



# Priests Serving the Hispanic Community | MINUTES

Meeting date | time *February 13, 2018 | 10:00 A.M.-12:00P.M.* |  
Meeting location *Blanchette Catholic Center*

Meeting called by Bishop Daniel Conlon  
Type of meeting V Encuentro  
Facilitators Jorge Rivera &  
William Becerra  
Note taker Alicia G. Juarez-Garcia  
Attended

Invited  
Peter Newburn  
Fr. Burke Masters

Rev. Sunny Castillo,  
*St. John Paul II, Kankakee*  
Rev. Jose Cilia, O. Carm.,  
*Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Joliet*  
Rev. Franklin Duran,  
*St. Dominic, Bolingbrook*  
Rev. Herbert Essig  
*St. Francis of Assisi, Bolingbrook*  
Rev. Gregor Gorsic  
*St. Andrew, Romeoville*  
Re. Jerome Kish  
*St. Matthew, Glendale Heights*  
Rev. David Lawrence  
*St. Mary, West Chicago*

Rev. Don McLaughlin  
*Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora*  
Rev. Matthew Nathan  
*St. Alexis, Bensenville*  
Rev. Jose L. Torres, O. Carm.  
*Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Joliet*

Rev. Edward Ward, O. Carm.  
*Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Joliet*

## Seminarians

Senavio Sarabia  
*Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora*

James Guarascio  
*St. Dominic, Bolingbrook*

Ramon Sida  
*St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield*

## AGENDA TOPICS

---

*Bishop's observations on the V Encuentro Experience and Document* | Presenter Bishop Conlon

### Discussion Conversation

*Jorge pointed out the following objectives of the meeting:*

- Briefly report, the most significant findings and possible pastoral responses to the experience of the V Encuentro.
- Hear the wisdom from Pastors lived realities and experiences serving the Hispanic community
- Establish with pastors a best practice to inform and communicate Hispanic ministry issues.
- Enquire how could the office best serve pastors, vicars and their lay leaders?

Bishop reflected on ministering to Hispanics:

- It requires an appreciation of the uniqueness of the culture.
- Learn about the dynamics at the different parishes.
- It takes time in part because the Latino population is very large and seems to be taken for granted.
- The young are also influenced by the secular culture like other young people in this country
- Protestant churches are reaching out to young people, what are we doing?

The bishop expressed his appreciation of the seminarians that are learning Spanish and the culture.

We had a conversation in the past about the makeup of our parishes, where we had a national parish model. However, this decision was made long ago. We should explore creative and pastorally sound alternatives to minister to Hispanic Catholics: I invite you to help me reflect on how better respond: Do we need to add more Spanish masses, and catechism, adult faith formation programs, etc.? What is very clear is that, this must be bilingual and culturally sensitive.

I am especially grateful for the work of the Hispanic Ministry office, that with V Encuentro Process has helped the diocese begin this process of reflection.

---

*Review of Diocesan V Encuentro Document Highlights - "La voz del pueblo"* | Presenter William Becerra & Jorge Rivera

1. Four important areas were identified from the *V Encuentro* Consultation process; Pastoral Priorities that require attention from everyone involved in pastoral care in the diocese of Joliet: (1) Youth/Young Adults; (2) Families; (3) Formation, and (4) Social Justice.
2. **Youth/Young Adults:** The immediate need to create spaces where this generation feels free to identify with their own expectations and where their cultural heritage, experience of faith, and life expectations are considered. It is clear that the traditional approach to ministry with young adults has not resonated in the reality of Hispanic/Latino young adults. A new way of thinking and accompanying is needed. Initiatives must give priority to young people, which mean any proposed effort must intentionally be: **from, for, with and by** young people. The responsibility of the leader/youth minister must be of an *advisor* and *companion*, who promotes a shared leadership, not

coordinate pre-planned activities for young people that do not involve them. The purpose of this model is to empower leaders with vocation and experiences in a multicultural church.

3. **Families:** The consultation process confirmed the need for a more integral method in family ministry, one that goes beyond the aspects of faith and evangelization. We found more people requesting services in Spanish in the areas of counseling, effective inter-family dialogue, leadership, multicultural and trans-generational challenges, single parents, and other realities affecting the lives of Hispanic/Latino families.
4. **Formation:** Some parishes prepare their ministers, servers, and volunteers but there are still a significant number of people seeking more organized and systematic ways of learning their faith and to be formed for the ministries they currently serve. There's an emphasis on the desire for biblical formation and pastoral leadership, particularly in Spanish.
5. **Social Justice:** As expected, the majority of participants in the consultation process viewed the lack of immigration status as one of the main obstacles to full ecclesial integration. Many hope their churches and pastors would be more present with them, helping them navigate the predicaments of their complicated social situations. This reality can be viewed as an opportunity to connect with people's everyday lived experiences, Catholic Social Teaching and the possibility to develop lay leadership at the parish level.
6. The experience of consulting the grassroots or base is the most important part of the *V Encuentro* consultation process. A similar process should be continued in more local and personalized manner that responds to the realities of each community.
7. Faith communities would benefit from clear and precise presentations regarding the services and opportunities for parish involvement. Short formation programs, using simple language, in a systematic way, and with a certain amount of frequency, on the essential elements of Christian life would help more people live their faith and seek its relevance in their daily lives.
8. There is great emphasis on improving the sense of community and hospitality of all who are part of the pastoral life in the communities of faith: clergy, ministers, servers, volunteers, diocesan and parish staff.
9. It is evident that a gap exists between the life of faith and the people's daily life. Social activities that include them from a pastoral perspective are recommended.
10. A great missionary fervor is perceived among the Hispanic/Latino people. This "fervor" is sometimes stifled by the lack of support and interest. Continued dialogue with all those who desire or feel called to be part of a committed community is advised. The pastor/parish priest in each community plays the most important role; when he does not call to a dialogue and planning, good *intentions* remain just that, good *intentions*, but without intentional changes. The simple act of delegating to a few has not shown to be effective.

## Discussion Conversation

Mr. Newburn asked the group to break out in groups and answer to questions:

- What are your challenges and ministerial concerns with the Hispanic Communities?
- What are your hopes and dreams?

## Challenges:

- One of the parishes in Bolingbrook started a Spanish Mass
- Be able to involve youth and young-adults, something that even this Encuentro process was not able to do successfully since only 15% of the participants were youth/young adult.
- That not many Hispanic children attend our Catholic Schools.
  - Fr. Herbert from St. Francis of Assisi, shared some statistics about the number of school-age Hispanic Catholic children in the United States today.
    - This is 8 million out of a total population of 14.6 million Catholic school-age children.
    - Out of the pool of 8 million Hispanic school-age Catholics, only around 318,000 are enrolled in our Catholic schools nationwide — barely 4 percent of this population.

(Source OSV Newsweekly, Embracing Hispanics in our Catholic Schools, by Hosffman Ospino ;  
<https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/National/Article/TabId/717/ArtMID/13622/ArticleID/24012/Embracing-Hispanics-in-our-Catholic-schools.aspx>)

- St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi, have Catholic schools with room for Hispanic families we understand that financial reasons make it difficult for them to enroll.
- How to build unity specially in a multiethnic parish.
  - The physical space limit, to accommodate the different cultures.
  - Mass space, how do we accommodate English and Spanish Masses and bilingual celebrations like an Easter Vigil.
- Lack of bilingual priests.
- How do we promote unity not only as a parish but as a Diocese and as one Church? And help people see that they are part of something bigger.
- The need of formation and the need for education, it is so deep in the Hispanic community, just even basic education.
- So many that are active are hungry for formation.
- Integration is a difficult expectation.
  - The Archbishop of Miami said that integration happens from a position of strength.
  - So when people are trying to survive, are worried of being deported, or worry were the next piece of bread is coming from then learning English is not a priority.
  - So Social Justice becomes a key component of the equation too.
  - People have to be safe and have some kind of vitality in order to integrate.

- The next generation of young Hispanics who are Catholic:
  - Don't necessarily have a Catholic culture and they don't have the traditions from Mexico because they grew up here.
  - They are not even showing up to mass or to church because either they don't have their (driver's) license or their parents can't take them because they don't have a (driver's) license or if they are undocumented they then can't get a license.
- Bishop commented, Hispanics have different expectations from parish priests and will go up to the priest for things that Anglos will not, as shown in the V Encuentro Document. The demand from priests is high and not enough, so in terms of the training of the laity, the diocesan offices could discern and provide various resources to people in the Hispanic parishes to assist the priests in ways that are not needed in the Anglo parishes. So, for example assistance in fundamental counseling will provide the spiritual guidance and direction to people. If we are not providing enough training in any given area, particularly if it is needed to be provided in Spanish, the diocesan offices need to discern how to provide the kind of training required.
- Fr. Burke then added, The beauty of working with the Hispanic community is the spiritual fatherhood because they want you to be part of every aspect of their lives, the drawback to that is that you are pulled in so many directions. So, if we could get help as bishop was saying in those other areas, maybe then we will do the things that we do best instead of urgent versus important.

### Suggestions:

- Applying current successful practices of apostolic movements among Hispanics in more parishes or parish groups.

For example:

- Charismatic Renewal movement
- Nascent apostolic movement called: *Encuentros Juveniles*
- *Cursillos de Cristiandad*
- Accompany and advocating for basic rights and justice of the Latino Community, according to the teachings of the Church. Ecclesial integration is not priority for the Latino community if Social Justice is not present.
- Greater emphasis in ministry with youth and young adults. Statistics have proven the Latino population is a very young (28 year is the average age) we need to accompany the next generation of Catholics.
- Empowering Hispanic Catholics leaders to take ministry trainings to assist in the pastoral care of the parish.
- Foster vocations in the Latino Community
- Ministry in the Latino community requires a more holistic approach, as shared by the Fr. Sunny from Kankakee. More than the sacramental, liturgical and religious education offered, the Parish community has organized activities that respond directly to particular

needs in the Latino Community: Financial education, leadership development, social services presentation, immigration presentations.

### Conclusion Closing

At the end of meeting all pastors were informed that most of the pastoral activities that the office of Hispanic Ministry has been involved in, has been with the open collaboration and participation of what is it has come to be called: The Diocesan Pastoral Team. A group created following the methodology of the V Encuentro to listen to the communities' concerns and organize diocesan pastoral activities. This pastoral team is neither a council or decisional body; it is a group of parishioners who want to be involved in working collaboratively in ministry with, for and by Hispanics. It is inclusive, anyone is welcomed. The commitment of the Office of Hispanic Ministry is to inform Pastors and the diocesan curia about activities of the pastoral team by publishing the minutes of all meeting on our website.

Finally, the pastors presented agreed to the proposal of office of Hispanic Ministry to send a curated monthly summary of activities, and relevant information to pastors about Hispanic ministry in our diocese.