



## **V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry Diocese of Little Rock**

### **Goal of V Encuentro**

The main goal of the V Encuentro is to discern ways in which the Church in the United States can better respond to the increasing Hispanic/Latino presence, and to strengthen the ways in which Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church.

During the process we have focused and put into practice the main objectives of the V Encuentro.

1. Call all Catholics in the United States to become authentic and joyful missionary disciples that give witness to God's Love with a prophetic voice in a culturally diverse Church
2. Provide a renewed ecclesial vision that develops effective pathways to invite, engage and form Hispanic
3. Catholic youth, young adults, and families to live out their baptismal vocation
4. Invite all Catholic leaders to engage and accompany Hispanic Catholics who find themselves in the
5. peripheries of the Church and society, particularly those who live in at-risk situations and are not actively involved in their faith community
6. Identify and promote opportunities for Hispanic Catholic pastoral leaders to serve at all ministerial levels of the Church and the larger society, and increase the number of protagonists in the New Evangelization
7. Stimulate a new wave of faith formation and leadership development initiatives that prepare Hispanic
8. Catholics to share and celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ and to become leaven for the Reign of God in society

In his video message to the Bishops of the United States on November 16, 2016, Pope Francis stated: “Our great challenge is to create a culture of encounter, which encourages individuals and groups to share the richness of their traditions and experiences, to break down walls and to build bridges. The Church in America, as elsewhere, is called to “go out” from its comfort zone and to be a leaven of communion. Communion among ourselves, with our fellow Christians, and with all who seek a future of hope.

We need to become ever more fully a community of missionary disciples, filled with love of the Lord Jesus and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel.

At the heart of the V Encuentro process is a five-week experience of reflection, evangelization, and consultation guided by five themes inspired by Pope Francis’ call to Foster a culture of Encounter (cf. The Joy of the Gospel, n. 24):

1. Called to a loving encounter with Jesus
2. With words and actions: Do it!
3. Walking together with Jesus
4. Bearing fruits of new life
5. Celebrating the joy of being missionary disciples

In response to the call of our Bishops, inspired by both Jesus’ example evident in the gospels and by Pope Francis’ call to bring joy and hope to the periphery, we have reached out to those who live in isolation, in sorrow, and in poverty, and to those who find themselves wounded along the way and need the merciful and tender embrace of Christ. From there, we will be able to discern the Church’s best pastoral and evangelizing response to parishes, diocese, youth groups and ecclesial movements. On this joyful journey, there will be a preferential option for Hispanic/Latino youth. (Cf. V Encuentro Guide page 5)

In our Diocese of Little Rock we began the V Encuentro process with a workshop and 87 people from 26 parishes that have Hispanic Ministry attended. After the workshop 23 persons from several parishes committed themselves to be part of the V Encuentro Diocesan Team, with whom we have held periodical meetings to encourage and support those that did not come and to prepare the Diocesan Encuentro on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at Barton Coliseum at the State Fair Grounds in Little Rock.

We had a total of 13 V Encuentro workshops from October 2016 to May 2017, with about 500 people attending. Gracias a Dios, the evangelization, communion and consultation process based on family visitation and the small group reflection based on the five themes proposed by the National Guide were carried out in 30 parishes out of the 46 that have Hispanic Ministry.

From June 4 to November 4 the Parish Encuentros are being held and we will conclude with the Diocesan V Encuentro on November 18 to which EVERYONE IS INVITED WITHOUT EXCEPTION!

### **Small and Large Sprouts of Resurrection, of New Life in Jesus**

Thanks to the generous response of many of our brothers and sisters that said YES to the invitation of “going out from their comfort zone” and had the audacity to go to the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel, everywhere in our Diocese small and big sprouts of resurrection or new life in Jesus, that by the power of the Holy Spirit transforms the hearts are beginning to appear:

- the courage of many Catholics to go out and visit the families, whom with amazement and joy have welcomed them because for the first time someone from their Church, the Catholic Church has come to visit them
- people that for years had gone away from the Catholic Church have come back Home y have committed themselves in different ministries
- weekly meetings at the homes sharing the V Encuentro sessions have created a sense of belonging to the community and interest for their neighbors
- with the children in their faith formation classes and parents the five sessions were carried out and they enjoyed sharing their faith with simplicity and joy
- with a small group of brothers that are deprived of their freedom, a lay missionary shared the Good News of the Risen Lord and they sent the answers to the questionnaires of the Missionary and Consultation Journal to the Hispanic Ministry Office, in which they share how the encounter with Christ has transformed their lives, because even though they are secluded in a prison they feel very much loved by God and they want to know more about Him in order to be better persons and good Catholics
- a man that hated and was desiring revenge because of his little boy's death... has pardoned and is now FREE even behind the bars of a prison
- at a parish where the regular Mass attendance was from 17 to 20 parishioners each weekend: after the missionaries visited 80 families, they held the V Encuentro sessions and a new pastor that speaks Spanish was assigned the Mass attendance is 200!
- the youth from Russellville, Dardanelle and Danville parishes got together and participated in the national video challenge “Nuestra Alegría es el Encuentro” in YouTube, with name the River Valley Millenials and won third place

- several young adult groups have started and are being accompanied by the Sisters from the Hispanic Youth Ministry Office

- a diocesan choir formed by members from 15 parishes has come together to practice the songs for the Diocesan Encuentro

## **The V Encuentro Process Continues**

All Catholics in our Diocese are invited to the Diocesan Encuentro on November 18, 2017 from 10 am to 5 pm

For this celebration we have three excellent missionary disciples: witnesses of God's love:

Our dear Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, great shepherd and advocate of the rights of the immigrants

Monsignor Scott Friend, Vicar General, who throughout his priestly ministry has accompanied the community in its search for identity, belonging and mission as Catholic Hispanics in the United States

Father Mauricio Carrasco, Pastor of St. Augustine in Dardanelle and St. Andrew in Danville, a young priest that with his open smile and friendly approach makes visible God's tender and merciful love

## **Everyone, Everyone is Invited to Celebrate the Joy of Being "Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love."**

### **Upcoming Dates**

**December 2, 2017:** Meeting to evaluate the Diocesan V Encuentro

**January 20, 2018:** Meeting with the parish coordinators and secretaries to share the reports and elaborate the Diocesan V Encuentro report that will be presented to Bishop Taylor and shared at the Region X in San Antonio, Texas, April 13-15, 2018.

We will also elect the 18 delegates to the Region X Encuentro that will represent our Diocese.