calls to action at the state and national levels, in English and Spanish⁹⁹
- Collaborating with state Catholic conferences, local Catholic Charities, and community organizations to advocate on behalf of and with the poor, the suffering, and the outcasts on the peripheries to create real policy, legislative, or structural changes as needed
- Partnering with Catholic Relief Services and other global relief organizations to increase global solidarity through prayer, education, encounter, economic support, and advocacy¹⁰⁰
- Engaging and empowering Hispanics/Latinos running for public office, by offering opportunities for dialogue and formation to help them grow in their understanding Catholic social teaching

8) Liturgy and Spirituality

Liturgy and spirituality are central to the life of the Church, as they sustain and express the faith of the People of God in communal prayer and divine worship. Increased access to the celebration of the liturgy and sacramental life in Spanish is essential for nourishing the Catholic identity of new immigrants and their families. Also important is a spirituality nourished in the prayer of the Church and supported by cultural expressions of religiosity that help keep the faith alive, operative, and vibrant.

Objective: *To make the celebration of the Sunday liturgy and other sacraments more accessible in Spanish and contextualized by Hispanic/Latino spirituality and lived reality.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Promote beautiful, reverent, authentic, and vibrant celebrations of the Sunday liturgy in English, in Spanish, and in a bilingual format
- Providing ongoing formation to help clergy understand the cultural and social reality of Hispanic/Latino people
- Continuing to support the language needs and unique cultural elements, celebrations, and expressions of the liturgy in Hispanic/Latino communities

Objective: *To form liturgical ministers and musicians for Hispanic/Latino communities.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Identifying, inviting, and forming new ministers to serve in a variety of contexts
- Offering homilies in English and Spanish that speak to the reality of the local community to make the connection between faith and life
- Developing a liturgical catechesis, presented in a dynamic and engaging way, to help youth and young adults more fully understand and live the liturgy

9) Promotion of Vocations

99. Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, state Catholic conferences, Justice for Immigrants, Catholic Relief Services, and Voice of the Poor provide excellent opportunities for engagement in advocacy. Community organizations that receive funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development also train local leaders in organizing.

100. See Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 142–153.

An increase in ecclesial vocations among the Hispanic/Latino community, particularly vocations to the priesthood, is essential for the Church to carry out its mission. “At this historical moment, particular attention should be given to US-born Hispanics, who constitute the majority of young people within this population.”¹⁰¹ Local faith communities play a key role in creating a culture of vocations and need to work closely with Hispanic/Latino families to do so. We also need to make more Catholic education opportunities available to the Hispanic/Latino community as a means of discerning and supporting vocations.

Objective: *To increase the number of Hispanics/Latinos in the vocations of priesthood, consecrated life, permanent diaconate, lay ecclesial ministry, and marriage.*

Pastoral Approaches

- Instructing the faithful on the universal call to holiness and promoting the vocations of priesthood, permanent diaconate, consecrated life, single life, and marriage across ministries and programming
- Encouraging prayer for vocations, particularly to the priesthood and religious life, in Eucharistic adoration and other forms of personal family and community prayer.
- Building relationships with Hispanic/Latino families, developing ministries with young people, and offering young people opportunities for vocational discernment
- Offering accompaniment and spiritual direction for young people who are discerning their vocation
- Equipping diocesan offices with personnel who can engage and model vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life, and lay ecclesial ministry
- Encouraging pastors to speak with their Hispanic/Latino young people, in groups and individually, especially to encourage discernment toward the priesthood — that is, offer talks on vocations. For a 2021 special report on cultural diversity in vocations to religious life in the United States, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) surveyed religious priests, brothers, and sisters and noted that 50 percent indicated that their parish clergy had supported and encouraged them to discern their religious vocation.¹⁰²

10) Catholic Education

Catholic schools, colleges, and universities have historically been a great gift to the Church and its mission, providing the benefit of a Catholic education and preparing leaders in Church and society with a strong Catholic identity. Many of these institutions have been successful in welcoming and integrating the Hispanic/Latino community. However, nationally less than 4 percent of Hispanic/Latino children currently attend a Catholic school. We must urgently redouble our efforts to better reach Hispanic/Latino families and to welcome, embrace, mentor, and form Hispanic/Latino young people in these institutions. Catholic schools need to develop strategies for accessibility and retention (financial and cultural) for Hispanic/Latino families and other underserved communities, respecting the rich diversity of our Catholic community.¹⁰³

101. USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation*, no. 53.

102. CARA, “Cultural Diversity in Vocations to Religious Life in the United States: Findings from a National Study of New Religious Members,” *CARA Special Report*, Summer 2021, 6, cara.georgetown.edu/s/Summer2021Vocations.pdf.

103. Alliance for Catholic Education - University of Notre Dame, *To Nurture the Soul of a Nation: Latino Families, Catholic Schools, and Educational Opportunity* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Alliance for Catholic Education Press, 2009).

Objective: To enroll and graduate more Hispanic/Latino students in Catholic educational institutions.

Pastoral Approaches

- Cultivating a missionary spirit among school staff and administrators
- Creating opportunities for school staff and administration to meet Hispanic/Latino families and affirm the gifts they bring to the local church and community
- Providing information about Catholic educational institutions in ways that are attractive to and accessible by Hispanic/Latino families, considering their language preferences, culture, and location in the community
- Developing strategies to make Catholic education more affordable, and communicating with Hispanic/Latino families about the financial assistance available
- Having schools and dioceses inform Hispanic/Latino families of existing programs within their state, and training Catholic institutions to participate in advocacy to begin or expand school choice programs
- Adapting the school environment to be more welcoming and inclusive spaces, proactively hiring more bilingual Hispanics/Latinos as teachers and administrators, and providing intercultural competency training to school staff and volunteers
- Inviting and preparing members of the Hispanic/Latino community to serve as volunteers, mentors for students and families, and members of advisory bodies regarding budgets, activities, staff development, scholarships, and other areas of school life, thereby helping the schools respond to their Hispanic/Latino community in ways commensurate with their population growth
- Raising awareness among Hispanic/Latino families about Catholic education, preparing children for college, assisting with their discernment and application, and investing in pathways that guarantee some success in the higher education of Hispanic/Latino young people
- Offering a variety of formats, languages, and online components in higher education, in both degree-granting programs and continuing education programs
- Reaching out intentionally to priests from international backgrounds to inform them about the history and centrality of Catholic schools in the life of the Church of the United States
- Having Catholic schools carefully consider how to incorporate Hispanic/Latino families more deeply into the life of the school

The following, final part includes national initiatives that we are committing to carry out over the next ten years, initiatives that can serve as an example for more localized pastoral planning. We invite local pastoral leaders to engage in these activities to the extent that they will equip themselves and their ministries to advance their discerned pastoral priorities.

PART V

National Projects and Initiatives

This final part of the *National Pastoral Plan* contains several projects and national initiatives that we, as bishops of the United States, commit to carry out over the next ten years. Other initiatives will be incorporated into the plan over the next several years as the ten-year plan will span four USCCB planning cycles.¹⁰⁴

- Rollout of National Plan
- Pastoral Discernment and Accompaniment of the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Network
- Evangelization and Mission
- Faith Formation and Catechesis
- Pastoral Accompaniment of Families
- Pastoral Formation of Young Adult Leaders
- Immigration and Advocacy
- Pastoral Formation and Action for a Culturally Diverse Church
- Social Justice Formation and Mission
- Leadership Formation and Accompaniment
- Liturgy and Spirituality
- Vocations
- Catholic Education

104. The USCCB follows a four-year strategic planning cycle. The ten-year span of this *National Pastoral Plan* will include planning cycles 2021–2024, 2025–2028, 2029–2032, and 2033–2036.

1) Rollout of National Plan

Objective: *To assist dioceses in the development and implementation of their pastoral plans, between September 2023 and December 2024.*

Outcome: Between seventy-five and one hundred dioceses become familiar with the pastoral plan and can develop their own plans or update them using the pastoral guidelines and priorities of this plan.

Activity 1:	Develop a one-day in-service to present this <i>National Pastoral Plan</i> , diocesan statistics, and tools for using the plan to develop local plans.	<i>By September 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Hold a national “train the trainers” in-service for coordinators of regional teams.	<i>By November 2023</i>
Activity 3:	Hold “train the trainers” pastoral planning workshops in fourteen regions.	<i>Between January 2024 and June 2024</i>
Activity 4:	Hold diocesan “train the trainers” in-services in dioceses.	<i>Between June 2024 and June 2025</i>
Collaborators:	External collaborators: current ERAVE ¹⁰⁵ regional chairs and lead bishops, regional Hispanic/Latino ministry teams, diocesan directors and coordinators for Hispanic/Latino ministry, and national Hispanic/Latino Catholic organizations	

2) Pastoral Discernment and Accompaniment of the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Network¹⁰⁶

Objective: *To engage in a process of pastoral discernment and accompaniment with national and regional Hispanic/Latino Catholic organizations and institutions.*

Outcome: A synodal spirit and a common vision develop among leaders of the Hispanic/Latino ministry network and a strengthening of their organizations and institutions.

105. See Appendix B for full list of abbreviations of Catholic organizations, departments, major ecclesial movements, and initiatives.

106. The Hispanic/Latino ministry network includes national, regional, diocesan, and local leaders.

Activity 1:	Design a process of dialogue and pastoral discernment using the priorities and outcomes of the V Encuentro's <i>Proceedings and Conclusions</i> , the Raíces y Alas Congress 2022 proceedings, and pastoral insights from the 2021 I Asamblea Eclesial para Latinoamérica y el Caribe as a starting point.	<i>By December 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Invite national and regional organizations to select priority areas and engage in conversation and pastoral discernment at their annual meetings and other forums.	<i>From January 2024 to June 2025</i>
Activity 3:	Conduct a summit on Hispanic/Latino ministry to share pastoral insights, perspectives, and recommendations generated through the dialogue and pastoral discernment process.	<i>Fall 2025</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Subcommittee for Hispanic Affairs, Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church External collaborators: national Catholic organizations	

3) Evangelization and Mission

Objective: *To create a national movement designed to encounter Hispanics/Latinos on the peripheries, bringing them into the presence of Christ and inviting them to encounter the living Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.*

Outcome: *Between fifty and seventy-five dioceses engage in a missionary project and see an increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino Catholics who are partaking in the celebration of the Sunday liturgy and otherwise demonstrating a growing appreciation of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.*

Activity 1:	Design a process of mission to the peripheries based on the USCCB resource <i>Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples</i> .	<i>By December 2024</i>
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Activity 2:	Provide “train the trainers” in-services in fourteen episcopal regions.	<i>From January 2024 to January 2028</i>
Activity 3:	Offer training to guide couples and families through irregular situations, so they may rectify their situation and return to the reception of the Eucharist, and so we can support their families in the reception of the sacraments.	<i>January to December 2025</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Subcommittee for Hispanic Affairs; Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church; Evangelization and Catechesis	

Objective: *To commemorate the five-hundred-year anniversary of the Guadalupan event and revitalize its evangelizing message and mission.*

Outcome: *Catholics become more aware of the message and mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe and are better able to engage in this evangelizing mission.*

Activity 1:	Develop resources on the message and mission of the Guadalupan event, including a parish guide based on the <i>Nican Mopohua</i> . ¹⁰⁷	<i>By December 2029</i>
Activity 2:	Hold “train the trainers” in-services in fourteen episcopal regions on the use of the <i>Nican Mopohua</i> parish guide.	<i>January to December 2030</i>
Activity 3:	Plan a national celebration to mark the five hundred years following the Guadalupan event.	<i>November or December 2031</i>
Activity 4:	Promote the anniversary celebration of the Guadalupan event in dioceses across the United States.	<i>During 2031</i>

107. See Clodomiro L. Siller Acuña, *Para Comprender El Mensaje De Maria De Guadalupe* (Buenos Aires: Argentina, Editorial Guadalupe 1989), 12.

Activity 5:	Mark the celebration of the Guadalupe event as a new beginning of the evangelizing action of the Church.	<i>December 12, 2031</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs; Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church, Divine Worship, and Pro-Life Activities External collaborators: national Catholic organizations, regional leaders, and diocesan directors of Hispanic/Latino ministry	

4) Faith Formation and Catechesis

Objective: *To form and accompany catechetical leaders in light of the Directory for Catechesis, with an emphasis on the lay ministry of the catechist.*

Outcome: *The number of well-formed Hispanic/Latino catechetical leaders increases between 30 and 50 percent, including a 10 to 20 percent increase in parish staffing for leading catechetical ministries across the country by December 2033.*

Activity 1:	Develop in-services and resources, in both English and Spanish, on the <i>Directory for Catechesis</i> and the formation of catechetical ministries.	<i>By December 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Promote the lay ministry of catechists as a privileged means of evangelizing that strengthens ecclesial communion, by holding ongoing in-services, presentations, and dialogue at national catechetical gatherings and events.	<i>By December 2025</i>
Activity 3:	Develop and provide Spanish-language daily readings and reflections in audio and video formats to promote biblical literacy and animation for ministry.	<i>By December 2024</i>
Activity 4:	Meet with the national Association of Catholic Publishers to present the vision of this <i>National Pastoral Plan</i> and discern the kinds of bilingual resources and catechetical training materials that Catholic publishers can provide.	<i>By December 2023</i>

Collaborators:	<p>USCCB collaborators: Subcommittee on Scripture Translations; Secretariats for Evangelization and Catechesis; Divine Worship; and Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth</p> <p>External collaborators: FCH, NALM, NCCL</p>
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5) Pastoral Accompaniment of Families

Objective: *To design and develop resources to accompany and form Hispanic/Latino families as missionary disciples in the domestic church.*

Outcome: *Hispanic/Latino families strengthen their identity as the domestic church and see themselves as missionary disciples.*

Activity 1:	Develop resources for Hispanic/Latino families based on the five movements outlined by Pope Francis in <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> , no. 24, with an emphasis on mission.	<i>By December 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Create and provide in-services to help dioceses use these resources.	<i>From January 2024 to January 2028</i>
Activity 3:	Use the Por Tu Matrimonio website to animate and accompany Hispanic/Latino families as missionary disciples in the domestic church. ¹⁰⁸	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	<p>USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Evangelization and Catechesis; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth</p> <p>External collaborators: CFLA, FHF</p>	

Objective: *To increase collaboration among Hispanic/Latino family life ministers at the national level.*

108. See USCCB, Por Tu Matrimonio, www.portumatrimonio.org.

Outcome: Better coordination and accompaniment develop among Hispanic/Latino family life ministers and ministries.

Activity 1:	Create and maintain a national directory of leaders responsible for Hispanic family life ministries in dioceses and other Catholic organizations and institutions.	<i>By December 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Plan and conduct joint annual meetings of CFLA and Hispanic Family Life Ministry in a spirit of <i>pastoral de conjunto</i> .	<i>Annually</i>
Activity 3:	Collaborate on the implementation of our 2022 resource <i>Called to the Joy of Love: Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry</i> and our 2009 pastoral letter <i>Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan</i> .	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Evangelization and Catechesis; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth External collaborators: CFLA, FHFM	

Objective: *To enhance formation and accompaniment of Hispanic/Latino couples and parents in parishes.*

Outcome: Hispanic/Latino families demonstrate a stronger Catholic identity and are better able to live out their faith as couples, parents, and family members in the domestic church.

Activity 1:	Identify best practices for Hispanic/Latino family ministry in parishes, including marriage preparation and accompaniment, and in family ecclesial ministries and ecclesial movements.	<i>By June 2024</i>
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Activity 2:	Promote the dissemination of these best practices through annual gatherings, webinars, and the Por Tu Matrimonio website.	<i>From January 2025 through 2033</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Evangelization and Catechesis; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; Catholic Education; Pro-Life Activities; JPHD	

6) Pastoral Formation of Young Adult Leaders

Objective: *To accompany and form between two thousand and three thousand Hispanic/Latino young adults by 2033 so that they reach their full potential as missionary disciples.*

Outcome: *Bring forth a new generation of Hispanic/Latino young adult leaders formed as missionary disciples.*

Activity 1:	Produce and deliver a leadership program designed for Hispanic/Latino young adults engaged in ministry.	<i>By 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Engage dioceses to register annual cohorts of fifteen to twenty participants, and assign each a local VEYAHLI coordinator.	<i>By 2024</i>
Activity 3:	Create a Hispanic/Latino young adult accompaniment program and resource center.	<i>By 2023</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church; Catholic Education (Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service); Evangelization and Catechesis; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; JPHD External collaborators: VEYAHLI alliance, coordinated by the host organization MACC; LaRED, NIMYA, NFCYM	

7) Immigration and Advocacy

Objective: *To support and actively engage in the work of the Justice for Immigrants (JFI) campaign and other initiatives advocating for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship.*

Outcome: Catholic leaders become activists on comprehensive immigration reform, generating renewed solidarity with our undocumented brothers and sisters.

Activity 1:	Promote and participate in JFI's educational and advocacy efforts.	<i>Annually</i>
Activity 2:	Highlight the theme of immigration in pastoral care and advocacy, in national conferences, and within the Hispanic/Latino ministry network.	<i>Annually</i>
Activity 3:	Lift up the active participation of Hispanics/Latinos in the life of the Church, regardless of immigration status.	<i>Annually</i>
Activity 4:	Inspire a new generation of advocates, attorneys, and pastoral ministers committed to defending the dignity and rights of undocumented peoples.	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Migration and Refugee Services; CCHD; Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); JPHD External collaborators: Catholic Relief Services, state Catholic conferences	

8) Pastoral Formation and Action for a Culturally Diverse Church

FORMATION

Objective: *To have between seventy-five and one hundred seminaries, dioceses, parishes, and other Catholic organizations and institutions commit to develop higher levels of intercultural competency in their staff and leaders by December 2028.*

Outcome: The number of Catholic leaders, lay and ordained, who are interculturally competent and better able to promote ecclesial integration and inclusion in their ministry increases by 20 to 30 percent by December 2028.



Activity 1:	Update the USCCB’s 2013 resource <i>Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers</i> . ¹⁰⁹	<i>By December 2023</i>
Activity 2:	Promote presentations and in-services on <i>Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers</i> and our 2013 resource <i>Best Practices for Shared Parishes</i> . ¹¹⁰	<i>From end of 2024 through December 2028</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborator: Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church External collaborators: seminaries, houses of formation, Catholic universities, diocesan leaders, other national organizations	

Objective: *To promote formation in Hispanic/Latino ministry, culture, and language proficiency among all seminarians, candidates to the permanent diaconate, and consecrated men and women.*

Outcome: *Between 50 and 75 percent of newly ordained priests and consecrated men and women are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in ministry among Hispanics/Latinos.*

Activity 1:	Conduct an inventory of available data on how seminaries and houses of formation are preparing students for ministry among Hispanics/Latinos.	<i>By December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Collaborate in the implementation of the <i>Program of Priestly Formation</i> , sixth edition, as well as the <i>National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America</i> , second edition, with an emphasis on intercultural competencies and best practices in shared parishes. ¹¹¹	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborator: Secretariat on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations	

109. See USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Building Intercultural Competence*.

110. See *ibid.*; USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*.

111. See USCCB, *Program of Priestly Formation*; USCCB, *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2021).

External collaborators: National Organization of Seminary Rectors, diocesan offices for vocations, NCDVD, BC, ANSH, ANDH, FHFM, FIP, NFPC, CMSM, LCWR, CMSWR

YOUNG ADULT LEADERS

Objective: *To collaborate in implementing the Journeying Together action plan.*

Outcome: Hispanic/Latino young adult leaders increase their capacity to relate to, communicate with, and work with young adult leaders from the various cultural families represented in the Journeying Together initiative.

Activity 1:	Promote active participation in implementing the objectives and activities of the Journeying Together action plan.	<i>June 2023 to December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Promote the Journeying Together model for use in local dialogues among cultural groups.	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; Catholic Education; Evangelization and Catechesis External collaborators: LaRED, NIMYA, NFCYM, CCMA	

9) Social Justice Formation and Mission

Objective: *To equip Hispanic/Latino leaders for social mission.*

Outcome: A greater number of Hispanic/Latino leaders are prepared and able to engage in the social justice mission of the Church.

Activity 1:	Consult Hispanic/Latino leaders for strategy development; and strengthen relationships, presence, and collaboration to reach and engage more Hispanics/Latinos in the social mission of the Church.	<i>June 2023 to December 2024</i>
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Activity 2:	Build on current Spanish translations and the cultural adaptation strategy for key selected resources like “Two Feet of Love in Action.” ¹¹²	<i>June 2023 to December 2024</i>
Activity 3:	Promote and expand culturally diverse voices and perspectives through the work of various USCCB departments, highlighting Hispanic/Latino voices as conference or online presenters, writers, or interviewees.	<i>June 2023 to December 2024</i>
Activity 4:	Provide opportunities for formation in Catholic social teaching and practices, including direct action, advocacy, and community organizing.	<i>June 2023 to December 2028</i>
Activity 5:	Collaborate with the JFI campaign.	<i>Annually</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: JPHD; Migration and Refugee Services (JFI); Ad Hoc Committee on Racism; CCHD; Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church, Pro-Life Activities, and Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth External collaborator: Catholic Relief Services	

10) Leadership Formation and Accompaniment

Objective: *To form and accompany leaders to more effectively engage with this National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry and implement it at the local level.*

Outcome: *Between one hundred and one hundred twenty dioceses and Catholic organizations benefit from a bilingual ministerial series designed to help them improve their pastoral practices in each of the ministerial areas identified by the V Encuentro process.*

Activity 1:	Complete the virtual V Encuentro Ministry Series of workshops and materials.	<i>By September 2023</i>
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¹¹². See USCCB, “Two Feet of Love in Action.”

Activity 2:	Promote the V Encuentro Ministry Series to prepare for and follow up on this new <i>National Pastoral Plan</i> .	<i>June 2023 through December 2024</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Subcommittee for Hispanic Affairs; Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, various other USCCB departments and secretariats External collaborators: national Catholic organizations, diocesan directors of Hispanic ministry	

11) Liturgy and Spirituality

FORMATION

Objective: *To provide formation on preaching and music ministry for a Hispanic/Latino context.*

Outcome: *Active, conscious participation of Hispanics/Latinos in the Sunday liturgy increases.*

Activity 1:	Provide training and formation to clergy on dynamic and culturally appropriate preaching.	<i>By December 2025</i>
Activity 2:	Spearhead an initiative to provide liturgical education and formation for musicians in Hispanic/Latino communities.	<i>2025–2026</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Committee on Divine Worship External collaborators: AMPHE, Oregon Catholic Press, Liturgical Training Publications	

SCRIPTURE AND THE LITURGY

Objective: *To publish a lectionary in Spanish for use in all dioceses in the United States.*

Outcome: *Hispanic/Latino Catholics in the United States can worship using a common lectionary.*

Activity 1:	Approve and publish <i>La Biblia de la Iglesia en América</i> for use in the United States of America.	<i>TBD</i>
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Activity 2:	Develop and publish the lectionary in Spanish.	<i>By December 2026</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Committee on Divine Worship, Subcommittee on Scripture Translations	

12) Vocations

Objective: *To identify and promote best practices in engaging and accompanying Hispanic/Latino youths and young adults, both US-born and foreign-born, who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life.*

Outcome: *The number of Hispanic/Latino priests and consecrated men and women being ordained or making their religious profession increases between 10 and 15 percent by December 2033.*

Activity 1:	Identify best practices in vocational ministry among Hispanics/Latinos in dioceses and religious congregations, by using current data and conducting a national survey.	<i>By December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Promote youths and young adults and the engagement of Hispanic/Latino families as the cradle of vocations.	<i>January 2024 through December 2024</i>
Activity 3:	Develop an initiative to promote best practices in vocational ministry among Hispanics/Latinos, with a special focus on US-born Hispanics/Latinos, that spans from the initial outreach to Hispanic/Latino men, women, and families to their ordination or profession of the evangelical counsels (religious vows).	<i>By December 2025</i>
Activity 4:	Create a team to provide dioceses and religious communities with formation and training in promoting Hispanic/Latino vocations, both in person and virtually. Offer two to three training sessions in each of the fourteen episcopal regions.	<i>Between January 2026 and December 31, 2028</i>

Activity 5:	Evaluate initiatives and make improvements on the best practices training sessions.	<i>January to December 2029</i>
Activity 6:	Roll out improved sessions.	<i>2030-2033</i>
Collaborators:	<p>USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church; Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; Evangelization and Catechesis.</p> <p>External collaborators: National Organization of Seminary Rectors, diocesan offices for vocations, NCDVD, ANSH, ANDH, AHLMA, CCMA, FHF, FIP, LaRED, NFCYM, NIMYA, NFPC, CMSM, LCWR, CMSWR</p>	

Objective: *To increase the number of priests, permanent deacons, consecrated men and women, and lay ecclesial ministers who are able to effectively accompany the Hispanic/Latino community by 20 to 35 percent by the year 2033.*

Outcome: *More priests, permanent deacons, consecrated men and women, and lay ecclesial ministers are able and available to lead and coordinate Hispanic/Latino ministries in parishes, with a significant number of Hispanics/Latinos in other Catholic organizations and institutions.*

Activity 1:	Launch a national campaign to promote the engagement of Hispanic/Latino youths and young adults at the diocesan and parish levels using a collaborative model, and also within Hispanic/Latino families. Include the promotion of parish groups for Hispanic/Latino youths and young adults and the engagement of Hispanic/Latino families as the cradle of vocations.	<i>January to December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Present and promote the campaign at a national gathering of vocations directors, developed in collaboration with vocation directors and national organizations.	<i>By December 2025</i>
Activity 3:	Organize three hybrid gatherings for vocation leaders to highlight best practices in identifying,	<i>Between June 2024 and June 2025</i>

	strengthening relationships with, inviting, and accompanying men and women who are discerning their ecclesial vocation.	
Activity 4:	Develop resources based on best practices for use by dioceses, parishes, and religious communities and families.	<i>By December 2025</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborators: Secretariats for Cultural Diversity in the Church; Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations; Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth External collaborators: National Organization of Seminary Rectors, diocesan offices for vocations, NCDVD, ANSH, ANDH, AHLMA, LaRED, NFCYM, NIMYA, FHF, FIP, NFPC, CMSM, LCWR, CMSWR	

13) Catholic Education

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Objective: *To increase the percentage of Hispanic/Latino children in Catholic schools from 4 to 7 percent by December 2033.*

Outcome: *More Hispanic/Latino children experience Catholic education and strengthen their Catholic identity and vocational discernment in the service of Church and society.*

Activity 1:	Identify best practices in the inclusion of Hispanics/Latinos in Catholic schools in the fourteen territorial episcopal regions.	<i>By December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Promote collaboration and the sharing of best practices and resources in the fourteen episcopal regions.	<i>January 2025 to December 2028</i>
Activity 3:	Collaborate in organizing a national symposium on Hispanics/Latinos in Catholic schools.	<i>In 2026</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborator: Committee on Catholic Education External collaborators: consortium of eighteen Catholic colleges and universities, LaRED, NFCYM, NIMYA, CCMA	

HIGHER EDUCATION

Objective: *To support the pastoral formation and higher education of the Hispanic/Latino community with an emphasis on young adults.*

Outcome: *A greater number of Hispanics/Latinos earn college degrees as well as master's degrees and doctorates in ministry, theology, religious studies, and related fields.*

Activity 1:	Collaborate in research on ways to make higher education more accessible and affordable.	<i>June 2023 to December 2024</i>
Activity 2:	Collaborate in organizing a national symposium on higher education.	<i>Deadline pending</i>
Collaborators:	USCCB collaborator: Committee on Catholic Education External collaborators: consortium of eighteen Catholic colleges and universities, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, LaRED, NFCYM, NIMYA, CCMA	

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Lest we be discouraged by the tremendous task at hand, we humbly pray for an outpouring of the creative love of the spirit or, as Pope Francis calls it, “overflow” (from the Greek *perisseuo*) as we seek to bear fruit in every human situation. “Such overflows of love happen, above all, at the crossroads of life, at moments of openness, fragility, and humility, when the ocean of his love bursts the dams of our self-sufficiency, and so allows for a new imagination of the possible.”¹¹³ Pope Francis also reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who “urges us to go out fearlessly to meet others, and who encourages the Church to become ever more evangelizing and missionary through a process of pastoral conversion.”¹¹⁴

113. Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 81.

114. Pope Francis, Message to Ecclesial Assembly.

Prayer

As we implement this new *National Pastoral Plan*, the liberating love of Christ the Redeemer and the maternal love of Our Lady of Guadalupe move us to be a Church that goes forth without fear, that more faithfully accompanies the People of God, and that bears fruits of new life, as we pray:

*God of infinite Mercy,
you sent your risen Son
to encounter the disciples on the way to Emmaus.
Grant us today a missionary spirit,
and send us forth to encounter
our sisters and brothers:
to walk with them in friendship,
to listen to their hopes and dreams with compassion,
and to proclaim your Word with courage,
so that they might come to know you once again
in the breaking of the bread.
Make us all missionary disciples, and stay with us always,
as we seek to share the joy of the Gospel
with people of all generations,
from every race, language, culture, and nation.
We ask you this with burning hearts,
filled with the Holy Spirit,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
and through the loving intercession of
our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Star of the New Evangelization in the Americas.
Amen.*

APPENDIX A

Stages of Development of Hispanic/Latino Ministry at the Diocesan Level

Stage 1: Initial Growth — Hispanic/Latino ministry is just beginning in a few parishes that are in the initial stage of welcoming Hispanics/Latinos in their area. Diocesan support usually assists parishes in offering Mass and sacramental preparation in Spanish, which often involves coordinating the efforts of a few bilingual clergy who serve several parishes. Studying population growth and shifting demographics is especially important at this stage to identify where access to the sacraments in Spanish is most needed.

Stage 2: Organic Expansion — Hispanic/Latino ministry is expanding to more parishes, which are beginning to offer Mass in Spanish. Ministry in some parishes is becoming more comprehensive to include faith formation, youth and young adult ministry, family ministry, liturgical ministry formation, and social services, among others, in the language and cultural context of Hispanics/Latinos. Diocesan offices play an important role by supporting emerging Hispanic/Latino leaders and providing resources and programming at the diocesan level that parishes cannot offer alone. This support often includes coordinating direct services of bilingual ministers in several parishes, because most parishes do not have bilingual staff at this stage. Advocacy for needed resources and building of parishes' internal capacity are crucial during this stage.

Stage 3: Structural Development — Hispanic/Latino ministry continues to expand to more parishes, and several parishes have increased their internal capacity. For example, the pastor or parochial vicar now can preside over Sunday Mass and other sacraments, and the parish has bilingual staff and committed lay leaders to coordinate and implement various ministries. The Hispanic/Latino community in some parishes has reached the belonging stage and interacts more with the broader ecclesial community. While the diocese continues to provide direct support to parishes with emerging Hispanic/Latino populations, diocesan support for most parishes transitions from direct services to a greater focus on forming Hispanic/Latino leaders for effective ministry. Strengthening coordination among diocesan offices as well as increasing each ministerial office's internal capacity to support Hispanic/Latino ministry are all crucial at this stage.

Stage 4: Diocese-Wide Shared Responsibility — By this stage, a significant number of parishes are providing comprehensive Hispanic/Latino ministry. The Hispanic/Latino community may even form the majority of parishioners in several of these parishes and may have moved to the stage of co-responsibility. Hispanic/Latino leaders are active in ministries across cultures and ministerial areas. Coordination among diocesan offices has increased, and several diocesan offices commonly have bilingual staff who are trained in intercultural competency. *Pastoral de conjunto* among these ministry areas is extremely important. Those responsible for Hispanic/Latino ministry at the diocesan level play a crucial role in supporting this level of collaboration and coordination. We strongly recommend they play a prominent role in diocesan pastoral planning and advisory bodies as the Hispanic/Latino population grows and as ministry among Hispanics/Latinos continues to develop.

APPENDIX B

List of Catholic Organizations, Departments, Major Ecclesial Movements, and Initiatives

ACTHUS	Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians in the United States
AHLMA	Asociación de Hermanas Latinas Misioneras en América (Association of Latin American Missionary Sisters)
AMPHE	Asociación de Músicos Pastorales Hispanos del Este (Association of Hispanic Pastoral Musicians of the East)
ANSH	Asociación Nacional de Sacerdotes Hispanos (National Association of Hispanic Priests)
ANDH	Asociación Nacional Diáconos Hispanos (National Association of Hispanic Deacons)
BC	Boston College
CALL	Catholic Association of Latino Leaders
CCHD	Catholic Campaign for Human Development
CCMA	Catholic Campus Ministry Association
CELAM	Episcopal Conferences of Latin America
CFLA	Catholic Family Life Association
CMFN	Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network
CMSM	Conference of Major Superiors of Men
CMSWR	Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSMG	Catholic Social Ministry Gathering
Cursillo De Cristiandad	
ERAVE	Equipo Regional de Acompañamiento del V Encuentro (V Encuentro Regional Teams for Accompaniment)
FCH	Federation for Catechesis with Hispanics
FIP	Federación de Institutos Pastorales (Federation of Pastoral Institutes)
FHFM	Federation for Hispanic Family Ministry
INHL	Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia (National Institute for Hispanic Liturgy)
Instituto Fe y Vida	
Jóvenes Para Cristo	
JFI	Justice for Immigrants
JPHD	USCCB Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development
LaRED	National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana
NFPC	National Federation of Priest Councils
LCWR	Leadership Conference of Women Religious
MACC	Mexican American Catholic College
Marriage Encounter	
MIDCAHM	Midwest Catholic Association of Hispanic Ministry
Movimiento Familiar Cristiano	
NALM	National Association for Lay Ministry

NCADDHM	National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry
NCCL	National Community of Catechetical Leaders
NCCS	National Catholic Committee on Scouting
NCPD	National Catholic Partnership on Disability
NCCHM	National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry
NCDVD	National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors
NFCYM	National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry
NFPC	National Federation of Priests' Councils
NIMYA	National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults
NWROHA	Northwest Regional Office of Hispanic Affairs
RECOSS	Region XI Commission on the Spanish Speaking
Renovación Carismática Católica Hispana	
SEPI	Southeast Pastoral Institute
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
UND	University of Notre Dame
VEYAHLI	V Encuentro Young Adult Hispanic Leadership Initiative