



Diocese of  
OWENSBORO



# CALLED TO BE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

**Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry**  
2021–2026

# My dear sisters and brothers,



With great pride I present to the Church of Owensboro *Called to be Missionary Disciples: Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry*. This pastoral plan is a plan for evangelization, charity, catechesis and education. In the years to come as this plan is implemented, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed to tens of thousands of people, and in a real sense to everyone in western Kentucky.

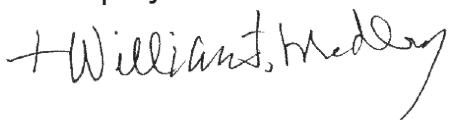
I am incredibly proud of the way this plan has evolved. Our Hispanic/Latino ministry leaders have worked to engage people at every level to reflect upon the call of Pope Francis that all embrace the responsibility to be missionary disciples. I am most grateful to those whose leadership has brought us to this moment.

Jesus said, "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." (Matthew 28:19 – 20)

We are sharers in God's mystery because those who went before us heeded this command and passed the gift of faith to us. Now this hour is ours to pass on this precious gift of faith.

Adopting this plan is just one step. We must then study the plan so that we may go into the vineyard to carry it out with the assurance that Jesus is with us to the end of time.

Let us pray for one another!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William F. Medley".

**Most Reverend William F. Medley**  
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro



# Brothers and sisters,

I feel great joy and hope at having experienced, together with many of you and through this planning process, that the driving force of the Holy Spirit never left us nor did it stop acting. Even amidst the uncertainty, discouragement, fear and sadness caused by a pandemic; not even that could stop the action of God in his Church. The effort, participation and continuous work of all the representatives and delegates of the parishes was something to be admired. And although for some time, we were forced to rely more on screens than on physical presence to accompany one another in this work, still, clinging to Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Virgin of Guadalupe, we kept going. I am thinking, for example, of the Feast of Pentecost, where the Spirit descends on the Apostles and despite the difficulties, discouragement, uncertainty and fears, the power of the Holy Spirit impels them to move forward with strength and faith. That same force of the Holy Spirit now moves us and accompanies us. I am very proud of our Hispanic/Latino community and privileged to be able to serve in our diocese.



I trust and know that the hard work and dedication of so many of you reflected here in our Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry 2021-2026 will undoubtedly bear abundant fruit. This particular plan also includes a continuous work and effort of synodality, in other words, “walking together,” collaborating alongside other diocesan offices in good-will efforts to advance greater ecclesial integration. My hope is that reading, studying and putting into action what the following pages contain, will encourage us all toward a continuous renewal and pastoral conversion without fear, as a diocese, as parishes and even as individual Hispanic/Latino Catholics. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* in paragraph 33, exhorts us: “Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way’. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.”

I will close by encouraging everyone and expressing the very words that our esteemed Bishop William F. Medley often repeats and which are so true. “We are never beyond the reach of God.” In other words, God never walks away, he always supports us and takes us by the hand. May God then bless our pastoral ministry, all our efforts and above all bless each of our families.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Christopher Gutiérrez". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Dcn. Christopher Gutiérrez**

Director of the Office of Hispanic/Latino Ministry for the Diocese of Owensboro

*"If we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?"*  
~ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 25

# SUMMARY

This Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry is to guide ministry efforts with the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2026. It was prompted by the process, consultation and conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry that took place from 2017 to 2020. It was created through a synodal process, in other words, walking together, with a pastoral planning team of representatives of the 14 parishes that have a Hispanic/Latino community, in collaboration with various diocesan directors and in constant communication with Bishop Medley. Using the Pastoral Circle of **See-Judge-Act**, they examined the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community, studied ecclesial documents and recommended projects at the diocesan level.

Four strategic priorities were identified for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in the next five years:

**The Missionary Disciples' Journey** — Support Hispanic/Latino people in all stages of discipleship to create evangelizing communities.

**Leadership Development and Ministry Training** — Provide accessible opportunities for Hispanics/Latinos who want to be leaders and pastoral agents.

**Accompany Families: Couples, Children and Young People** — Strengthen the domestic church and our attention to young people. Promote a culture of vocations in families.

**Works of Charity and Justice** — Serve the needs of the people in the peripheries and advocate for them.

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry describes the current reality of the Hispanic/Latino community, offers some quotes from ecclesial documents, and presents the projects proposed at the diocesan level for the next five years. Parish leadership is encouraged to discern local actions and responses, and to consider how diocesan offices could support them.

See Appendix C for a tool to assist parish leadership in this process. All appendices are found at [owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan](https://owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan).

# THE CONTEXT

Hispanic/Latino Ministry began in the Diocese of Owensboro in 1993 through the impetus of Sr. Francis Mary “Fran” Wilhelm, OSU, better known as “La Hermana Panchita,” with the support of Bishop John J. McRaith, may they both rest in peace, with the opening of Centro Latino in the outskirts of Owensboro.

Bishop McRaith opened the diocesan office of Hispanic/Latino Ministry in 1997. In the following decades the Hispanic/Latino community continued to grow in various parts of the diocese and more parishes began to have Masses in Spanish and ministries directed toward Hispanics. A variety of priests, religious sisters and brothers, deacons, and laity have served the Hispanic/Latino community with devotion and dedication over the years. For a more complete historical memory of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, see Appendix A. The first Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry was in effect from 2007 to 2011. This plan focused on Formation, Missionary Option, Collaboration (*Pastoral de Conjunto*), and Liturgy & Prayer, all within the context of the New Evangelization.

In 2009 Bishop McRaith retired and Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop William F. Medley in 2010. The Diocese of Owensboro developed a 2012-2015 Strategic Plan with six goals and it was adapted to the Hispanic/Latino community to guide Hispanic/Latino Ministry efforts. The goals focused on the New Evangelization through fostering spirituality, a commitment to faith formation, the mission of evangelization, stewardship, and vocations. A diocesan office for Hispanic Youth & Young Adult Ministry was opened in 2012 but closed in 2016.

The Diocese of Owensboro developed a 2016-2018 Pastoral Plan with three priorities: Go! (Be a Church of mercy, open and welcoming to all), Make Disciples (Foster a sense of discipleship, vocations, and stewardship), and Teach (Provide ministries to promote human dignity, family, and the teachings of Jesus). As part of this plan an Ad Hoc Committee on Evangelization was created which resulted in opening a Diocesan Office of Evangelization in March 2017 and a four-year focus on evangelization. Each year focused on a theme based on the 2017 USCCB document *Living as Missionary Disciples (LMD)*<sup>1</sup> : Encounter (2017-2018), Accompany (2018-2019), Community (2019-2020) and Send (2020-2021). At the same time, at the national level, the process of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry began.



FILE PHOTO

The late Sr. Fran Wilhelm, OSU, and the late Bishop John J. McRaith at Centro Latino's 20th anniversary celebration on Nov. 16, 2013.



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

The delegates who participated in the Sept. 2018 V National Encuentro in Dallas, TX: Miguelina Young (Paducah), Mayra Tirado (Hopkinsville), Baltazar Rafael (Sebree), Claudia Valladares (Bowling Green), Fr. Carmelo Jiménez (Sebree), Dcn. Chris Gutiérrez, and Bishop William F. Medley.

In 2017, several parishes in our diocese participated in the sessions of the V National Encuentro with prayer, study and consultation with those in the peripheries following the themes of encounter, getting involved, accompanying, bearing fruit and celebrating based on the vision of Pope Francis for the universal Church expressed in his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG)<sup>2</sup>, the Joy of the Gospel. This consultation process continued with Parish Encuentros, a Diocesan Encuentro in August 2017, a Regional Encuentro in February 2018, and a National Encuentro in September 2018. Delegates from the Diocese of Owensboro participated at all levels, including a National Virtual In-Service in October 2020 to study the *Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (P&C)*.<sup>3</sup> The official delegates were: Miguelina Young (Paducah), Mayra Tirado (Hopkinsville), Dcn. Baltazar Rafael (Sebree), Claudia Valladares (Bowling Green), Fr. Carmelo Jiménez (Spiritual Director for Hispanic/Latino Ministry), Dcn. Chris Gutiérrez (Diocesan Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry) and Bishop William F. Medley.

The process, consultation, and conclusions of the V Encuentro prompted the beginning of another pastoral planning process for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in the Diocese of Owensboro from July 2020 to March 2021. This new plan goes into effect on July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.



# V ENCUESTRO

DISCÍPULOS MISIONEROS: TESTIGOS DEL AMOR DE DIOS  
MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: WITNESSES OF GOD'S LOVE

# DIOCESAN PASTORAL

## PLAN FOR HISPANIC/LATINO MINISTRY 2021-2026

This Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry has been created through a synodal process, in other words, walking together. It was created with a team of priests, Hispanic/Latino ministers and lay leaders from 14 parishes that have a Hispanic/Latino community, in constant communication with diocesan directors and with our Shepherd, Bishop Medley. To see who was part of this Pastoral Planning Team, see Appendix B. This team and the diocesan directors studied Pope Francis' vision expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium* and the *Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry* starting in July 2020. The team shared with diocesan directors their perspective about the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in their parishes. The diocesan directors shared their offices' current and planned projects and how they could collaborate with the Hispanic/Latino community.

The process was based upon an important principle of Hispanic/Latino Ministry: *pastoral de conjunto*<sup>4</sup>. *Pastoral de conjunto* is a spirituality of communion in mission, of collaborating at different levels of the Church, in distinct roles of the clergy and the laity, and of planning *with* people not *for* people. It affirms the identity of different groups, calls us to inclusion and openness, and at the same time reminds us that we are all united as one Body of Christ.

Based on the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in our diocese, our diocese's focus on evangelization and what they studied, the team divided into working groups during November and December 2020 to discuss concrete pastoral responses. Four strategic priorities were identified for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in the next five years:

**The Missionary Disciples' Journey** — Support Hispanic/Latino people in all stages of discipleship to create evangelizing communities.

**Leadership Development and Ministry Training** — Provide accessible opportunities for Hispanics/Latinos who want to be leaders and pastoral agents.

**Accompany Families: Couples, Children and Young People** — Strengthen the domestic church and our attention to young people. Promote a culture of vocations in families.

**Works of Charity and Justice** — Serve the needs of the people in the peripheries and advocate for them.

Due to the challenges the Hispanic/Latino community faces in traveling long distances and the great differences among the resources available in the different parishes with a Hispanic community, the need was identified to work at the level of regions instead of having programs only at the diocesan or parish level. To this end, the diocese has been divided into four regions for Hispanic/Latino Ministry:

The four regions and parishes that currently have Hispanic/Latino Ministry:

### Our Lady of Guadalupe Region

- Owensboro (Sts. Joseph and Paul)
- Henderson (Holy Name of Jesus)
- Sebree (St. Michael)
- Madisonville (Christ the King)
- Beaver Dam (Holy Redeemer)

### Our Lady of Mount Carmel Region

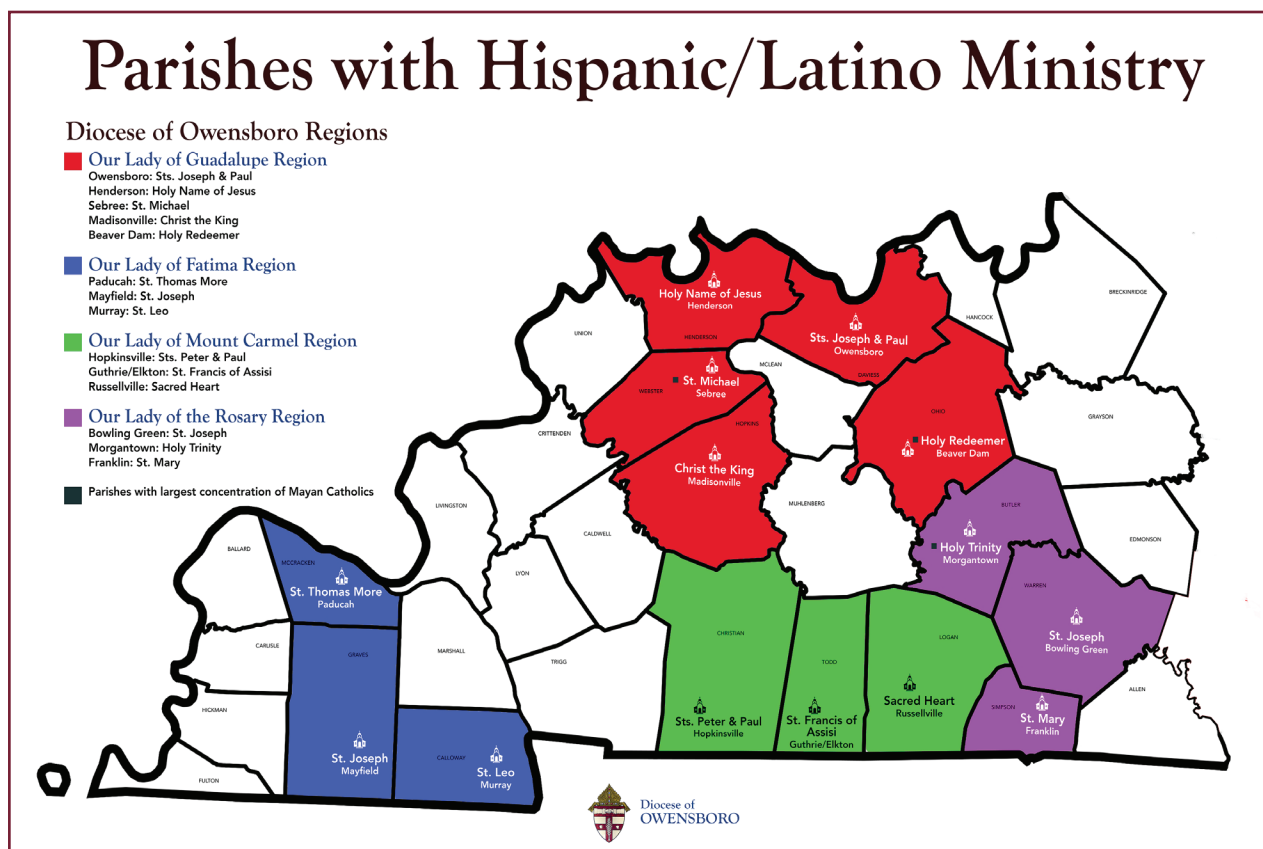
- Hopkinsville (Sts. Peter and Paul)
- Guthrie/Elkton (St. Francis of Assisi)
- Russellville (Sacred Heart)

### Our Lady of Fatima Region

- Paducah (St. Thomas More)
- Mayfield (St. Joseph)
- Murray (St. Leo)

### Our Lady of the Rosary Region

- Bowling Green (St. Joseph)
- Morgantown (Holy Trinity)
- Franklin (St. Mary)



Next are more details on the four strategic priorities using the Pastoral Circle of **SEE–JUDGE–ACT**. The **SEE** section describes the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in our diocese related to each strategic priority. The **JUDGE** section includes some quotes and concepts from the vision of the Universal Church, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and our diocese. The **ACT** section describes the diocesan level projects proposed for the next five years. Parish leadership is encouraged to discern local actions and responses, and to consider how diocesan offices could support them. They can use the Working Document for Parish Leadership in Appendix C as a tool of discernment and for references to use for further study. See Appendix D to read the ideas for actions at the parish level that came out of the working groups for inspiration.

The details about the diocesan projects will continue to be discerned on an ongoing basis by a Diocesan Implementation Team. This team will be made up of representatives from each region and the diocesan directors of the offices named in this pastoral plan. Their task will be to meet regularly to assess the progress of the plan, discern the next steps, and be in communication with the leadership of the parishes with Hispanic communities. The Diocesan Implementation Team should also evaluate the plan at the end of the five years and initiate a new pastoral planning process for the next diocesan pastoral plan. Due to the uncertain reality of the effects of the pandemic, exact dates for diocesan projects are not included here. Projects that can hopefully begin in the fiscal year July 2021 to June 2022 are marked with (2021-22). Updates and links to the resources mentioned in each section can be found on our website: [owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan](http://owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan).



FILE PHOTO

Matachines dancers from Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Henderson leaving St. Stephen Cathedral following a pilgrimage through Owensboro during the Year of Mercy on Aug. 27, 2016.

*"I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. 'Mere administration' can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission.'"*

*~ Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 8*

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FROM 2021 TO 2026

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 — The Missionary Disciples' Journey:**  
Support Hispanic/Latino people in all stages of discipleship to create evangelizing communities.

**SEE** The Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro are mostly immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador and their children born in the U.S. There are also people from other Central and South American countries and the Caribbean. Some more established families already have grandchildren or great-grandchildren born in the United States. In the Diocese of Owensboro and for the purposes of this plan, the phrase Hispanic/Latino community also includes Mayan Catholics of indigenous descent who bring the richness of their own languages and distinct cultures.

The Hispanic/Latino community is known for its deep roots of faith and brings many blessings to our diocesan Church. Many of the Hispanic/Latino immigrants are Catholic by tradition, but sometimes there is a lack of a personal encounter with Jesus and a personal commitment to the Catholic Church. Many Hispanics/Latinos come to parishes for Mass, other sacraments, or popular devotions, but many times they lack a basic faith formation and only come once in a while. This lack of catechesis and commitment to the Church makes it difficult for them to transmit the faith to the next generation. On the other hand, it is important to note that there are cases of Hispanics/Latinos who, despite lacking regular participation or formation in the Church in their home countries, have found parishes here in the Diocese of Owensboro with open doors where they have been motivated to learn more and take more responsibility for their Catholic faith.

The catechesis that is offered to children and youth in the parishes is sometimes not very accessible to the Hispanic/Latino community and sometimes does not empower parents as the primary teachers of the faith. However, it should be noted that the changes that have been made out of necessity during the pandemic have involved parents much

more. The methods of catechizing children and youth sometimes do not connect to their daily lives, their main goals, or their personal faith lives. Many children and youth leave catechetical programs without a personal commitment to their faith and to the Church, and many children and young people ultimately leave the Church.

In some parishes the Hispanic/Latino community is very active, but many parishioners do not recognize their baptismal call to evangelize and commit themselves to ministries. Some parishes have bilingual priests and paid staff dedicated to Hispanic/Latino ministry, and in other parishes there are not enough human resources to accompany the Hispanic community. Dedicated volunteers have emerged in various parishes thanks to the pastoral accompaniment as well as movements like Christ Renews His Parish and the Charismatic Renewal, but many of them feel they do not have the faith formation or ministry training necessary to be leaders.

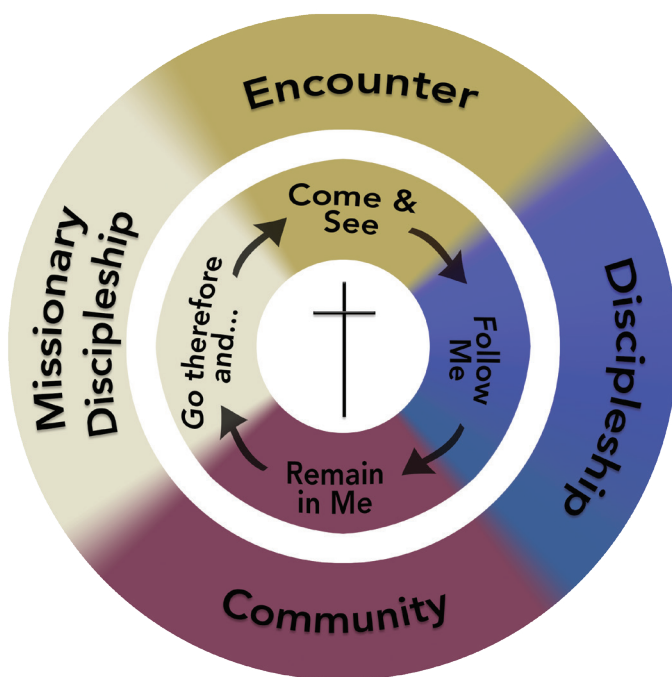


COURTESY OF EUGENIA WYLIE  
Students receiving the Sacrament of First Communion at Holy Trinity Parish in Morgantown on June 10, 2018.

**JUDGE** Evangelizing communities must be created full of missionary disciples. "The Church which 'goes forth' is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice." (EG 24)

"Missionary discipleship takes place within the context of evangelization and begins with an encounter with Christ. We look to Jesus, the Master who personally formed his apostles and disciples, as the model of evangelization. Christ gives us the method: 'Come and see' (Jn 1:46), 'Follow me' (Mt 9:9), 'Remain in me' (Jn 15:4), and 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19). The method includes encounter, accompany, community, and send. This method is formation for missionary discipleship. It leads the believer to become a disciple and from there for the disciple to become a missionary." (LMD, p. 9)

## The steps on the missionary disciples' journey:



- **"Come and see"** — This step includes pre-evangelization efforts, taking the first step, going out to listen and being close to the people, creating welcoming spaces. It also includes the kerygma, the first proclamation of the Gospel, of personal encounters with Jesus Christ. These kerygmatic opportunities should be an integral part of all ministry - retreats, holy hours, sacramental preparation, classes, devotions, traditions of popular piety, etc. Pope Francis describes three settings for evangelization: evangelization in ordinary pastoral ministry with those who come to the parish, evangelization with the baptized

who do not participate, and evangelization with those who do not know Jesus Christ. (cf. EG 14)

- **"Follow me"** — This step includes accompanying (walking with) those who have come or have returned or who have responded to the kerygma. It also includes basic faith formation and discipleship for adults as well as for children, youth and young adults.
- **"Remain in me"** — This step includes ongoing conversion, perseverance in discipleship, participation in sacramental life, ongoing formation, and belonging to small faith communities. It involves creating community first in families and then in the parish (the community of communities).
- **"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations"** — This step includes the mission of all the baptized to share the faith with others, to take the first step and to be witnesses of God's love with works of charity and justice. It also includes discerning gifts and charisms. It is converting oneself from a disciple to a missionary disciple.

**ACT** Since the parish is the primary place for evangelization, accompaniment, formation, and sending forth, parish leadership is encouraged to discern local actions to foster missionary discipleship. See Appendix C for references from the documents to study the topic further and questions for local discernment.

# Diocesan-level projects:

**Announce the Good News in Spanish. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Communications, Worship and Evangelization & Discipleship)**

- Create materials or collect ready-made materials in Spanish for pre-evangelization, evangelization, and basic faith formation to share with parishes. (2021-22)
- Promote events and programs offered by the diocese and parishes in Spanish. (Ongoing)
- Identify and collaborate with people who can create content in Spanish for the diocesan media.
- Continue to improve liturgies in Spanish by supporting parishes in forming their liturgical ministers. Provide all diocesan liturgical guidelines in Spanish. Offer workshops for liturgical ministers (including music ministers) in each region. (2021-22)

**Support ecclesial movements and other kerygmatic opportunities. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and Evangelization & Discipleship)**

- Bring together the leaders of the ecclesial movements to listen to their needs. (2021-22)
- Research other ecclesial movements that could serve the Hispanic/Latino community.
- Develop a systematic outline of topics that could be included in kerygmatic opportunities and provide kerygmatic resources to parishes.
- Offer retreats or talks and organize faith groups or movements in each region to better serve parishes that do not have the resources to do so on their own.

**Support parishes/regions in creating small faith communities. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Evangelization & Discipleship, Marriage & Family Life and Young & Young Adult Ministry)**

- Explore small group resources at different stages of the Missionary Disciples' Journey. (2021-22)
- Collaborate with some parishes to pilot resources and make recommendations to other parishes/regions. (2021-22)
- Train people to lead small faith communities. (Ongoing)



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ  
Bishop Medley interacts with children and families at Hispanic/Latino Family Encuentro in Hopkinsville 2018.

*There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church...grounded in their baptism and confirmation...In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. In others, it is because in their particular Churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making...The formation of the laity and the evangelization of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge."*

~ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 102

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 — Leadership Development and Ministry Training:** Provide accessible opportunities for Hispanics/Latinos who want to be leaders and pastoral agents.

**SEE** There are currently 14 parishes that have some form of Hispanic/Latino Ministry. There are significant differences among the pastoral realities of these parishes.

Some parishes only have a Mass in Spanish with a few families. They are in the first phase of welcoming the Hispanic/Latino community and developing ministries dedicated to them. They have very few bilingual human resources and there are still no leaders who have emerged from the Hispanic/Latino community. The established communities in these parishes need to grow in knowledge and develop intercultural attitudes and skills in order to create a welcoming space and be able to integrate the Hispanic/Latino community

in the parish over time. Hispanics/Latinos in these parishes need basic formation and training to serve as liturgical ministers, including music ministry.



FILE PHOTO

Family holds hands during the Our Father at the Permanent Diaconate Ordination for the first Hispanic/Latino class on Sept. 14, 2019.

However, in most of these 14 parishes, they have had Mass in Spanish for several years and already have an established Hispanic/Latino community. Hispanics/Latinos feel welcome and that they belong to the parish. There are already ministries dedicated to the Hispanic/Latino community and Hispanic/Latino leaders have emerged who want to help and become more committed. These emerging leaders need to learn more about the faith and develop their leadership skills. They need help to discern their gifts and charisms to become pastoral agents in specific ministerial areas and then to be trained for these ministries



#### FILE PHOTO

Bishop William F. Medley ordains five men for the first Hispanic/Latino class of permanent deacons during Mass on Sept. 14, 2019. The newly ordained deacons are Trinidad Soriano (Hopkinsville), René Amaya (Bowling Green), Edwin Pacheco (Russellville), José Blanco (Mayfield), and Baltazar Rafael (Sebree),

(for example, to be catechists for children, to lead small faith communities, youth ministry leaders, advisers for young adults, mentors couples, family ministry, etc.). They need accompaniment to feel encouraged and to persevere in ministry.

Some of these parishes have a lot of human resources to serve the Hispanic/Latino community including several committed leaders. Hispanics/Latinos have a sense of ownership of the parish and its ministries. In some parishes, Hispanics/Latinos make up a majority of the parishioners. It should also be noted that good stewardship includes financial support for parishes and learning about the economic needs that parishes have. In these communities, the committed leaders need support and training to further integrate into the parish and be pastoral agents for the community at large. Some, for instance, want to support neighboring parishes or diocesan initiatives in different ministerial areas.

## JUDGE

"If Hispanics/Latinos are to have a bigger role in the life and leadership of the ecclesial community at all levels, the Church must make a prophetic commitment to the integral education of all members of the community...Opportunities for formation in the Christian life, as well as a holistic education to overcome daily challenges and struggles, can then be provided to a wider audience. The fruit of these efforts will be good will toward the Church and a broader pool of potential leaders who have developed the human tools for pastoral ministry and leadership in a missionary key." (*P&C*, p. 62)

"Genuine spiritual accompaniment always begins and flourishes in the context of service to the mission of evangelization. Paul's relationship with Timothy and Titus provides an example of this accompaniment and formation which takes place in the midst of apostolic activity. Entrusting them with the mission of remaining in each city to "put in order what remains to be done" (Titus 1:5; cf. 1 Tim 1:3-5), Paul also gives them rules for their personal lives and their pastoral activity. This is clearly distinct from every kind

of intrusive accompaniment or isolated self-realization. Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.” (EG 173)

“The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelizing Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church.” (EG 130)

Pastoral leaders embrace pastoral, spiritual, human and intellectual formation, and are interculturally competent. (cf. *LMD*, p. 24-25)

“Formation for these leaders [catechists and lay leaders] should be ongoing and lifelong, with a constant process of learning about the lived reality of the people they serve in the local community.” (*P&C*, p. 75)

“In some parishes, the pastoral staff itself is an obstacle to accompaniment and integration due to its limited linguistic, cultural and intercultural competence. For this reason, it is important to include language studies as well as topics of intercultural competence and the theory and practice of Hispanic/Latino ministries...in formation programs...continuing education for current leaders.” (*P&C*, p. 62)

“Changing the approach to pastoral care and accompaniment will advance the integration of the Latino community into the life and leadership of the Church. Care should be taken to ensure that this effort leads to ecclesial integration, with all sectors of the parish or diocese moving together toward a common vision for pastoral practice, rather than establishing separate tracks of pastoral ministry for Hispanics and non-Hispanics, or forcing the Latinos to assimilate into structures and pastoral frameworks of the prevalent cultural group(s) in the community.” (*P&C*, p. 61-62).

In the pastoral experience in shared parishes across the United States a process of ecclesial integration has been discerned with three phases with several movements in each phase:

- **Welcoming** – The parish is creating a space of hospitality and developing ministries for Hispanics/Latinos
- **Belonging** – Hispanics/Latinos already have a sense of belonging to the parish and are already developing leadership
- **Ownership** – Hispanics/Latinos have already come to feel ownership of the parish and work in collaboration and in a co-responsible way with the entire parish, it is time to emphasize the importance of sharing time, talents and treasure.

**ACT** Parish leadership is encouraged to discern local actions to welcome and integrate the Hispanic/Latino community into parish life and foster leadership in the Hispanic/Latino community. See Appendix C for references from the documents to study the topic further and questions for local discernment.

# Diocesan-level project:

**Create a Diocesan School of Hispanic/Latino Formation to provide formation opportunities for Spanish speakers in the diocese. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Evangelization & Discipleship, Faith Formation, Worship, Marriage & Family Life, Youth & Young Adult Ministry, Stewardship & Development and Catholic Charities)**

- Assess the formation needs in the diocese and the resources that are already available (2021-22)
- Explore the possibility of participating in the V Encuentro Ministerial Series as a diocese (2021-22)
- Hire teachers or create/purchase formation resources that are still needed (2021-22)
- Identify leaders in each region to be formed. It will include leaders of ecclesial movements, catechists, couples who want to accompany other couples, youth ministry leaders, leaders of small faith communities, liturgical ministers and those who want to connect those in need to services in the community. (2021-22)
- Offer formation modules in Spanish about: deeper faith formation, stewardship, leadership development, safe environment and the protection of vulnerable people, identifying gifts and charisms, and ministry training in specific ministerial areas.
- Offer professional development for priests, diocesan and parish staff, and parish leaders about the Hispanic/Latino community, ecclesial integration, and intercultural skills. (Ongoing)



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ  
Diocesan Hispanic/Latino Encuentro with Fr. Rafael Capó in the McRaith Catholic Center lower level in 2017.



COURTESY OF JENNY GLENN  
Parishioners at St. Michael in Sebree lead a procession down the road to honor St. Michael the Archangel, the parish's patron saint, during their community festival on Sept. 29, 2019.

*“The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace.”*

~ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 315

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – Accompany families: couples, children and young people:** Strengthen the domestic church and our attention to young people. Promote a culture of vocations in families.

**SEE** There has been an increase in sacramental marriages in the Hispanic/Latino community in recent years. Many couples have decided to take this important step after being involved in their parishes and ecclesial movements. They have liked the preparation they receive at the Pre-Cana retreats and some couples have started using Natural Family Planning (NFP). Several couples have asked for more access to Spanish-speaking NFP instructors. Several couples have had good experiences with the *Banquete de Bodas* movement, but local accompaniment has been lacking after the retreats. There are still many Hispanic/Latino couples who are cohabitating or have only married civilly. Oftentimes young people skip over the dating and courtship stages and quickly start cohabitating and having children.

For the Hispanic/Latino community, family is a very important value. In some parishes a sense of community and support among families has grown. Pastoral accompaniment has helped through retreats, ecclesial movements, small groups, novenas, posadas and other devotions in people’s homes. At the same time, there are many Hispanic/Latino families that are disconnected from the parish who only come for special events or when seeking a sacrament. Many of them no longer return after the sacrament. There is a need for a family ministry with accompaniment of distant families.

Passing on the faith to the next generation is also a big challenge. Many parents lack faith formation, making it difficult for them to instruct their children or they simply do not make it important. Many youth and young adults reject the culture and faith of their parents and drift away from the Church over time. This lack of connection with faith and with the Church also makes it difficult for young people to discern their



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ  
Photograph taken at the Hispanic/Latino Marriage Retreat at St. Michael in Seabree on Feb. 8, 2020.



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

Hispanic/Latino young adult retreat on Thanksgiving Day 2018 at Christ the King Parish in Madisonville, KY.

vocation in life. Some young people feel that they do not belong to either their parents' culture nor to the prevailing culture. These young people need more support in their families and from people trained to work with young people. Several young people have had very good experiences in diocesan retreats and youth camps, but many families are unaware of these opportunities or need financial support and transportation to participate.

**JUDGE** "The Church would do well to recognize that families are called to be the primary agents, and the home the primary place, for evangelization and the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next." (P&C, p. 62) In current practice the parish has taken the leading role and the families a lesser role.

"It will take a radical re-engineering of our faith formation and family ministries to set these relationships on their proper foundations." (P&C, p. 62)

"The next most common recommendation was to develop family ministries in parishes to focus on their pastoral care and accompaniment. This might entail providing formation to pastoral leaders so that they can respond or make referrals for families in crisis situations... There should also be an intentional effort to make every parish event or gathering family-friendly by involving parents, children and older generations in a process together, or by ensuring the availability of care and activities for the little ones when it would not be feasible to involve them in a session or activity with the adults." (P&C, p. 76) "[Delegates] called for a renewal of marriage preparation to respond in constructive ways to the contemporary social and cultural challenges facing marriage, As well as



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

Newly married couples in Nov. 2017 together with Dcn. Chris Gutiérrez and Fr. Carmelo Jiménez Salinas (from left to right): Lorenza and Miguel, Rosenda and Domingo, Permina and Alonzo.

for the beautiful Catholic vision for marriage and family life to be incorporated in age-appropriate ways into catechesis at all levels...Ongoing support for couples should also be provided to strengthen communication, eliminate violence or coercive control in the relationship, and to help them work through difficulties they may encounter...strengthen family unity and communication by supporting the retention of cultural practices, identity, and the language." (P&C, p. 76-77)

"The promotion of ecclesial vocations must begin in families, and parents require bilingual tools and support from the parish to help them discuss, pray for, and encourage vocational discernment among their children...Vocational materials should address all vocations, including lay ecclesial ministry, marriage and family, and the committed single life." (P&C, p. 82)

"It has become essential to provide multiple opportunities and a broad range of programs and activities to engage the adolescent members of the parish in a setting that is welcoming and addresses their holistic needs and personal interests." (P&C, p. 77)

"Delegates also recommended that dioceses should budget to hire a diocesan coordinator of *pastoral juvenil hispana*. This person should work in a *pastoral de conjunto* with the offices of faith formation/catechesis, youth ministry, young adult ministry, and Hispanic/Latino or multicultural ministries to ensure that youth ministry and young adult leaders are equipped with the vision, principles, strategies and models for an effective outreach and accompaniment of the Latino young people they are called to serve. This would entail establishing and promoting formation programs to constantly equip new and emerging young leaders for these ministries...and form young leaders with passion, perseverance, joy and commitment to be evangelizers of their peers." (P&C, p. 77-78)

# ACT

Since the parish is the principal place of accompaniment of families in all their stages, the parish leadership is encouraged to evaluate their current accompaniment and discern local actions to improve it. See Appendix C for references from the documents to study the topic further and questions for local discernment.

## Diocesan-level projects:

**Continue forming Spanish-speaking couples for sacramental marriage. Provide more marriage enrichment opportunities, now in each region. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and Marriage & Family Life)**

- Pre-Cana retreats will continue to be offered twice a year (Ongoing)
- Mentor couples will be identified who can be trained to accompany couples in their communities, both to prepare for marriage and for ongoing support throughout their marriage and difficulties faced by couples and families. (2021-22)
- *Banquete de Bodas* will continue to be offered, but with an emphasis on one region each year and strengthening the stage of local accompaniment of these couples between the large events. (Ongoing)
- Continue expanding Natural Family Planning (NFP) services in Spanish. Support current instructors and find ways to train more. (2021-22)

**Offer more opportunities for Hispanic/Latino youth and young adults in the different stages of the Missionary Disciples' Journey. (Collaboration between the offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Youth & Young Adult Ministry and the Gasper River Catholic Youth Camp & Retreat Center)**

- Modify current diocesan camps, programs and events to attract more Hispanic/Latino youth & young adults. (Ongoing)
- Train more Hispanic/Latino adults in Safe Environment so they can be involved



COURTESY OF MISSY ECKENBERG

Hispanic/Latino women at St. Thomas More Parish hosted a Christ Renews His Parish Retreat in Oct. 2013.



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

Banquete de Bodas Retreat in Spanish for couples at Gasper River, led by Fr. Lustein Blanco Grajales in 2019.

- in events for children and youth. (Ongoing)
- Offer the Lazarus Retreat in Spanish. (2021-22)
- Hire a diocesan director for Hispanic/Latino Youth & Young Adult Ministry (*pastoral juvenil hispana*). (2021-22)
- Support and form more current Hispanic/Latino Youth & Young Adult Ministry leaders. (Ongoing)

**Create a diocesan vocations team that can help foster a focus on all Christian vocations in Hispanic/Latino families and parishes with a Hispanic/Latino style and bilingually. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Vocations, Marriage & Family Life, Young & Young Adult Ministry and Communications)**

- Identify and invite team members. (2021-22)
- Find, create and distribute materials in Spanish to families about all the vocations.
- Offer family events in the regions where vocations are presented with panelists from each vocation.
- Include the topic of vocations in all programs for children, youth and young adults.
- Organize retreats and visits for children, youth and young adults to the seminaries and houses of religious life.
- Offer retreats and formation opportunities for quinceañeras (young ladies celebrating their 15th birthday), dating couples and young people in general that highlights the importance of the dating and courtship stages of relationships and the blessing of the sacrament of marriage.
- Provide parishes with resources for Holy Hours for Vocations and other materials to promote vocations. (2021-22)



COURTESY OF GASPHER RIVER CATHOLIC YOUTH CAMP & RETREAT CENTER  
Youth enjoy their time during summer camp at Gasper River.

*“To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people’s lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people.”*  
~ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 268

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – Works of charity and justice:** Serve the needs of the people in the peripheries and advocate for them.

**SEE** The Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro finds themselves in different situations regarding immigration, integration into communities, and economic levels.

Some individuals and families have settled here, and their children or grandchildren have been born in the United States. They are stable in their jobs, schools and parishes. They could serve as bridges and navigators in the community. Some individuals and families do not stay in one place; they follow job opportunities or seek to be close to their family members and only stay in the diocese for a short time. Some individuals and families are migrants and come for a season depending on the weather and farm work. Some individuals and families are newcomers and need a lot of support to meet their basic needs, find community resources, look for work, and enroll their children in school.

There are many Hispanics/Latinos in the diocese who are U.S. citizens and permanent residents. But there is also a significant population of people with temporary legal status -- awaiting asylum, TPS (Temporary Protected Status), DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), etc. -- or who are undocumented and need support and legal advice on immigration matters. It is important to understand that this permanent limbo or the absence of a path toward legalization for the undocumented affects their level of participation in Church life. Many times, individuals and families live in constant uncertainty and fear, not necessarily feeling like they belong or that they are welcome.

Family life faces many challenges and obstacles in our times. Many Hispanic/Latino parents do



COURTESY OF SUSAN MONTALVO-GESSER  
Miguel Quintanilla with Catholic Charities is pictured here with a mother and her child following a Know Your Rights presentation at St. Leo Parish in Murray on Aug. 24, 2019. Sr. Esperanza Rivera-Gomez, director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry at St. Leo is pictured to the far right.

not feel prepared to deal with them. Sometimes language and culture complicate the relationship between parents and their children. Technology is a particularly difficult challenge because many parents do not know how to protect their children from all the dangers that it entails. Especially for newly arrived Hispanics/Latinos and the undocumented there is a lot of financial need. This need sometimes causes parents to work so many hours that they do not spend time together as a family. Some children spend a lot of time alone and are neglected. Some couples, families and young people are in crisis and do not know about the resources that exist to help them.

## JUDGE

"The V National Encuentro delegates also advocated for the Church to make a clear and prophetic commitment to promote human development in the Hispanic/Latino community. The burning issue is immigration: the Church must become the prophetic voice of immigrants...Advocacy must be accompanied by direct assistance, or at least referral to agencies that can help, for undocumented individuals and families...Education is the key to social advancement...begins with literacy, finances, career skills, language, citizenship, GED, and skills for healthy relationships." (P&C, p. 61) "Respond to particular needs in the community such as recovery from addictions, communication in marriage and family life, and visiting the sick or homebound; welcome and help the recently-arrived to find work, education and faith formation..." (P&C, p. 74)

"An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the 'smell of the sheep' and the sheep are willing to hear their voice." (EG 24)



COURTESY OF MIGUEL QUINTANILLA  
Catholic Charities worked with FEMA to host a COVID-19 vaccine clinic for the Hispanic/Latino population on May 4, 2021.

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security." (EG 49)

"Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid." (EG 187)

**ACT** Parish leadership is encouraged to consider its current works of charity and justice, and those are still needed. See Appendix C for references from the documents to study the topic further and questions for local discernment.

## Diocesan-level projects:

**Support couples and families in their mental health. (Collaboration between the offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Catholic Charities, Communications, Youth & Young Adult Ministry and Marriage & Family Life)**

- Expand the options to receive accessible counseling in Spanish. (2021-22)
- Offer workshops for parish leaders and parents on the current challenges for families and young people, healthy family relationships, child development, effective discipline, signs of abuse, etc.
- Offer mental health training and available resources to priests, parish staff, and other leaders.
- Expand the Clean Heart Initiative in Spanish. (2021-22)
- Create a list of recovery groups / 12-step groups for Spanish speakers. (2021-22)
- Teach parents about using technology and how to protect their children.
- Train teams by region on how to use and share the diocesan and community resources available.

**Support Hispanics/Latinos with their practical needs. (Collaboration between the Offices of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Catholic Charities and Communications)**

- Continue to provide legal services for immigration. (Ongoing)
- Give presentations (in person and via video) and create resource packets on immigration, proposed legislation, and DACA. (2021-22)
- Create better systems to help Hispanics/Latinos in need.
- Train local people in each region in how to navigate community services to help those who do not know.
- Spread the word about the directory of available services and distribute copies in Spanish. (2021-22)
- Give presentations (in person and via video) on financial literacy.
- Connect Hispanic/Latino leaders with local St. Vincent de Paul chapters.



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

Bishop Medley addresses the Hispanic/Latino community at the 2018 annual Hispanic Families Encuentro in Hopkinsville.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND DEDICATION

We thank our Shepherd, Bishop William F. Medley for his constant support and encouragement for the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro. We thank the pastors, parochial vicars, deacons and Hispanic/Latino Ministers who have served and continue to serve the Hispanic/Latino community in the parishes with such devotion and dedication. We thank the many lay leaders who have sacrificially supported Hispanic/Latino ministry as volunteers in their parishes.

Special thanks to Patti Gutiérrez as facilitator and writer.

And we entrust this plan to the care of our heavenly Mother:

***Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to  
communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth,  
illuminating even the fringes of our world.  
Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us.  
Amen. Alleluia!***  
(Abbreviated from Pope Francis' prayer in *Evangelii Gaudium* 288)

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>*Living as Missionary Disciples (LMD)*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2017. Available here in English and Spanish online or to purchase in print: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/living-missionary-disciples>

<sup>2</sup>*Evangelii Gaudium (EG)* - The Joy of the Gospel: On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Pope Francis, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

<sup>3</sup>*The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (P&C)*, USCCB, 2019. Available online here: <https://vencuentro.org/e-resources-for-proceedings-and-conclusions/>

<sup>4</sup>Taken from *Encounter and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB), 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Module 5 of *Building Intercultural Competencies for Ministers*, available online: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church/intercultural-competencies-module-5>



COURTESY OF DCN. CHRIS GUTIÉRREZ

At a Mass at Cathedral, Bishop Medley designates official delegates to represent the diocese for the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry in Sept. 2018.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Historical Memory of Hispanic/Latino Ministry in the Diocese of Owensboro

Hispanic/Latino Ministry began in the Diocese of Owensboro in 1993 through the impetus of Sr. Francis Mary “Fran” Wilhelm OSU, better known as “La Hermana Panchita”, with the support of Bishop John J. McRaith, may they both rest in peace, with the opening of Centro Latino in the outskirts of Owensboro.

Bishop McRaith opened the diocesan office in 1997 and appointed a part-time Diocesan Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Fr. Stan Puryear. In the following years the Hispanic/Latino community continued to grow in various parts of the diocese and more parishes began to have Masses in Spanish and ministries directed toward Hispanics/Latinos.

During this stage:

- The first sisters of the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Ad Gentes (MAG) arrived to serve in Paducah and Mayfield (later they would also serve in Owensboro and Murray) The Sisters who have served in the diocese are: Sr. Celia Sánchez Coatl, Sr. María Ofelia Hernández Vázquez, Sr. Lucia Morales, Sr. Isabel González Pérez, Sr. Adelina Rito Saavedra, Sr. María Imelda Quechol, Sr. Esperanza Rivera Gómez, Sr. Leticia Rojas Ramírez, Sr. Ofelia Ramírez Valencia, Sr. Ester Ordoñez, Sr. María Luisa Morales, Sr. Eloisa Torralba Aquino, Sr. Pilar Hinojosa and Sr. Gloria Ramos Hernández.
- Glenmary Home Missioners served the Hispanic communities in the parishes of Beaver Dam, Morgantown, Elkton and Guthrie, Those who served the Hispanic community are: Fr. Frank Ruff, Fr. Fid Levri, Fr. Vic Subb and Bro. David Henley.
- Various priests from the Diocese of Owensboro learned Spanish and began serving the Hispanic/Latino community: Fr. Anthony Shonis, Fr. Stan Puryear, Fr. Ken Mikulcik, Fr. Tom Buckman, Fr. Ray Clark, Fr. Eric Riley, Fr. Jason McClure, Fr. Albert Bremer, Fr. Andy Garner and Fr. Robert Drury.
- Some priests from Latin America came temporarily to help and
- Several other parishes hired lay people and bilingual sisters to serve the Hispanic community: Vanessa Argüello (Bowling Green), Byron “Paco” Macías (Hopkinsville), Sr. Luisa Bickett OSU (Beaver Dam/Morgantown), Paul Witte (Elkton/Guthrie), Aida Badillo (Elkton/Guthrie)

In 2004 Bishop McRaith hired Patti Murphy as the full-time Diocesan Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and she served until 2007. The Hispanic community had expanded and grown throughout the diocese. In order to find a way to better support parishes with Hispanic/Latino communities from the diocesan offices, a pastoral planning process was

carried out with teams from eight parishes. They studied *The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry* (1987) and *Encounter and Mission* (2002) and prepared the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry (2007-2011). This plan focused on Formation, Missionary Option, Collaboration (*Pastoral de Conjunto*), and Liturgy & Prayer, all within the context of the New Evangelization. During this stage, Fr. Carmelo Jiménez from Chiapas, Mexico arrived in 2006 to help Hispanic/Latino Ministry. More collaboration began among parishes with Hispanic/Latino ministry for diocesan initiatives and supporting each other. Parishes hired Abraham Brown (Henderson) and Christopher Gutiérrez (Owensboro). The diocese participated in the national process starting in the parishes leading to the national event of the First National Encuentro of Hispanic Youth & Young Adult Ministry in 2006.

In 2007 Bishop McRaith hired Luis Ajú as Diocesan Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry who served until his retirement in 2014.

During this stage:

- Many of the programs and initiatives of the diocesan pastoral plan were implemented with the collaboration of parish Hispanic/Latino Ministers,
- The parish Hispanic/Latino ministries were strengthened and the Hispanic/Latino population continued to grow in number, Glenmary turned over the parishes in its care to the diocese, parishes hired: Patti [Murphy] Gutiérrez (Sebree), Carl Schmidt (Hopkinsville), Alma Reeder (Hopkinsville), José Gallegos (Bowling Green/Elkton/Guthrie), Gina Holmes (Bowling Green), Deacon Heriberto Rodríguez (Guthrie/Elkton), Sr. Patricia Sullivan (Russellville)
- The diocese received a grant from Catholic Extension and hired a Diocesan Director of Hispanic Youth & Young Adult Ministry (*pastoral juvenil hispana*) from 2012 to 2016: the first was Luis Ajú, Jr and the second was Susana Solorza,
- Several Catholic schools were able to enroll many Hispanic families,
- In 2009 Fr. Juan René Kalombo arrived to help Hispanic/Latino Ministry.
- All seminarians began to be required to learn Spanish. The priests ordained during this stage who have served the Hispanic/Latino community are: Fr. Daniel Dillard, Fr. Ryan Harpole, Fr. Steve Hohman, Fr. Joshua McCarty and Fr. Brandon Williams.
- In 2013 the first Hispanic/Latino priest of the diocese was ordained: Fr. Julio Barrera,
- In 2013, Fr. Julio Cesar Palarino began to come every January from Argentina to support Hispanic/Latino Ministry,
- The Hispanic/Latino community was very involved in the 5 seasons of the Arise program from 2012 to 2014,
- More Hispanic/Latino leaders began to emerge in the parishes and more parishes began Masses in Spanish.

In 2009 Bishop McRaith retired and Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop William F. Medley in 2010. The Diocese of Owensboro developed a 2012-2015 Strategic Plan with six goals and it was adapted to the Hispanic/Latino community to guide Hispanic/Latino Ministry efforts. The goals focused on the New Evangelization through fostering spirituality, a commitment to faith formation, the mission of evangelization, stewardship, and vocations.

In 2014 Bishop Medley hired Christopher Gutiérrez as Diocesan Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and he currently continues in this position.

During this stage:

- In 2016 the second Hispanic/Latino priest of the diocese was ordained: Fr. Basilio Az Cuc.
- In 2017 Christopher Gutiérrez (Sebree) and Roberto Cruz (Hopkinsville) were the first Hispanics/Latinos ordained as permanent deacons of the diocese.
- In 2019 the first class of Hispanic/Latino permanent deacons was ordained: René Amaya (Bowling Green), José Blanco (Mayfield), Baltazar Rafael (Sebree), Edwin Pacheco (Guthrie) and Trinidad Soriano (Hopkinsville).
- Centro Latino was closed in 2018 when Sr. Fran retired; she passed away in November 2020 at the age of 91.
- Parishes hired Alyssa [Maty] Magnuson (Sebree), Mayra Tirado (Hopkinsville), Sr. Aida Badillo GHM (Beaver Dam/Morgantown).
- Fr. Antonio Dávalos (January to September 2016) and Fr. Lustein Blanco (2018-present) from Chiapas, Mexico arrived to help Hispanic/Latino Ministry.
- The priests ordained during this stage who have served the Hispanic/Latino community are: Fr. Michael Charles Abiero, Fr. Gary Clark and Fr. Will Thompson,
- We are also grateful for the effort that our Bishop William F. Medley made by spending two months in the Mexican American Catholic College in Texas studying Spanish which has helped him when he presides over the Eucharist with the Hispanic/Latino community.

The Diocese of Owensboro developed a 2016-2018 Pastoral Plan with three priorities: Go! (Be a Church of mercy, open and welcoming to all), Make Disciples (Foster a sense of discipleship, vocations, and stewardship), and Teach (Provide ministries to promote human dignity, family, and the teachings of Jesus). As part of this plan an Ad Hoc Committee on Evangelization was created which resulted in opening a Diocesan Office of Evangelization in March 2017 and a four-year focus on evangelization. Each year focused on a theme based on the 2017 USCCB document *Living as Missionary Disciples*: Encounter (2017-2018), Accompany (2018-2019), Community (2019-2020) and Send (2020-2021). At the same time, at the national level, the process of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry began.

In 2017, in our diocese several parishes participated in the sessions of the V National Encuentro with prayer, study and consultation with those in the peripheries following the themes of encounter, getting involved, accompanying, bearing fruit and celebrating based on the vision of Pope Francis for the universal Church expressed in his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). This consultation process continued with Parish Encuentros, a Diocesan Encuentro in August 2017, a Regional Encuentro in February 2018, and a National Encuentro in September 2018. Delegates from the Diocese of Owensboro participated at all levels, including a National Virtual In-Service in October 2020 to study *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry*. The official delegates were: Miguelina Young (Paducah), Mayra Tirado (Hopkinsville), Baltazar

Rafael (Sebree), Claudia Valladares (Bowling Green), Fr. Carmelo Jiménez (Spiritual Director for Hispanic Ministry), Dcn. Chris Gutiérrez (Diocesan Director of Hispanic Ministry) and Bishop William F. Medley. To see the statistics collected by the V Encuentro about the Hispanic/Latino community in our diocese visit <https://vencuentro.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/534-Owensboro-EN.pdf>.

The process, consultation, and conclusions of the V Encuentro prompted the beginning of another pastoral planning process for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in the Diocese of Owensboro from July 2020 to March 2021. This new plan goes into effect on July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.

## Appendix B: Diocesan Pastoral Planning Team

### Diocesan Personnel:

**Deacon Christopher Gutiérrez** (Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry)

**Patti Gutiérrez** (Planning Process Consultant)

**Susan Montalvo-Gesser** (Director Catholic Charities)

**Charlie Hardesty** (Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry)

**Tina Kasey** (Director of Communications)

**Dr. Jeff Andrini** (Director of Evangelization & Discipleship)

**Lauren Johnson** (Co-Coordinator of Worship)

**Danny May** (Director of Marriage & Family Life)

**Valeria Vessels** (Director of Stewardship & Development)

### Parish Representatives:

**Holy Name of Jesus, Henderson:** Abraham Brown (Hispanic Minister), Gabriela Ángeles, Berta Arroyo

**St. Mary, Franklin:** Maria Molina, Casey Gomez

**St. Joseph, Bowling Green:** Fr. Basilio Az-Cuc (Associate Pastor), Gina Holmes (Hispanic Minister), Claudia Valladares

**St. Michael, Sebree:** Fr. Carmelo Jiménez (Pastor), Fr. Lustein Blanco (Associate Pastor), Alyssa [Maty] Magnuson (Pastoral Associate), Deacon Baltazar Rafael, René Contreras

**Sacred Heart, Russellville:** Deacon Edwin Pacheco

**Sts. Joseph & Paul, Owensboro:** Fr. Juan René (Pastor), María Elena Zamora, Bruno Espinoza

**St. Thomas More, Paducah:** Miguelina Young, Norma Molina

**St. Joseph, Mayfield:** Sr. Ma. Luisa Morales MAG (Hispanic Minister), Sr. Gloria Ramos MAG (Hispanic Minister), Deacon José Blanco, Elvira Bartolo, Ángela García

**St. Leo, Murray:** Sr. Esperanza Rivera MAG (Hispanic Minister)

**Holy Redeemer, Beaver Dam & Holy Trinity, Morgantown:** Fr. Julio Barrera (Pastor), Sr. Aida Badillo GHM (Hispanic Minister), Andrea Castellanos

**St. Francis of Assisi, Guthrie:** Deacon Heriberto Rodríguez (Parish Life Coordinator), Consuelo Aguilar, Sandra Reséndiz, Adela Resendiz, Mireya Resendiz

**Sts. Peter & Paul, Hopkinsville:** Mayra Tirado (Hispanic Minister), Ellis Salas

For more information about this plan, please contact the diocesan offices at:

McRaith Catholic Center  
600 Locust St, Owensboro, KY 42301  
(270) 683-1545

<https://owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan>

# Appendix C: Working Document for Parish Leadership (where there are Hispanic communities)

## How to Use this Document

*"Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel."  
~ Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 20*

Recognizing and respecting that each parish has its own particular pastoral context, the pastoral leadership in each parish is invited to consider their context and the particular context of the Hispanic community that resides within its geographic boundaries. The Hispanic community in different parts of the diocese is in different stages of ecclesial integration (Welcoming, Belonging, Ownership) and this will affect local pastoral planning as well.

It should be used in conjunction with the following Church documents.

- *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG)<sup>1</sup> The Joy of the Gospel: On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Pope Francis, 2013.
- The USCCB document *Living as Missionary Disciples* (LMD)<sup>2</sup> which offers principles that parishes can apply to their missionary discipleship and evangelization efforts within their particular pastoral context and as part of their existing planning process.
  - Videos and resources to help study this document can be found here: <https://www.catholicapostolatecenter.org/living-as-missionary-disciples.html>
- *Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples*<sup>3</sup> which offers five sessions for small groups dive deeper into the evangelizing mission of the Church.
- *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry* (P&C)<sup>4</sup> is a summary of the four-year process of the V National Encuentro and the main conclusions. The V Encuentro process will continue to develop a renewed vision and a new national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry scheduled for 2022.

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*Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) - The Joy of the Gospel: On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Pope Francis, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

<sup>2</sup> *Living as Missionary Disciples* (LMD), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2017. Available here in English and Spanish online or to purchase in print: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/living-missionary-disciples>

<sup>3</sup> USCCB, 2020. Available online here: <https://vencuentro.org/creating-a-culture-of-encounter/>

<sup>4</sup> *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry* (P&C), USCCB, 2019. Available online here <https://vencuentro.org/e-resources-for-proceedings-and-conclusions/>

- *Building Intercultural Competencies for Ministers*<sup>5</sup> (BICM) - a program to learn more about different cultures and how to work more effectively in multicultural situations.
- *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*<sup>6</sup> - Explains the process of ecclesial integration of a newcomer group and the obstacles to integration in shared parishes.

Below are citations from these documents to delve further into the topics of the four strategic priorities. It is recommended to use the Pastoral Circle of *See-Judge-Act*. *See* includes reviewing the diocesan reality (see the pastoral plan) and considering the local reality. *Judge* includes considering the concepts from the vision of the Universal Church, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and our Local Church. *Act* invites parish leadership to discern local actions and responses, and consider how diocesan offices could support them. It is recommended to start with one or two things in each strategic priority to focus on for one or two years at the parish level. If parish leadership would like help or accompaniment in this process of study and local discernment, the diocesan directors are available to support them.

For more information about this plan or for assistance with pastoral planning at the parish level, please contact the diocesan offices at:

McRaith Catholic Center  
600 Locust St, Owensboro, KY 42301  
(270) 683-1545

<https://owensborodiocese.org/hispanic-pastoral-plan>

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<sup>5</sup> USCCB, 2014. <https://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church/intercultural-competencies>. Available online or in a bilingual book.

<sup>6</sup> USCCB, 2014. Available in a bilingual book here: <https://store.usccb.org/best-practices-for-shared-parishes-p/7-389.htm>

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FROM 2021 TO 2026

## Strategic Priority 1 - The Missionary Disciples' Journey

### SEE

Review the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro on page 10 of the pastoral plan. How does it reflect the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the geographical boundaries of your parish? How is it different?

### JUDGE

Review the quotes from the pastoral plan on page 11.

Study these sections of the ecclesial documents to further study this topic:

- *Evangelii Gaudium*
  - The Joy of the Gospel which is ever new and shared (1-13), an evangelizing community of missionary disciples (24), definition of a parish (28), the relationship between the parish and small communities and movements (29), focus on the essentials instead of a multitude of doctrines (35-39), a mother with an open heart (46-49), all the baptized are called to mission, to bear witness to the faith wherever they are (119-134), a kerygmatic and mystagogical catechesis (163-168)
- *Living as Missionary Disciples*
  - A Deeper Encounter with Christ: Formation for Discipleship (p. 9-19), a culture of encounter and accompaniment (p. 26-28)
- *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry*
  - Evangelization and Mission (p. 73-75, 96-98), Ecclesial Movements (p. 92-94), Formation in Faith and Catechesis (p. 75-76, 98-100), Liturgy and Spirituality (p. 81-82, 125-127)

### ACT

Questions for Parish Leadership

- What are the opportunities that the parish already provides for the four steps of the missionary disciples' journey? Which ones are bearing fruit? Where do changes need to be made to foster missionary discipleship more intentionally? Where are more opportunities needed?
- Pick one or two areas to focus on for one or two years.
  - Pre-Evangelization activities
  - Kerygmatic opportunities
  - Initial accompaniment
  - Basic catechesis for adults
  - Catechesis and sacramental preparation for children and youth

- Support for families as communities of faith
- Small faith communities in the parish
- The sacramental life of the community
- Ongoing education
- Sending forth to share the faith
- Identifying charisms and gifts
- Works of charity and justice
- What support or resources would be needed from the diocesan offices?

## Strategic Priority 2 - Leadership Development and Ministry Training

### SEE

Review the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro on page 14 of the pastoral plan. How does it reflect the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the geographical boundaries of your parish? How is it different?

### JUDGE

Review the quotes from the pastoral plan on page 15.

Study these sections of the ecclesial documents to further study this topic:

- *Evangelii Gaudium*
  - Having more lay people at the service of the Church (102), charisms at the service of a communion which evangelizes (130-131), we have to initiate everyone in the “art of accompaniment” (169-173), study of the Sacred Scriptures (174-175)
- *Living as Missionary Disciples*
  - Effective Planning for Ministry Requires Leaders (p. 24-29)
- *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry*
  - Integrating Hispanics into Church leadership (p. 59-63), Evangelization & Mission and Faith Formation & Catechesis (p. 73-76, p. 96-98, p. 98-100), Intercultural Competencies (p. 79-80, p. 114-116), Leadership Development & Ministry Formation (p. 80-81, p. 122-125), Stewardship and Development (p. 147-149)
- *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*
  - Module 3: Develop Intercultural Communication Skills in Pastoral Settings
- *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*
  - Part III: The Developmental Process of Ecclesial Integration/Inclusion and Stewardship in Shared Parishes (p. 77-105)

### ACT

## Questions for Parish Leadership

- In what stage of ecclesial integration is the Hispanic/Latino community in your parish?
- Have Hispanic leaders emerged?
- How can you help them discern their gifts and charisms?
- How could you accompany, form and train them better as leaders?
- What specific training do they need to serve in different ministry areas?
- How could you challenge committed parishioners to share more of their time, talent, and treasure?
- Pick one or two areas to focus on for one or two years.
- What support or resources would be needed from the diocesan offices?

## Strategic Priority 3 - Accompany Families: Couples, Children and Young People

### SEE

Review the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro on page 18 of the pastoral plan. How does it reflect the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the geographical boundaries of your parish? How is it different?

### JUDGE

Review the quotes from the pastoral plan on pages 18-19.

Study these sections of the ecclesial documents to further study this topic:

- *Evangelii Gaudium*
  - Some cultural challenges (61-67), challenges to inculturating the faith (68-70), other ecclesial challenges (102-109)
- *Amoris Laetitia*<sup>7</sup> (The Joy of Love)
  - Some Pastoral Perspectives (Chapter 6: 199-258) - the family today, preparing couples for marriage, accompanying them in the first years, casting light on crises, worries and difficulties.
  - Towards a Better Education of Children (Chapter 7: 259-290).
- There are many resources available on marriage and family life for the "Amoris Laetitia Family" Year
  - Vatican site: Amoris Laetitia Family Year 2021-2022 - <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/amoris-laetitia.html>
  - USCCB Site: <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/year-amoris-laetitia-family>

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<sup>7</sup> *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) on love in the family by Pope Francis, 2016.  
[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html)

- *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry*
  - Responding to the needs of families and the young (p. 62-63), Family Ministry (p. 76-77, p. 100-102), Hispanic Youth & Young Adult Ministry (p. 77-78, p. 85-86, 133-139), Vocations (p. 82, p. 149-152), Major Themes Emerging from the Consultation with youth and young adults (p. 174-179)
- *The Final Report of the National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults*<sup>8</sup>
  - Executive Summary (p. 17-24)
- *Resources for Catechetical Sunday 2017: Living as Missionary Disciples*<sup>9</sup>
- The Bishops of the USCCB are expected to approve a new National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life in June 2021<sup>10</sup>. It will include the themes of prayer and a relationship with Jesus, formation, accompaniment and advocacy. A resource guide and other ways to implement the pastoral framework based on *Amoris Laetitia* will accompany it.

## ACT

### Questions for Parish Leadership

- How could you encourage more couples to marry in the Church?
- What is the marriage preparation process and how could it be improved?
- Are there couples that could be invited to be formed as mentor couples?
- Is there an NFP instructor in Spanish? If not, is there a couple who could be invited to be trained?
- What are the current marriage enrichment opportunities? Should they be increased?
- How are Hispanic families currently accompanied, especially in their homes or wherever they are? Do the parish events and programs take into account the whole family or is childcare provided if it is a program for adults?
- When someone shows up looking for a sacrament or for a special celebration, do they feel welcomed and accompanied? How could the processes and hospitality be improved?
- How are parents supported in instructing their children in the faith? Are there opportunities for faith formation for parents?
- How do you accompany youth and young adults in the parish? Are there opportunities for them to get involved in the parish? How could outreach to them be improved? Are there people willing to be trained in youth ministry?
- Is there a culture of vocations in your families and in your parish? (including lay ecclesial ministry, marriage and family, and committed single life) How could this culture be fostered?

<sup>8</sup> The report can be downloaded in English and Spanish here: <https://www.nationaldialogue.info/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/living-disciples>

<sup>10</sup> You can check this page for updates <https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/marriage-and-family>

- Pick one or two areas to focus on for one or two years.
- What support or resources would be needed from the diocesan offices?

## Strategic Priority 4 - Works of Charity and Justice

### SEE

Review the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the Diocese of Owensboro on page 23 of the pastoral plan. How does it reflect the reality of the Hispanic/Latino community in the geographical boundaries of your parish? How is it different?

### JUDGE

Review the quotes from the pastoral plan on page 24.

Study these sections of the ecclesial documents to further study this topic:

- *Evangelii Gaudium*
  - Pastoral ministry in a missionary key (33), taking the first step, getting involved and accompanying (24), the social dimension of evangelization (177-258), reasons for a renewed missionary impulse (262-288)
- *Living as Missionary Disciples*
  - Send (p. 33-34)
- *The Proceedings and Conclusions of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry*
  - Immigration (p. 78-79, 111-114), Justice and Peace (p. 80, 117-119), Human Development (p. 109-111), Migrant Ministry (p. 128-131)

### ACT

Questions for Parish Leadership

- What is the reality of Hispanics/Latinos like in your geographical boundaries?
- What are their social, economic, family and legal needs?
- What are the works of charity and justice that the parish already does? Which ones are lacking?
- Are there people already familiar with resources in the community who could help newcomers? Are there people who could be trained for this ministry?
- Pick one or two areas to focus on for one or two years.
- What support or resources would be needed from the diocesan offices?

## Appendix D: Ideas for Action Steps at the Parish Level

### Evangelization / Discipleship / Formation / Catechesis / Devotions and Traditions

- Retreats to motivate and awaken people with continuous and constant formation/accompaniment. Consider small retreats, brief opportunities to escape the day's distractions
- Create teams that visit families, pray with them, give them some formation at home, invite them to parish events (Consider Joe Paprocki's books from Loyola Press). Go on mission in the Hispanic/Latino sense - reach out to the peripheries. Form but also feed these ministers.
- Constantly offer opportunities for kerygma, include ecclesial movements, children and youth
- Encourage the community to pray more with some short-term challenges, or by signing up to pray at a certain time/day
- Form parents on how to share the faith and form their children
- Strengthen community among those who already come to Mass, to create more trust among them, to become more involved in their lives
- Offer continuous formation and training opportunities, start, even with a few, so that you can gradually invite new people to participate more
- Share Hispanic/Latino traditions and devotions with the rest of the parish
- Communicate to the parishioners on an ongoing basis about the groups and ecclesial movements that are in the parish and what they do, frequent invitations during Mass.
- Use social media to reach the community.

### Youth & Young Adult Ministry

- Incorporate more community service opportunities for youth
- Invite parents to participate about once a month in formation for young people
- Help young people themselves to be missionaries and invite people they know
- Form and encourage more youth and young adults to be altar servers
- Include activities that attract their attention such as sports, always with some prayer and formation included
- Offer workshops or incorporate into your classes formation about how to pray (not just recite prayers)

### Family Life / Vocations / Marriage / Natural Family Planning

- Create family ministries, a team of mentor couples, to help couples with problems and help parents to educate and discipline and form their children
- Accompany and form families; go to their homes individually or have small groups in homes

## **Catholic Charities / Social Concerns / Family Life**

- Organize Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Spanish in parishes
- Form psychological / spiritual support groups for couples and families
- Offer talks on all the dangers of technology and the health of young people for parents, invite teachers or police officers and teach parents how to protect and monitor; share this information more often at Mass, in bulletins, social media, etc.
- Give workshops about how to manage money, make budgets, achieve goals, etc.
- Share information often about the community assistance that already exists (for illnesses, medical care, financial aid, etc.) and at the same time make everyone aware that they should only ask for what they need
- Share information in simple language, easy-to-share. Many people don't attend talks and workshops, so we need to offer something shorter and simpler.

## **Liturgy / Music**

- Train liturgical ministers (altar servers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters). Start with those who are already serving and then look for ways to invite/encourage others.
- Train those who lead the music in Spanish Masses (choirs and musicians)

## **Stewardship / Collaboration / Ecclesial Integration / Formation of Leaders**

- Offer ongoing opportunities for bilingual formation and training for leaders.
- Prepare and offer an induction for each ministry in the parish, when someone new joins they are better prepared to participate

