



V Encuentro Guide

Fifth National Encuentro
of Hispanic/Latino Ministry

A USCCB INITIATIVE

V ENCUESTRO

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: WITNESSES OF GOD'S LOVE



LETTER FROM THE BISHOPS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At this time of grace, it gives us great joy to welcome you as protagonist in the process of the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (V Encuentro), under its theme **Missionary Disciples: Witnesses to the God's Love.**

The V Encuentro is an initiative of the Bishops of the United States calling all Catholic leaders to listen with profound attention to the needs, challenges and aspirations that the growing Hispanic/Latino population faces in daily life. It especially prepares us as a Church to better recognize, embrace, and promote the many gifts and talents that the Hispanic community shares in the life and mission of the Church, and in the society.

The V Encuentro process will gather hundreds of thousands of missionary disciples just like you, in Encuentros at the parish, diocesan, and regional levels; and your voice will be heard at the national Encuentro. As bishops, we are eager to hear the ideas and recommendations that will emerge from the process. We are ready to support your leadership in the life and mission of the Church, particularly that of emerging Hispanic/Latino young leaders.

Throughout the process of the V Encuentro, millions of Catholics like you will go forth to encounter our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters, in thousands of parishes, lay ecclesial movements and Catholic organizations. This missionary action seeks to give witness to the Kingdom of love, truth and justice that Christ asks us to proclaim, particularly among young people and families living at the peripheries of the Church and society.

The Guide that you hold in your hands is an instrument designed to help us live out the missionary process of the V Encuentro. The Guide's five sessions are inspired by the call of Pope Francis to be missionary disciples, to be la *Iglesia en salida* (the Church in Mission). As such, the sessions and missionary actions prepare us to take the first step, to involve ourselves, accompany others, give abundant fruit, and celebrate the joyful presence of the Risen Jesus Christ in our families, our faith communities and on the peripheries.

Go forth and begin your journey as a joyful missionary disciple, giving witness to the tenderness and nearness God's love.

Your brothers in Christ,

Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller
Archbishop of San Antonio, MSPS

Most Rev. Nelson Pérez
Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Centre



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Introduction

1 THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE V ENCUESTRO

Hispanic/Latino Catholics are a blessing from God with prophetic presence in our dioceses and parishes. The process of national Encuentros has significantly changed the ways in which the Church responds to the Hispanic presence and the ways in which Hispanics respond as a church. The V National Encuentro will not be the exception. The V Encuentro promises another renewed experience, which will provide the opportunity to prepare missionary disciples ready to serve the entire Church and society in the United States through the abundant gifts bestowed by the Hispanic/Latino community.

The V Encuentro process is a priority activity in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Strategic Plan 2017-2020. The **main goal** of the V Encuentro is to discern ways in which the Church in the United States can better respond to the Hispanic/Latino presence, and to strengthen the ways in which Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church.

The V Encuentro is a four-year process of ecclesial reflection and action that invites Catholics in the United States to intense missionary activity, consultation, leadership development, and identification of best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization. The V Encuentro starts at the grass-roots level and calls for the development of resources and initiatives to better serve the fast-growing Hispanic population in dioceses, parishes, ecclesial movements, and other Catholic organizations and institutions in light of its theme: ***Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love.***

All leaders in arch/dioceses, parishes, lay ecclesial movements and other Catholic organizations and institutions are invited to participate by reaching out to Hispanic/Latino Catholics, particularly those living in the periphery, through the missionary process of evangelization and consultation of the V Encuentro.

The V Encuentro has **five objectives**:

1. Call all Catholic leaders in the United States to become authentic and joyful missionary disciples by giving witness to God's love with a prophetic voice by encountering their Hispanic brothers and sisters



in Christ, therefore embracing the cultural diversity in the North American Church.

ENAVE

2. Promote a vision of the Church in mission that develops effective pathways to invite, engage, and form Hispanic Catholic youths, young adults, families, and lay ecclesial movements to live out their baptismal vocation. This includes the promotion of the vocation to the priesthood and consecrated life.
3. Invite all Catholic leaders to engage and accompany Hispanic Catholics, particularly the most vulnerable and those who find themselves in the periphery of the Church and society.
4. Identify and promote opportunities for Hispanic Catholic pastoral leaders to serve in leadership positions in the Church and in the larger society, and increase the number of lay and ordained ministers directly engaged in the New Evangelization. This will require dioceses and parishes to receive new leaders, and those seeking formation to become leaders.

5. Stimulate a new wave of faith formation and leadership development initiatives that prepare Hispanic Catholics to share and celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ and to become leaven for the Reign of God in society.

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

1. Called to a Loving Encounter with Jesus in the Church
2. With Words and Actions: Do it!
3. Walking Together with Jesus
4. Bearing Fruits of New Life
5. Celebrating the Joy of Being Missionary Disciples

This guide offers all the necessary information your community, group, or organization needs to participate in the initial five-week experience. All Catholics are invited to participate!

2 THE V ENCUESTRO AS A PROCESS OF EVANGELIZATION

Catholics in the United States enter the process of the V Encuentro in response to the Church's universal invitation to a New Evangelization in our day. Many are the signs of hope that give life to Catholicism in the United States: our faith communities, our people, cultural diversity, the desire to build families and a society rooted in Christian values, and particularly our youths. But we also know that there are many challenges: the increasing influence of secularization (millions of Catholics drifted away from the Church), lack of resources to evangelize, a shortage of pastoral ministers to walk with God's people in their spiritual journeys, and their longing for justice, among others. The V Encuentro is an opportunity for the entire Church in the United States to announce Jesus Christ and his message to Hispanics/Latinos with new ardor, new methods, and new expressions.

3 THE V ENCUESTRO AS A PROCESS OF COMMUNION

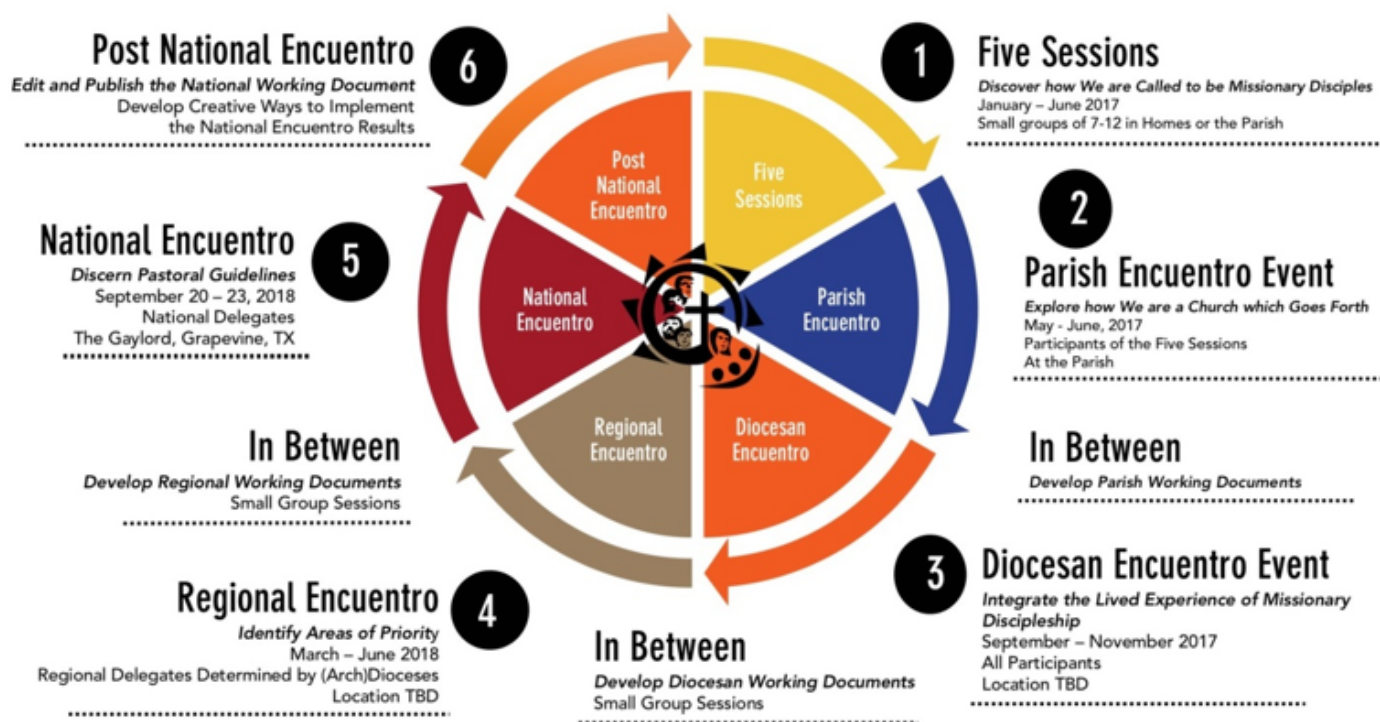
Many generations of Catholics since the sixteenth century, even before the United States considered itself a nation, have contributed to building communities of

faith in the United States rooted in the Catholic tradition. Diversity at all levels has always been part of our experience (i.e., cultural, linguistic, and even ideological), and yet there is only one Catholic communion in the country. Today, as the Church in the United States becomes increasingly Hispanic, it is our turn to strengthen that communion. The V Encuentro is a way by which we can respond to God's call for all to live in communion as missionary disciples in light of our shared faith in Jesus Christ, listening to God's Word, celebrating the sacraments, and affirming the many ways in which we experience God in *lo cotidiano*, the everyday. When the Church in the United States embraces the challenge to respond better to the Hispanic presence and strengthens the ways in which Hispanic Catholics respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church, we experience communion.

4 THE V ENCUESTRO AS A PROCESS OF CONSULTATION

As a profoundly ecclesial process of evangelization and communion, the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry is committed to engaging Catholics in a process of intentional listening and consultation. Such listening and consultation, in this particular process, are defined by the location where they take place: the peripheries of family, church, and society. Millions of Hispanic Catholics live in those peripheries. The V Encuentro is a process that empowers Catholics who already come to our parishes, lay ecclesial movements, and other Catholic organizations to "go out" to the peripheries where many Catholics live, feeling abandoned, unheard, desolate, and often times disaffected. The V Encuentro is an evangelizing process that prepares missionary disciples in the Church to listen attentively, engage people's lives, and acknowledge hopes and frustrations. Through this consultation, people in the peripheries of our families, churches, and society, especially the young, are invited to express their voice, their hopes, and their dreams. The missionary disciples who listen to such voices will, in turn, be challenged to evaluate structures and ways of doing ministry as part of a process of pastoral conversion. Pastors, parochial vicars, and pastoral administrators are also invited to participate in the consultation process carried out by the missionary disciples. Though ministry with Hispanic Catholics remains the focal point of this consultation, such focus can be expanded at the local level. This process will bring many thousands of Hispanics/Latinos closer to Christ, while bringing countless benefits to the entire Church in the United States.

5 MILESTONES OF THE PROCESS OF THE V ENCUESTRO



6 THE V ENCUESTRO PRAYER



FE FUERZA VIDA CESAR GONZALEZ DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTER

God of Mercy,
You who went out to encounter
The disciples on the way to Emmaus,
Grant us a missionary spirit
And send us forth to encounter
Our brothers and sisters,
To walk along beside them,
Listen to their hopes and dreams,
Rekindle their faith
With the fire of your Word,
Prepare them to recognize you in the Eucharist
And send them as missionary disciples
To share the joy of the Gospel
To present and future generations
Of every race, language and culture.

We ask you this
From our burning hearts
Filled with the Holy Spirit,
In the Name of your beloved Son
And through the intercession of our Mother,
Mary of Guadalupe
Star of the New Evangelization
Amen.

Resources for the Use and Adaptation of the Guide as Part of the Process of the V Encuentro

AUDIENCES AND CONTEXTS

The Guide for the V Encuentro was designed to be used by all Catholics in faith communities throughout the United States. The goal is for small groups to use this resource in parishes, apostolic movements, small communities, Catholic schools, pastoral institutes, campus ministry settings, organizations, and any other context where Catholics are discerning how to better serve Hispanics/Latinos while strengthening the ways in which Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church. Most Catholics in the United States who practice their faith still have a strong connection to parish life. Thus, the process of reflection, evangelization, consultation, and outreach delineated in this guide challenges parishes to invite as many parishioners as possible to organize in small groups and participate in the process. It would be ideal for parish councils and commissions (e.g., pastoral, finance, liturgy) to embrace the process as part of their meetings. Boards of Catholic organizations, leadership teams, administrative teams in schools, groups of teachers, campus ministry teams, diocesan offices, small groups associated with apostolic movements, prayer groups, groups of priests and permanent deacons, groups of vowed religious, programs of continuing education, seminarians, students in ministry and theological programs, etc., are strongly encouraged to consider experiencing the five-week (or five-session) process. Besides being a powerful tool to refocus their work in light of the Church's evangelizing mission, it will inspire a desire to further engage Hispanic Catholics.

INVITATION TO ADAPT THE GUIDE

There are many contexts and realities that shape the experience of the more than 70 million Catholics in the United States. And about 32 million of them are of Hispanic/Latino origin. Some are recent immigrants, but many more are U.S. born and raised. It would be unrealistic for any resource to address every possible reality and question that emerges in each particular context. Also, there are major regional

differences that need to be taken into consideration, even when speaking about ministry with Hispanic Catholics. For example, the needs and expectations for Hispanic ministry in Fresno, California, are significantly different from those for Hispanic ministry in Rockville Centre, New York. To speak of outreach to Hispanic Catholics in an apostolic movement most likely calls for a different conversation when compared to speaking of outreach to the same group in the context of campus ministry or a Catholic school. The five sessions that constitute this guide, therefore, are to be treated as the basic building blocks that inspire reflection and commitment to evangelization as part of the V Encuentro process. The methodology and spirituality sustaining the process already helps ensure a fruitful experience. However, parishes, dioceses, apostolic movements, organizations and institutions, schools, and other groups are encouraged to make adaptations deemed necessary while maintaining the structure and the focus on Hispanic Catholics as much as possible. Consideration should be given to ways in which seminarians and religious communities can also be engaged in the missionary work of the V Encuentro process. Do not hesitate to highlight local examples and efforts, raise questions that are more specific to your particular reality, propose activities for missionary work that respond more directly to the context in which you evangelize, etc.

If your pastoral team makes an adaptation that you think will be effective in reaching out to a particular audience such as farmworkers, or seminarians, or Catholic school administrators, or youths in at-risk situations, or prisoners, to mention just a few, please consider sharing those adaptations with the rest of the country. To do this, write an email to contact@vencuentro.org with the materials you adapted. There will be an entire section on the V Encuentro website with all these resources, as they become available, that can benefit hundreds of thousands of Catholics in the country.

For more information on the use of this Guide, you can visit: <http://vencuentro.org/>

Themes and General Objectives of the Guide

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

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

This guide offers all the necessary information your community, group, or organization needs to participate in the initial five-week experience. All Catholics are invited to participate in the process to go out and encounter Hispanics/Latinos who have not felt the embrace of the church.

The five sessions of this Guide are at the heart of the process of reflection, evangelization, and consultation for the V Encuentro. By entering this process, Catholic faith communities and groups in the United States are invited to . . .

1. Experience being a Church that goes forth.
2. Inspire a process of reflection and faith sharing among members of the small group.
3. Contemplate the calling to being missionary disciples.
4. Prepare to engage in evangelizing missions and consultations in the periphery.
5. Document the experience and the process of consultation to discern pastoral implications.
6. Make the transition from small groups into small faith communities.

The carrying out of the five sessions culminates in the celebration of a Parish Encuentro. Instructions to plan the Parish Encuentro are included in Part II, after Session 5.

STRUCTURE OF EACH SESSION

General Information

- Objectives
- Symbols
- Instructions to prepare the setting

Introductory Section

- Introduction
- Biblical excerpt from Luke 24: The Encounter with the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus
- Reflection on the biblical text
- After a few moments of silent reflection, a person assigned by the group shares a reflection on the reading, focusing on the evangelizing step that inspires the session

Core Sections

- **See** — *Focus on how the theme of the session connects to the individual person's story and the Hispanic community's historical memory.*
- **Judge** — *Reflection on the theme of the session with questions to discuss.*
- **Act** — *Invitation to specific actions as missionary disciples going out to the peripheries, with emphasis on outreach to Hispanic Catholics. Most actions focus on Hispanic youths and families.*
- **Celebrate** — *A short ritual that captures the essence of what was discussed during the session. It is important to encourage pastors and facilitators to incorporate known religious songs/hymns and popular devotions familiar to Hispanics in their communities. For the V Encuentro songs included in the Guide, visit <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/encuentro-musica>.*
- **Mission** — *Specific instructions to do missionary work during the week. Beginning with the first session, every participant in the V Encuentro process will receive a "Mission and Consultation Journal" where she/he will be invited to take notes about the missionary experiences.*

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS

Thank you for accepting the invitation to be a facilitator of a small group as part of the V Encuentro process. Remember the five basic responsibilities you have as a facilitator:

1. Prepare the space for the group to meet.
2. Guide the conversation, ensuring that everyone is welcomed and has a chance to participate.
3. Procure and distribute the symbols and any other materials to be used for each of the sessions.
4. Keep records of who participated in the sessions. The information will be used as part of the consultation process and shared with the bishops.
5. Submit a report to the Parish Encuentro Team (or coordinating team) at the end of the five-session experience (see *Small Group Facilitator Final Report* resource which will soon be available for download).

Here are a few practical recommendations that will help you facilitate the best possible experience:

- Spend some time in prayer before each session. If you pray the holy Rosary on a regular basis, offer this beautiful prayer for the success of the session and the people who will participate.
- Read the entire content of each session before meeting with the small group. Become familiar with the biblical texts, the words and ideas that are in the session, and the questions that are being proposed. If you have any questions, consult with the *Parish V Encuentro Team*, your *ecclesial movement leaders* or the coordinating team in Catholic organization or the V Encuentro website.
- Assign adequate time for the completion of each of the five moments of the session. For instance, know that the sections SEE and JUDGE will require more time than the others.
- Develop a strategy to facilitate the conversation. Visit the V Encuentro website for a few suggestions on how to facilitate a small-group conversation that encourages all participants to share their thoughts and reflections.
- Confirm that the number of symbols to be handed out at each session matches that of the participants in the small group.
- If you are going to incorporate some media resources (e.g., video, music, images, etc.), test your media equipment before the session. There are many resources on the V Encuentro website that you could use during the session, but you will need access to the internet or a device that allows you to access those resources.
- Arrive at least fifteen minutes before your small group meets to prepare the altar or sacred space.
- Make sure that the meeting space is free of interruptions and noises that will distract participants.
- Offer a warm welcome to every participant in your small group. Greet everyone by name.
- Make sure that the interaction among the group is always welcoming, respectful, and affirming.
- At the first session, ask all participants for their preferred contact method, preferably email. If a participant misses a session, communicate with this person to follow up. Renew the invitation.
- At the end of each session, thank all participants, and remind them of the day and time of the next meeting. Send a reminder the day before the next meeting.



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF HISPANIC MINISTRY

SESSION 1

Called to a Loving Encounter with Jesus in the Church



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

OBJECTIVES

- Share experiences of encounter with Jesus and how he seeks us out first so we can see.
- Deepen our understanding of our baptismal call to be missionary disciples.
- Prepare as missionary disciples to give priority to those who need it most.

SYMBOLS

Blindfolds, the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*, V Encuentro Wristbands

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before starting the session, prepare the space where the small group will meet. Arrange the chairs in a circle and place the image of a path in the center. Place the blindfolds near the path symbolizing all those things that prevent us from seeing. Ideally, there should be one blindfold per participant. There should also be a basket with V Encuentro wristbands. These will be distributed at the end of the session.

PRAYER



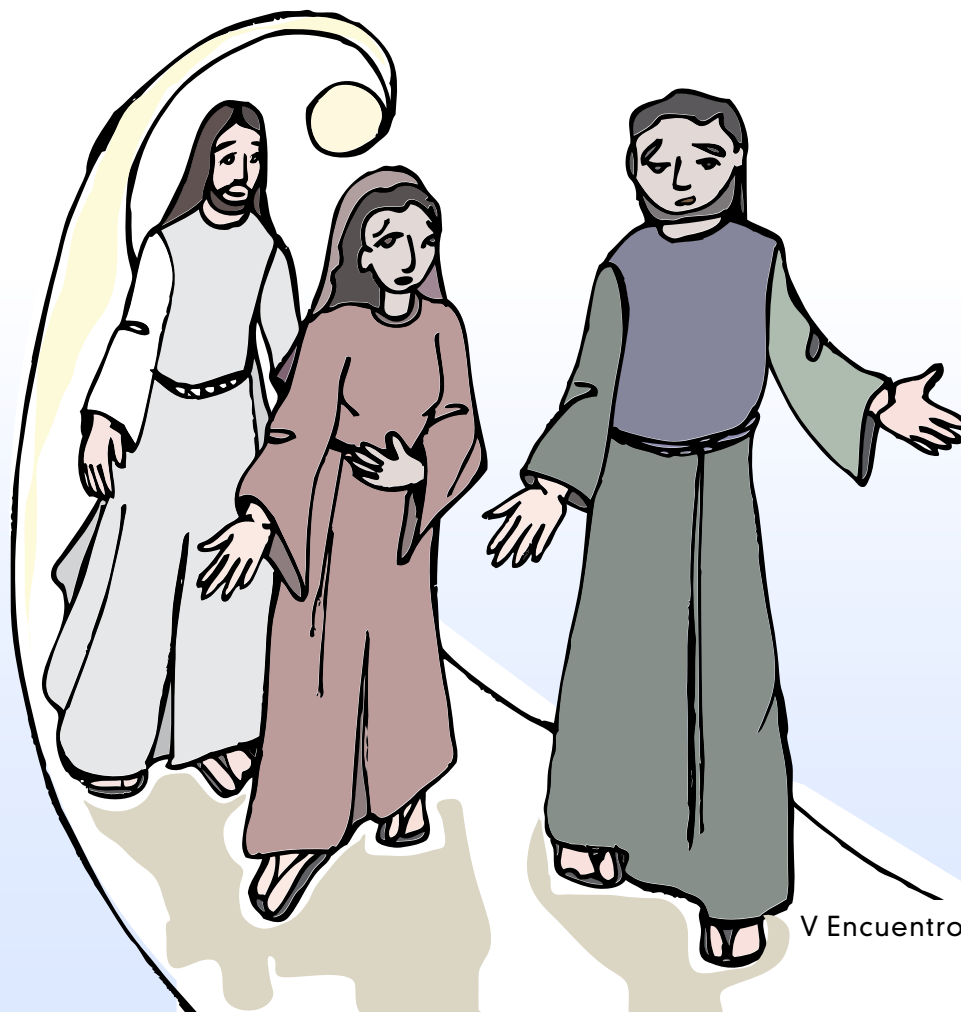
Song: *Alma Misionera* and with the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first session of the V Encuentro process. In these five weeks we will make our own journey with Jesus, following the various moments of the passage of Emmaus. We will also prepare to reach out to those who most need to hear the good news of Jesus and feel the loving embrace of the Church. In this first session we will focus on how Jesus reaches out to the disciples, taking the first step in coming forth to meet them.

The session starts with the following reading from the Scriptures:

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem, called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. (Luke 24:13-15)





CATHOLIC EXTENSION

After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

Reach out, take the first step (Primerear)...

In the biblical passage of the disciples on their way to Emmaus, Jesus comes forth to meet these two disciples who are returning from Jerusalem filled with fear, anxiety, and frustration. Jesus actively looks at the reality affecting his disciples and inserts himself in it. Jesus knows all his disciples have been traumatized by the death of their teacher, friend, and Lord. His death deeply disturbed them and filled them with fear. Their master had been arrested, tried, and found guilty of a crime deserving the death penalty, according to the laws of the time. The passage indicates that these two disciples remained three days in Jerusalem after the death of Jesus before deciding to leave town. It is possible that, during those days, they were in hiding out of fear of being recognized as disciples of the executed one, as Peter feared when three times he painfully denied knowing and even being a disciple of Jesus. They finally decide to leave the city, to get far away from that place of death, and return to their lives, to what they were doing before following Jesus.

The first action Jesus takes in this passage is to join the disciples in their walk. With this action, Jesus takes the first step, *primerear*. He gives priority to the disciples by reaching out to them and coming forth to meet them. Jesus approaches them with deep respect in order to listen to what they are saying, grasp their feelings, and perceive their reaction to the events. He reaches out to them, and listens to them, knowing their thoughts and feelings, and how much they have endured.

The biblical narrative indicates that the disciples did not recognize the stranger who joined them along the way because “*something prevented their eyes from recognizing him.*” We do not know how close to the disciples Jesus was walking, or for how long. What we do know is that Jesus is listening to what they say, and he recognizes their gestures of discouragement and sadness. This action of anonymous accompaniment shows great respect to the mourning the disciples are experiencing due to the death of such a beloved person in whom they had placed all their hopes. Deep in their sorrows, the disciples also face the harsh temptation that they may have wasted their time by following someone who turned out not to be who they thought he was. It is very likely that it was precisely this pain and confusion that prevented them from recognizing Jesus.

SEE

The facilitator invites the group to share in light of the following questions:

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that, while a person is sharing his or her experience, the other one is listening without judging, making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

1 Let us consider a moment in our personal history:

Share an experience in which you felt Jesus took the initiative to reach out to you. What were the blindfolds that prevented you from recognizing Jesus (e.g., tiredness, worries, the need to survive, the lack of reflection, isolation...)?

Who was walking by me? Who joined me in solidarity? Who gave me a friendly hand? Who or what restored my hope?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States:

2 Let us remember how the Lord first reached (*primereó*) out to the Hispanics/Latinos community:

The history of the Hispanic community in this country has many lights and shadows. For many Hispanics, this has been an experience of struggle, both in the Church and in society (phrases like, “*estamos en la lucha*” [“We are in the struggle”] or “we are on the move” are common among Latinos).

One of the most transcendental events through which Hispanics/Latinos see God taking the initiative in their favor

is the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego, an indigenous man, in 1531. The *Guadalupe* message awakens the hope of the indigenous people in the true God, and it opens an ecclesial and human horizon in which all the inhabitants of this earth have a place. Our Lady of Guadalupe sends Juan Diego out as a true missionary disciple in order to promote the conversion of many, including leaders in

the Church of his time. His was an announcement of hope rooted in the mystery of God who became flesh in the womb of the Virgin so as to offer his life for us.

An important moment of God’s initiative through the Church in recent time was the First National Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry, which took place in 1972. The I Encuentro was like a spark lit by the Holy Spirit in order to enliven the

journey of Hispanic/Latino Catholics in the United States. Since that time, Hispanics/Latinos have walked together as the Church in a process of Encuentro leading to conversion, communion, and solidarity. Other events in the recent history of Hispanic/Latino Catholics in which God has taken the initiative include:

- The ordination of the first bishop of U.S. Hispanic origin, Bishop Patricio Flores, in 1970.
- As of August, 2016, fifty-three Hispanic/Latino bishops have been ordained in the United States.
- The publication of the National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry in 1987.
- The celebration of the First National Encuentro for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in 2006.

These and other events in the context of Hispanic ministry have opened paths in many parishes and groups that decided to “reach out first” (*primerear*) to the Hispanic community by establishing Sunday Masses and other pastoral activities in Spanish.



VINCE OLEA

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Do you remember when the Sunday Mass was first celebrated in your parish in Spanish?
- What missionary programs or activities are present in your parish, school, or ecclesial movement that reach out to youth and families who are estranged from the Church?



ENAVE

JUDGE

God seeks us out first through the sacrament of Baptism and calls us to be missionary disciples of God's divine love.

God is the Lord of History. We were called to God's own life, and through the waters of Baptism we rose with Christ to a new life as sons and daughters of God.

Such splendid dignity makes us kings—children of a King; priests—participating in the priesthood of Christ and prophets—proclaimers and messengers of the Word of God in the world. Thus, our Baptism is an urgent call to participate in the life and mission of God. Pope Francis reminds us that, by virtue of our Baptism each member of the People of God becomes a missionary disciple (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 120). In turn, the bishops of Latin America emphasize the urgency of a missionary discipleship “so that these peoples continue to grow and mature in their faith in order to be the light of the world and witnesses to Jesus Christ with their own lives” (*Aparecida Document*, n. 16).

Jesus invites all the baptized to seek others out first (*primerear*) and gives us the Holy Spirit to guide our joyful steps. One of the most popular slogans in Hispanic ministry,

which was part of the III National Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry (1985) is “from pews to shoes,” that is, to become the Church *going forth* that Pope Francis preaches about, a Church that is always ready and willing to take the initiative toward those who have drifted away.

In the apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis tells us that reaching out first, *primerear*, means taking the initiative without fear: be the first to greet, to forgive, to listen, to show mercy, because God loves us first. This demands reaching out to others, to invite the excluded, to offer mercy, and to experience the joy of being a blessing to others. This missionary image of reaching out first calls to mind the prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila that says:

*God has no body on this earth but yours
No hands but yours
No feet but yours
Yours are the eyes with which he looks on the world
with compassion.
Yours the feet with which he walks doing good.
Yours the hands he now has to bless us.*

ACT

Taking the first step

How could we prepare ourselves for mission, what steps should we take, what gestures should we make to be the hands, the feet, and the eyes of God in the world?

Let us follow the example of Jesus in the story of Emmaus. Before joining the disciples who are on the way, Jesus actively looks at the reality affecting them and inserts himself in it. Jesus does not engage his disciples from afar. It is necessary for the Risen Christ to go to the periphery where his disciples are. That physical, political, emotional, and mental periphery has potentially turned them into confused and hopeless followers that may well share the fate of the one who died on the cross. This action teaches us to be present to the particular reality in which people live and, from that presence, to take the blindfolds off our eyes, open our senses, hearts, and minds as a preparation to receive the light of grace and a deeper encounter with one another and the Risen Lord in our midst.

Looking at our own pastoral activity, it becomes clear that we cannot actively engage reality only from behind a desk, at a rectory, or in a classroom. It is necessary to reach out to people in their daily contexts and to join them in their paths with a missionary attitude of deep respect.

In the Gospel According to (Luke 10) we see how Jesus sends seventy-two of his disciples to do missionary work, to go in pairs to preach the Good News to all the cities and places where he would go. Today, we are the disciples being sent, and the places where we should go are those where the people most in need to be “reached out to first” (*primereados*) are. We go to them so that they can experience the unconditional love and the mercy of God.

- What are some of those places where Jesus sends us in pairs today? Who are the people we need to reach out to urgently?
- What attitudes, gestures, and actions can help us encounter one another in daily life at work, school, the neighborhood, public transportation, the supermarket, the faith community, etc.?




VIVI IGLESIAS, DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

During this week, let us make the missionary commitment to reach out to others. To “put on our shoes” means to get into action. Let us consider where, specifically, we can start to reach out first (*primerer*), to truly be the Body of Christ in the world. Consider these three actions:

- In our daily life, reach out to the people you meet as part of your daily life, particularly Hispanics/Latinos. That includes removing the blindfold of indifference, routine, prejudice, ignorance, fear. Once we take that blindfold off, we can embrace welcoming attitudes, gestures, and actions.
- Identify a specific person you feel has a special thirst, a pain or a need, or is going through difficult moments, a person who needs to experience the tenderness of God and the love of the Church (see outline for missionary action #1).
- In pairs, go to a place in the periphery where Hispanics/Latinos congregate. Spend an hour or two there actively contemplating the reality of the place. It could be a market, a neighborhood, a park, a sports activity center, the end of the day at a public school, a busy street in a town or a larger city, a place of business, a welfare office, a farm, a food bank (see outline for missionary action #2).

CELEBRATE

 **Song:** *Cristo No Tiene Pies en el Mundo* (Estela García-López y Rodolfo López) or *Pescador de Hombres* (Cesáreo Garabain)

LEADER

Loving Lord, you have taken the first step and reached out to us. You have sought us out in so many ways, through so many events and people in our lives. Sometimes we have covered our eyes with blindfolds of our own making and have failed to see you. But, gently and lovingly, you have walked near us at all times. Allow us now to see and to have the courage to remove the blindfolds from our eyes so that we might see you in our daily life, in our pains and in our joys, in the life around us, in our brothers and sisters, in the thirst for you that those around us experience. Lead us to recognize that your eyes, your feet, and your hands in this world, are our eyes, our feet, and our hands stretched out for others. Others are waiting for us. Send us!

Let us now take a blindfold in our hands and reflect on what hinders us from seeing and recognizing God's action in our lives, or from seeing the need of the love of God that others have.

ALL

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of our self-centeredness, which prevents us from seeing you.

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of our worries about the future, which fill us with fear and prevent us from reaching out to others.

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of indifference, which prevents us from seeing the need to get out of our comfort zones.

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of our pain and disappointment, which prevents us from seeing you walking with us.

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of our obsession with possessions and control, which prevents us from seeing that we depend on you alone and that you are our light and all we need.

Take away, Lord, the blindfold of our doubt that prevents us from seeing you Risen, in all the life around us.

A person from the group then reads:

After this, the Lord appointed seventy [-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them: "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his

harvest. Go on your way."

The seventy [-two] returned rejoicing. (Luke 10:1-3, 17a) [and telling all they had seen and heard!]

LEADER

Now let us think of that person whom we need to reach out to (*primerear*). Let us write his or her name on a piece of paper. Let us all pray for him or her:

ALL

Lord, here are the people you love as your children, and who are in pain, thirsting for you. You send us to them, even as weak as we are. The harvest is rich. There are many good people out there, people just longing to recognize themselves as your chosen ones, your possessions. Lead us to them, Lord, and come with us on this journey.

LEADER

I now invite you to look for another person in this group and decide together where you will be going in mission.

We all send each pair on that mission and commit to support and accompany them with our prayers.

ALL

We will go, Lord, in pairs, into the place of the periphery where you send us, to seek out those you love, and those who are longing for you in the midst of their pain and confusion, who may have their own blindfolds preventing them from seeing you.


[Each pair can express where they will be going]

Now we say together the prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila and bless each other's eyes, hands, and feet with the Sign of the Cross.

LEADER

Lord Jesus, you accompany us in all our journeys, make us now aware that we are your good news, your gospel for others. You send us forth, yet you come with us. Thank you, good Jesus.

Every participant receives a copy of the V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal, which is to be used from now on to take notes based on the experiences of missionary activity.

 **Song:** *Iglesia en Salida/Church on a Mission* (Pedro Rubalcava, Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Hosffman Ospino) and the prayer for the V Encuentro.

MISSION

Choose one action.

OUTLINE OF MISSIONARY ACTION A

Take the initiative to reach out to someone

1

Look for the best time to meet the person you have chosen to “reach out to first” (*primererar*) this week.

2

Ask simple questions showing interest in the person. Do not start by giving instructions, advice, or talking about doctrine, but by listening intently. The first objective is to join them along their journey and become attuned to their lives.

3

Create a safe space where the person feels confident expressing himself or herself without fear of being judged.

4

Provide some hope or light. Share examples from your own experience.

5

If the person has expressed a need for some concrete help, try to find contacts or resources that could be useful.

6

It might be good to extend an invitation to a parish event or to some celebration in order to get to know the person better.

7

Make sure to stay in touch.

OUTLINE OF MISSIONARY ACTION B

Going into the peripheries

1

Choose a place to go in pairs to actively observe that particular reality.

2

Find a place where you can observe without disturbing or annoying others.

3

Use all your senses to perceive the reality of the place: the persons who are present, their ages, what they do, how they relate to one another, what type of place it is and how it is taken care of; notice if there are any authorities present, what moods people seem to have, how they are dressed, what type of music they listen to, in which language they communicate, what conversations you hear, what they talk about, what is in the air.

4

Upon returning home, share with the missionary companion:

- What you observed, heard, perceived.
- What you felt and thought while you were actively observing reality.
- What new things you learned from this experience.
- How does it prepare you to interact with those people in a second visit to this place?

SESSION 2

With Words and Actions: Do It!



ENAVE

OBJECTIVES

- Share the mission experiences carried out during the week.
- Share difficult moments and life dreams among group members.
- Experience the power of active listening as a way to get involved and participate in a process of consultation.
- Prepare ourselves for mission with people in the periphery, especially reaching out to young people

SYMBOLS

Bottles of water

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before the session, prepare the setting for the small group meeting. Chairs are placed in a circle and in the middle an illustration of a path is placed. Place the bottles of water near the path symbolizing our thirst for God and for a fuller life. The ideal is to have a bottle of water for each participant. There should also be a basket with *The V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journals* (new participants will receive a *Mission and Consultation Journal* at the end of the session).

PRAYER



Song: *Pescador de Hombres* (Cesareo Gabaráin) or *Como el Sol en el Cielo* (Johann Álvarez) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and greeting. Each participant is invited to briefly share a moment from his or her missionary experience during the week. The following questions can be used to guide the sharing:

Whom did you reach out to (*primereaste*)? What periphery did you visit? What did you see and hear?

The session continues with the following reading from the Scriptures:

[He asked them,] "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. (Luke 24:17-20)



After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

To get involved with gestures and actions...

In the first session we saw how Jesus took the initiative toward his disciples by joining them along the way to Emmaus. In this second section, we focus on how Jesus gets involved in the life of the disciples asking them about their conversation. This action by Jesus is one of the most surprising in this passage. Jesus knows full well what happened in Jerusalem, and he is very much aware of the difficult situation afflicting his disciples. Why, then, does Jesus ask the disciples what they are talking about along the way, as if he himself did not know the answer? In fact, Jesus asks again, kindly and calmly, saying, “*What sort of things?*” when the disciples answered sadly and in an incredulous tone: *Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?*

This very surprising gesture by Jesus, asking first, and then asking again, is a very important aspect of the methodology of the V Encuentro. The encounter with others, particularly with people who are going through difficult moments, must start by asking about their lives, concerns, hopes, ideas, needs, and dreams. This also allows them to speak about their reality from their own perspective, to share their experiences, their feelings, their ideas. To listen deeply creates a space of trust and safety that allows people to quench their thirst and unload their burdens.

Jesus is not interested in scolding the disciples for having abandoned him, or for not trusting in his promises. Nor is he interested in reproaching them for not having recognized him. He does not start the conversation by teaching them. Jesus’ questions reveal a great human sensitivity as well as his divine wisdom to listen to the suffering of his disciples and to allow them to express their pain, confusion, and astonishment about the events. Jesus knows that his disciples are extremely thirsty in their journey: they thirst for Jesus himself, his message of hope, justice and freedom rooted in the love of the living God who draws near to us, listens to our pains, and frees us from our sins; they thirst to be



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listened to in their pain.

The questions of the stranger invite the disciples to proclaim that Jesus was a powerful prophet in words and deeds before God and before the people. But their own leaders had given him up to be condemned to death, and he was crucified. It is not difficult to imagine the great confusion and pain that the disciples must have felt



KEN FALLS

seeing their priests and officials surrendering a prophet sent by God to his death. The disciples and all of the followers of Jesus expected him to liberate Israel from the Roman oppression and to restore the glory of the Kingdom of Judea. With the death of Jesus, those dreams are demolished and the disciples sink into hopelessness, the Kingdom of God Jesus had announced seemed lost. They are likely to wonder how much longer they will have to wait for the “true Messiah.” The disciples express disappointment and

probably wonder if it was all worthwhile to follow Jesus all that time. The fact that they are returning to the way they lived before meeting Jesus is a sign of their defeated hopes, because the one who had offered to quench their thirst forever is no longer with them.

SEE

The facilitator of the session invites the group to create a space of trust to share.

1 Let us think, for a few moments, about our own personal history, and let us share with one another the challenges and difficulties that have questioned our dreams and aspirations.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that, while a person is sharing his or her experience, the other one is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

Share an experience in which you felt that life difficulties led you to doubt your faith in Jesus. What events or disappointment threatened to take away your hope (forced migration, a death in the family, a betrayed relationship, being the victim of discrimination or of crime, financial difficulties, sicknesses, an addiction in the family, etc.)?

Who was by your side? Who asked you tenderly and knew how to listen? Who lent you a friendly hand without judging you? Who or what helped you to express your pain and restore your hope? Who helped you to quench your thirst?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

2 Let us recall how many Catholics doing Hispanic ministry have become involved in the lives of people and entire communities.

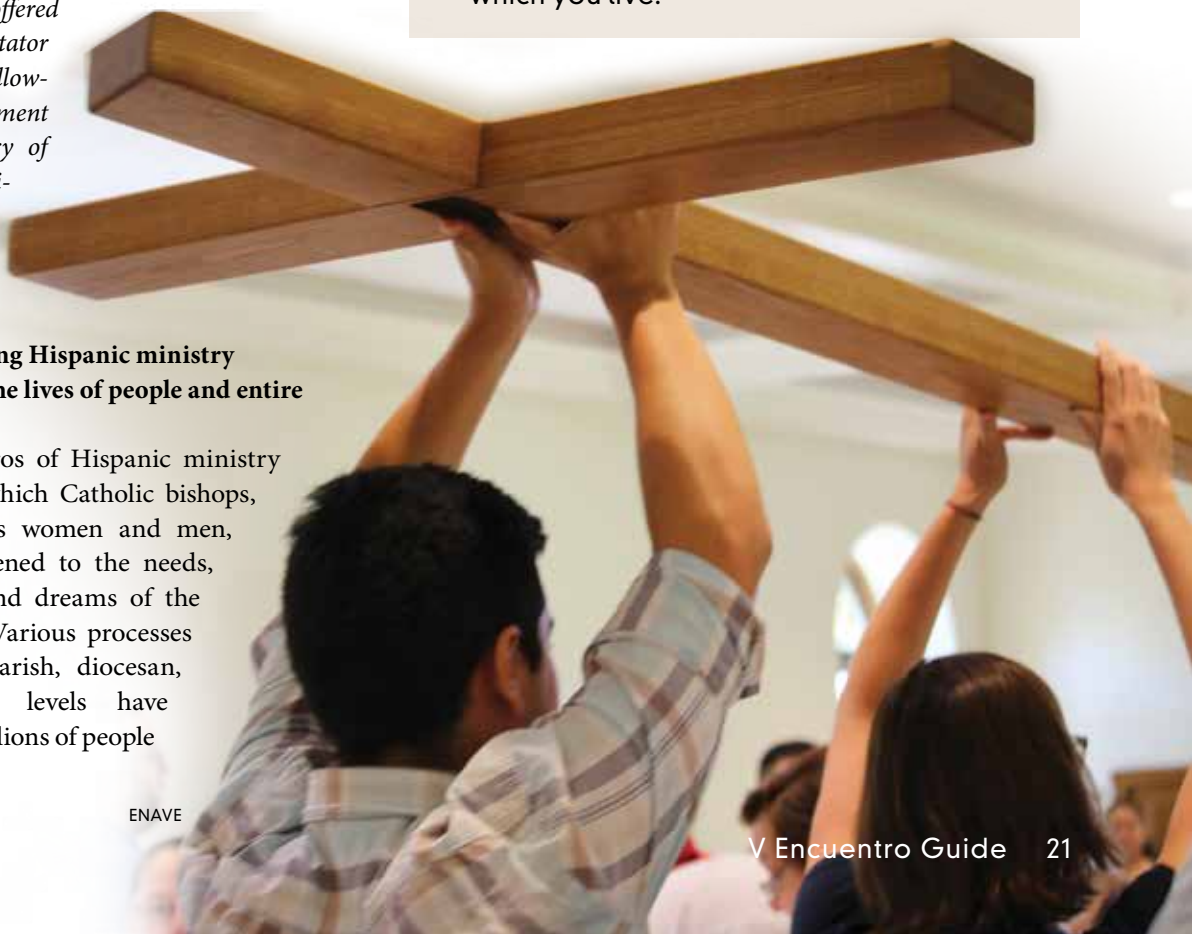
The national Encuentros of Hispanic ministry have been processes in which Catholic bishops, priests, deacons, religious women and men, and lay leaders have listened to the needs, challenges, aspirations, and dreams of the Hispanic/Latino people. Various processes of consultation at the parish, diocesan, regional, and national levels have awakened the hopes of millions of people

and created a space of safety and trust in thousands of parishes, ecclesial movements, and Catholic organizations for almost fifty years. Over 3,000 Hispanic/Latino priests are active in ministry today across the United States serving millions of Catholics. A growing number of Hispanic/Latino religious women are also involved in ministry, particularly evangelization, catechetical, formation, advocacy, and social services ministries.

Many Hispanic Catholics, and the Catholic Church as an institution, have been involved in the struggle for the rights of workers to organize: efforts leading to integral, fair, and human immigration reform; programs of assistance for people living in situations of poverty; initiatives to affirm and defend human life at all stages. César Chávez, for example, was a Catholic leader who dedicated his life to advocacy for justice for farmworkers. The United Farm Workers of America, founded by César Chávez, was an answer to the cry of thousands of farmworkers in their search for better salaries, better work conditions, the right to negotiate their contracts, and many other benefits that were rightly theirs.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Give examples of how your faith community, ecclesial movement, or Catholic organization is involved in the Hispanic community in which you live.



JUDGE

Pope Francis tells us that the disciples of an evangelizing community must be involved with works and gestures in the daily lives of others, particularly of those in difficult situations. Getting involved means narrowing distances, building bridges; going beyond one's own financial, cultural, educational, or migratory situation in order to reach out to the other. It means owning the suffering of others, taking on their difficulties, and even humbling ourselves, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Missionary disciples thus take on the “‘smell of the sheep’ and the sheep are willing to hear their voice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 24).

This call to becoming involved with those who suffer poverty, dispossession, or even discrimination comes from the very heart of the Church. In the document *Encuentro and Mission*, the Catholic bishops of the United States say that the Church's Missionary Option shows predilection for those who live in situations of poverty, sickness, discrimination, spiritual poverty, and loneliness. And Pope Francis speaks of a cultural and interior poverty so prevalent today, requiring an urgent response from the Church (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 2).

The mission of the Church toward those who suffer—particularly youths, women, and families—demands these two things: works of mercy and a committed struggle against all forms of injustice. In the *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, the bishops make an urgent call for us to get involved with those who live in the periphery, so that they can participate in the political, social, economic, and religious processes of their communities. The plan also calls to respond, in the pastoral and social realms, to the needs of families who are experiencing many difficulties, including abuse, divorce and separation, abortion, domestic violence, alcoholism and drug addiction, isolation, problems related to legal residence, and lack of educational opportunities (*Encuentro and Mission*, n. 32).

All these personal and

family situations create hopelessness, confusion, and suffering. Many people who live in these situations perhaps find themselves on the way back to their own Emmaus; that is to a way of living, thinking, and feeling removed from the Risen Christ, his love, and his promises of life lived to the fullest.

The encounter with the Samaritan woman is another example of how Jesus gets involved and involves a person in need with an entire community (see John 4:4-42). Jesus sits by the well where the Samaritan goes to procure water. He sits at the place where the life of the Samaritan woman finds its origin (the well is an image of the source of life for the Samaritan). As he asks “give me a drink,” he identifies himself as the source of water of that well. Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman with familiarity, going far beyond social and cultural prejudices, and he gets involved in her life, quenching the thirst she feels even without knowing it. The text shows how Jesus awakens the interest of the Samaritan woman, helping her to make a transition from everyday concerns to personal ones, and from personal concerns to spiritual ones. In this process, the Samaritan woman experiences her own conversion and becomes a disciple. She cannot contain the joy of “knowing herself loved” and “knowing herself accepted” and she goes to announce to others that she has met someone special. Then she says, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty.”



JOSÉ LÓPEZ, HISPANIC YOUTH AND YOUNGADULT MINISTRY DIOCESE OF STOCKTON



ENAVE

ACT

To be involved and to involve others

How can we get involved in the lives of people in our community and in the periphery, engaging young people in particular? What kinds of works and gestures should we carry out? In the Emmaus story we see how Jesus asks questions in order to start a conversation. He gradually gets involved in the anxieties and sadness of his disciples. In the case of the Samaritan woman, Jesus meets her by the well and shows interest in her daily life. He also asks questions and understands her need and her thirst for answers to the deep questions that give meaning to life. Jesus helps her to understand the difference between surviving and living to the fullest.

Our pastoral experience and many studies indicate that there are millions of Hispanic/Latino young people living in very difficult situations. Also, many of those young people are thirsty for opportunities for a better life: they thirst for tenderness and friendship, a sense of belonging to the Church and to society, the unconditional love of God, and a dignifying and fulfilling project of life. The V Encuentro offers a unique opportunity to see these young people not through sociological lenses but with the eyes of the disciple. Such a perspective moves us to get involved in the lives of millions of Hispanic/Latino young women and men who still have not felt the love of the Church and have

not had a personal encounter with the living Jesus.

The missionary action in this second week of the process of the V Encuentro sends us to places where we can meet young people and get involved in their lives. What are the wells where we can meet them? What questions can we ask them? What can we offer them?

In our daily life, let us show more interest in the regular life of young people in our own families. Let us ask them about what they consider most important in their lives, about their concerns, anxieties, what makes them happy, what they know for sure, their beliefs and doubts, what they expect from God, the message they wish they would hear from the Church.

In our community, we can get involved with young people who are experiencing major needs in the neighborhood, work, or faith community. Sit down with them to listen and be prepared to offer the services that the parish provides that could meet one of their needs. Another option is to meet with young people in the parish to talk about their needs, aspirations, and contributions to the life of the parish and society.

In the periphery, let's go in pairs to a "well," that is, a place where young people normally gather, and engage in dialogue with them.

CELEBRATE



Song: *Somos Pueblo Misionero* (Diego Correa y Damaris Thillet)

Lord, give us always of your water

Place a bowl with water where everybody can see it. This preferably should be a large, transparent receptacle, allowing the water to be seen. Add if appropriate other containers, such as the jars or bottles that workers or immigrants may use to carry water. Find some green plants, with leaves showing health and abundance to place around the water. If you can, find some soft music with sounds of water flowing that would invite a spirit of contemplation.

LEADER

I invite all of you to look at the water. Saint Francis of Assisi called it Sister Water. The eyes of Francis found in the water various demonstrations of goodness. The water refreshes us, energizes us, cleanses us, and heals us.

ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Water is docile and adaptable. It can also be terrifying and powerful. It is joy for children and blessing for a worker.

ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Immigrants know the power of water when they walk through the desert. In places where water is scarce, the poor long for water. Water is a blessing from God.

ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Let us keep a moment of silence lifting up to the Father the concern of our Church about droughts in the world and the images of lands where rainfall is insufficient. The dryness of lakes, rivers, and springs should not be seen just with the eyes, but with the heart. Let us in silence ask for the Father's forgiveness for those moments when we don't take care of creation. It is an injustice toward creation, but also toward the new generations.

LEADER

Lord, our God, you created water to nourish the earth; you have blessed the waters from the creation of the world. When



DIOCESE OF FRESNO/KEVIN FORD

your Son went into the Jordan River, you made your will known, that we listen to your Son, because it is in him that the source of life is found. Embrace your children who journey as part of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, that we renew our baptismal commitment and walk on the path of life with the power of your Spirit to promote justice and peace. Amen.

While singing, participants go to the front, and in pairs they sign each other with water and receive a water bottle. They also receive V Encuentro wristbands to give out to people they encounter in their missionary experience.

INTERCESSIONS

LEADER

Lord, you said you are the spring of living water. Whoever drinks the water you give will never thirst. Allow us in this V Encuentro to quench the thirst to be affirmed as Hispanics and get closer to you as true disciples, to be refreshed in your friendship.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one can go to you unless the Father calls him or her. Through this process of the V Encuentro, cleanse us with your life-giving water from all the dust gathered on the paths we have traveled and free us from all forms of slavery and guilt.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, who in your passion experienced thirst, free those who in their thirst drank water from false wells, and return them to your fold through the missionary action of your faithful.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one took your life from you because you surrendered it freely. We want to drink from your open side and take that living water to our sisters and brothers who remain in the periphery, and to those whose strength is spent in the ways of the world.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

LEADER

We praise you, Father, who give water to your Church to make the fields of your Reign fruitful. We thank you for making us one in Christ through Baptism and renewing the opportunities for us to return to true life. Lord, send your life-giving waters to our homes, where you call us to be missionaries so that the seeds we plant in your name may grow into an abundant harvest in our children, our families, our communities, and in all of creation. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Song: *Llamados al Encuentro* (Santiago Fernández) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

Instructions to get involved



Choose one person of the group with whom to go in missionary action in pairs.



Decide where you will go to get involved. It is recommended for the different pairs in the group to go to different places: a square, a store, a park, a detention center, a cafeteria, a place of work, etc.



Once you are in the place of mission, you can initiate the dialogue in a spontaneous way, or by introducing yourselves and asking for permission to converse. At the end of the dialogue, offer a sign of peace (e.g., a word, a gesture) to the person or persons with whom you spoke. You can give to one of them a copy of the four Gospels. When you get home, write down the most important ideas from the conversation in the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is most important in your life?
- What are your concerns?
- What makes you happy?
- What are your dreams?
- What obstacles prevent you from achieving them?
- What are you most certain about?
- What do you expect from God?
- What do you expect from the Catholic Church?
- What do you offer to others, to society?

SESSION 3

Walking Together with Jesus



OREGON CATHOLIC PRESS

OBJECTIVES

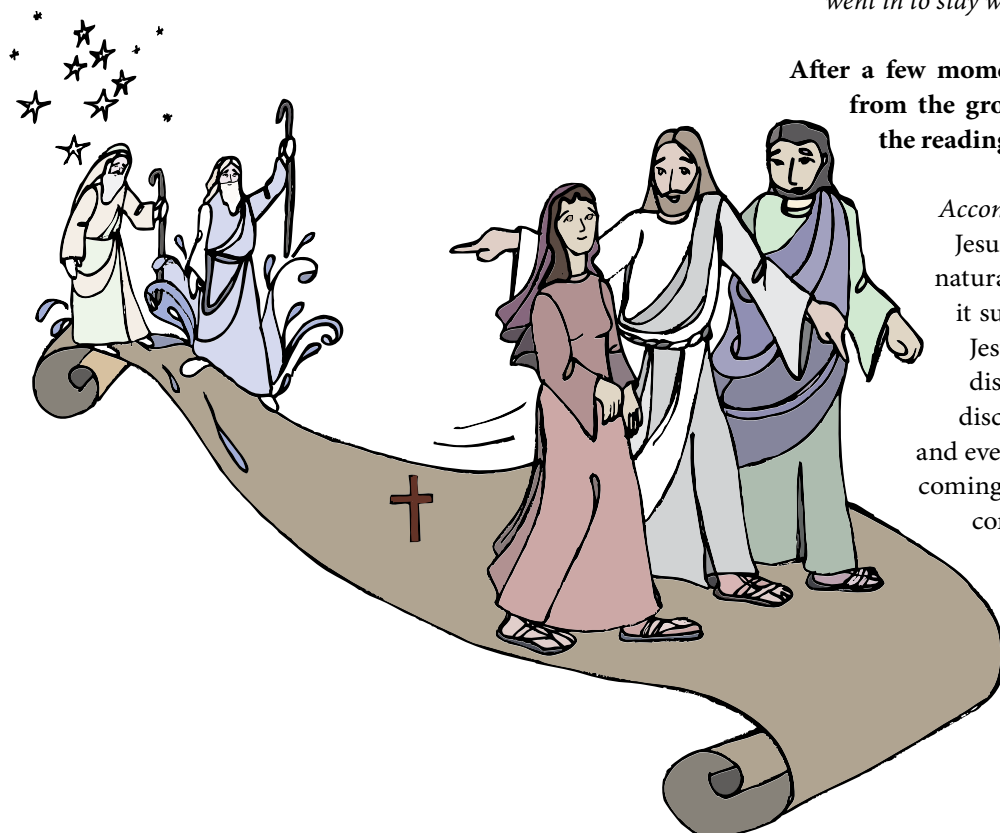
- Share about the missionary experience following the previous session, including the results of the consultation.
- Use the Scriptures to interpret life and inspire hope.
- Learn more about the spirituality of accompaniment.
- Prepare for missionary action with emphasis on the kerygma.

SYMBOLS

Bible and V Encuentro Wristband

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before starting the session, prepare the place where the small group will meet. Arrange the chairs in a circle and place the image of a path in the center. On a table, place a copy of the Bible, the Word of Life that gives meaning to our lives. Prepare a small basket with the bracelets of the V Encuentro, which are signs of our journeying in friendship with Jesus and those who walk together with us in life. Each participant will receive a bracelet during the prayer at the end of the session.



PRAYER



Song: *Un Pueblo que Camina* (Emilio Vicente Matéu) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

This third session of the process of the V Encuentro goes deeper into the meaning of Christian accompaniment. It emphasizes the importance of walking with Jesus to feel his friendship, listen to his word, and understand our lives in light of his promises of full and eternal life. Walking with Jesus leads us to say to him at the end of the journey: “Stay with us.”

The session starts with the following reading from the Scriptures:

And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. (Luke 24:25-29)

After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

Accompanying, walking together with Jesus . . .

Jesus’ action in this passage seems quite natural for a teacher: he teaches. What makes it surprising is the way he chooses to teach.

Jesus does not start the conversation with his disciples by teaching them. Most likely, the disciples would have felt very uncomfortable and even annoyed by the intrusion of a stranger coming to teach them at a time of sorrow and confusion. That is why Jesus first asks and listens to what the disciples have to say about their own reality, about their way of interpreting the events, which allows them to unburden their hearts and minds on the stranger who joined them along the way. This unburdening makes it

possible for the disciples to be ready to listen to what the stranger has to say, since the stranger has listened to them. There is no doubt that Jesus' listening attitude helps to create a bond of trust with the disciples. This trust will be evident later, when the disciples decide to invite the stranger to stay with them in order to continue the conversation.

Jesus chooses the most appropriate moment to share with the disciples a very different interpretation of what happened in Jerusalem in the past few days. He also chooses a kind, yet direct way to bring the disciples out of their obsession and pain when he says: *"Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer those things and enter into his glory?"* And he proceeds to interpret what the Scriptures said about him, starting with Moses and continuing with all the prophets.

The power of the Word and its interpretation from the perspective of the promise of the Resurrection gradually restores the hope of the disciples as they walk. It prepares them to recognize the Risen Jesus in the stranger that accompanies them and speaks to them. When the disciples arrive at the place where they will stay, Jesus gestures as if he would continue along his way, but the disciples tell him that it is getting late and invite him to stay with them. This gesture by Jesus, giving the impression of continuing on his way, shows that the stranger does not want to impose himself on the disciples or force them to continue the conversation. Jesus gives them the opportunity to continue the dialogue or say goodbye. The disciples take the initiative to continue in the company of the stranger, and they invite him in with the beautiful words: "Stay with us." This gesture by the disciples of concern for a stranger after a long and difficult day is welcomed by Jesus. Jesus accepts the invitation to remain with them, and in this way he prepares the stage for a moment of closeness and trust at the table.

With his way of teaching, Jesus models for us the importance of communicating with gestures and messages that awaken hope. This implies expressing a deep respect for the people we meet along our way, since they are also on a personal journey of faith. At the same time, it is our turn to share God's Word and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the

Church so they can understand, see, and feel their reality from the perspective of faith in the Risen Christ and the promises of his Reign of justice, love, and truth.

SEE

The facilitator invites the participants to get ready to share in light of their own experience and to listen with an attentive heart.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that while a person is sharing his or her experience the other one is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

Let us consider some moments in our lives when we have felt accompanied by someone. Let us also think of some words from the Bible that give us hope and have helped us to understand a difficult moment in our life in a different way.



PATRICIA JIMÉNEZ

Share an experience when someone welcomed you generously in his or her home or family. How did you feel being welcomed and accompanied? What changes did that person or family make in their own lives to welcome you? What words from the Bible have helped you during difficult times in your life?

At the same time, we know that there are many people around us who are alone and who are frequently rejected because of their social status, the color of their skin, cultural differences, or their migratory status. Have you ever felt rejected? How deep was the wound of that rejection? How did God become present at that moment?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

In the past fifty years, several initiatives to pastorally accompany the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States took place:

After the III National Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry (1985), Hispanic ministry was established in a significant number of parishes nationwide. Many diocesan offices were created to support Hispanic ministry. These offices increased the efforts of those that had been established years before and facilitated the rise of national organizations of Hispanic ministry. In 1988, a group of Hispanic theologians established the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), which fosters reflection on the central convictions of the Christian faith in the light of what it means to be a U.S. Hispanic Catholic. In 1991, the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry was created (NCCHM) as an organization to gather and support multiple national ministerial organizations working with Hispanic Catholics. In 1992, the National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry (NACDDHM) was created. In 1997, the *National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La RED)* was established to support processes of ministerial accompaniment of Hispanic Catholic youths and young adults, who today constitute the majority of U.S. Catholics younger than 25. Along these efforts, organizations of Hispanic priests, deacons, religious women and men, catechists, and pastoral institutes were renewed. And the increasing impact of various ecclesial movements such as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo de Cristiandad, and the Christian Family Movement, among others, inspired a new wave of creativity and pastoral service in the Church of the United States. Such growth has made it possible for the work of thousands upon thousands of pastoral leaders in parishes, dioceses, and movements to have increasing impact. In recent years, other national ministerial organizations have begun adapting their structures to better serve and accompany Hispanic Catholics.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Do you know about a ministry or a group in your faith community that was created to specifically accompany Hispanic Catholics in your parish? Share a few details about its origin and what it does.
- What type of ministries or initiatives would you like to see arise from the process of the V Encuentro in order to better accompany Hispanics in your parish and in the diocese?



JOSÉ LÓPEZ, HISPANIC YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DIOCESE OF STOCKTON

JUDGE

One of the deepest convictions we hold as Christians is that God accompanies us. God walks with us every day, in joyful moments and in difficult ones. It is possible to imagine, as many people do, that God created the world and left it to its own devices. When we experience suffering, violence, difficulties, rejection, abandonment, misunderstanding, and even the harsh reality of death, it is tempting to think that God is not with us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, however, clearly revealed to us that it is especially during those difficult moments that God is with us. God does not abandon the poor, the immigrant, the sick, the imprisoned, the person who feels lonely, nor does he abandon one who struggles with serious sin. God accompanies us with the power of the Word, sustaining us. God accompanies us in the sacraments, strengthening us with his divine grace. And it is in the Eucharist most of all that we discover that the Lord is with us, closer than anyone else could be. In the sacrament of Reconciliation we are truly forgiven by God.



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

Among the most tender experiences through which we experience God's accompaniment is in our relationship with Mary. She said yes to God, and the Word became flesh in her. Now Mary accompanies us as the first missionary disciple, inviting us to say yes as she did one day in Nazareth. At the time of the conquest, when the European and the indigenous cultures met on the American continent, division and violence were everywhere. Many people were suffering. Mary, in her avocations of Our Lady of Guadalupe, became part of this history with her apparitions as a mestizo woman affirming the dignity of the people who suffered. Mary of Guadalupe became a sign of hope and unity. Today, the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the strongest popular devotions among Catholics in the United States.

In the apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis offers Mary to us as a model of accompaniment: "Mary is able to recognize the traces of God's Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town 'with haste' (Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization" (n. 288).

At this historical juncture we are invited to reach out like Mary, to set out in haste to be with others and accompany them. In a special way, we are invited to set out in haste to be with the many Hispanic young people who are drifting away from the Church and who, for many reasons, need someone to listen to them and give them witness of the tender love of God. We are invited to set out in haste to be with the families, Hispanic and non-Hispanic, who are bringing new hope to thousands of Catholic communities throughout the country. A Church that reaches out in the United States is a Church that accompanies the Hispanic family. In the words of Pope Francis, the Church "wishes, with humility and compassion, to reach out to families and 'to help each family to discover the best way to overcome any obstacles it encounters'" (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 200).

A missionary disciple who accompanies others must follow the examples of Jesus and Mary. He or she must be able to discern the presence of God in ordinary life, make the decision to go out to the peripheries, walk with others, in the style of Jesus, act with justice and tenderness, and reach out to others.

ACT

Accompanying all

The passage of Luke at the beginning of this session portrays in detail the meaning of accompaniment and the pastoral sensitivity we must have to propose to others the novelty of the Gospel, without distinction of races or cultures. There are many places and many areas of ministry demanding this special accompaniment, as is the case of ministry with young people and families.

There is no doubt that many times the Hispanic community has been accompanied, as it gradually was integrated more fully into the life of the Church and U.S. society. Part of our action should be investing in the special areas of ministry. It could be tempting, however, to think that the ministry of Latinos is only for Latinos, and particularly immigrants. Such would be a very limited action.

When the apostles began to preach the Good News, they first focused on the Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They, however, soon discovered that it was necessary to open up the tent. The Acts of the Apostles (10:22-27) tells us the story of the centurion Cornelius, who was not a Jew, but received the Holy Spirit, accepted Jesus Christ, and was baptized together with his entire family. By accompanying them in this very important process, Peter makes it possible for Cornelius



ENAVE

and his family to now belong to the Church. Humanity is represented by Cornelius.

- How important is it for us to share the Gospel with people who are not like us, who do not speak our language nor share our cultural traditions? Is it possible that our pastoral activity may have become self-referential?

The mission of the Church is to preach the Good News to all. And, as St Paul reminds us, in order to hear the Good News, someone has to announce and preach it. Hispanic ministry as an integral ministry in the Church is an experience of evangelization that starts with Hispanic Catholics, yet is not limited to this population. Our Church is increasingly diverse with a great number of cultural families that want to listen to the Gospel. Therefore, all pastoral agents have the responsibility to accompany Hispanic Catholics in the best possible way so they become authentic missionary disciples of the Lord. At the same time, Hispanic Catholics have the responsibility to accompany the rest of the Catholic population in the United States, both in our faith communities and in the peripheries, so that they can also become missionary disciples of the Lord.

- What type of Hispanic ministry is needed in the midst of today's culturally diverse context in the Church? What type of change (or pastoral conversion) needs to happen so that we, as a Church, may accompany Hispanic Catholics more fully in their faith experience?

In the process of evangelization, accompaniment means the proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus and the fulfillment of his promises. The Word of God helps us to understand our own history as part of the History of Salvation and it fills us with joy and hope.

In our daily life. . . Let us go back to that young person we identified in our families at the end of the previous session. Let us approach him or her with the desire to accompany him or her. Share with that person something about your own experience. How has God accompanied you in your own life? What biblical passages have inspired you to live with hope and joy? Invite this young person to reflect on the difference it makes to be in relationship with the Lord Jesus. Ask him or her if they want their faith to grow or have any questions about the Church, and what passages from the Bible inspire them and give them hope. Sometimes we



DIOCESE OF TUCSON

encounter persons and even entire families that have never even heard the announcement that this Jesus who was crucified is risen from the dead, and offers us forgiveness, peace, and new hope. As Pope Francis reminds us, when we accompany others in their struggles, at an appropriate moment the Spirit will prompt us to share with them this Gospel announcement. We should not be afraid to do this (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 164)

In our community. . . let us go back to those young people we identified at the end of the previous session in the neighborhood, the workplace, or in our faith community. Let us approach them with the desire to accompany them and share how God accompanies us in our own lives. Share with them a passage or teaching of the Bible that encourages us and gives us hope. Identify a family that is in need of hearing the Good News and to be encouraged on their journey. Look for a way to dialogue with that family, knowing it a little better, share with them the Word of God, and pray with and for them. Speak to them also about your experience in this process of the V Encuentro. Invite them about the difference it makes to come into relationship with the Lord Jesus. Ask them whether they have questions about the faith or the Church. Invite them to ask.

In the periphery. . . go back to the place in the periphery that you visited last time and enter into conversation with the young people you identified last week. See if there is a possibility to meet their families and visit them with a message of welcome and hope. Follow the same model of dialogue and accompaniment suggested for the previous missionary action.

CELEBRATE

The Word of God is faithful



Song: *Oración de San Francisco* (Sebastian Temple) or *Instrumento de Tu Paz* (Koren Ruiz)

[The group gathers and prepares to receive the Word of God. Several candles are lit, and there are flowers].

LEADER 1

The Word of God comes to us, and to our community, meeting us where we are, in order to lead us to the Lord. This is why we are a pilgrim people, being led by the Word. This message is the same that the Patriarchs, kings, and prophets heard in old times. This message was heard by the early Christians, the desert fathers, the holy men and women of our Church. This message was known by our grandmothers and grandfathers who taught us how to pray. The same message was heard by the pioneers of Hispanic ministry in the United States of America. The leaders who started these ministries also strived to be faithful to this Word.

LEADER 2

Let's consider what the Gospel contains
(*Different voices*)

- The Good News of our salvation
- The stories of how Jesus lived doing good to all
- The testimony of those who saw and touched the Word of Life
- Nourishment, a lamp to guide our feet
- Safe pathway
- Purification, healing, and renewal
- Spirit and life, words of eternal life

LEADER 2

This message comes to us today surrounded by light, brought in with joy and an outpouring of refreshing water. Let us welcome the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ!

[Participants welcome a procession with the Bible. The person carrying the Book lifts it up.]

I invite you to receive the Word of God. Honor it. With incense, let us lift up our prayer that the V Encuentro may allow us to grow as disciples who listen to the Good News.

[Song. The procession enters slowly with lights, incense (when possible), flowers, and the Bible, which is placed open on a small table prepared in advance.]

LEADER 2

Sisters and brothers, we walk as part of the V Encuentro journey with the conviction that a light will guide us on our way. This Word has remained always faithful. It is not “yes” today and “no” tomorrow. It is the true Word that brings consolation and hope, a flame that purifies and consumes.

Come forward asking for the grace to be faithful. Let us kiss this holy book with devotion and take the bracelet that will remind us of God's faithfulness. Let us be encouraged to participate in God's own mission as we bring the Good News to our sisters and brothers.

[All come forward singing, kiss the Bible, and take two wristbands, one for themselves and one for a person they want to reach out to.]

CLOSING PRAYER

God of life and wisdom, you are always faithful to your promises and bring your plans to fulfillment. Walk with us in this process of the V Encuentro so that at each step we may find your message of love and tenderness. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the living face of your mercy and has given us your Holy Spirit to keep us faithful to you, and lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.



Song: *Salgamos a Llevar el Evangelio* (Santiago Fernández) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

1

Invite one person from your group to join you in missionary action this week.

2

Decide which family living in the periphery you plan to visit.

3

Start the dialogue by introducing yourselves, offering a greeting of welcome and peace, and identifying the parish, ecclesial movement, or Catholic organization to which you belong.

4

Get to know the family a little better by using last week's questions proposed for the missionary action to get involved.

5

Share your testimony of how God accompanies you in your own life. Use examples from the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*, based on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God.

6

Give witness of how God accompanies you in your life:

- At the time of contemplating the Mystery of God... **Wisdom**
- At the time of understanding the teachings of the Church more clearly... **Understanding**
- At the time of distinguishing and choosing good in our daily lives... **Counsel**
- At the time when courage is needed to overcome difficulties... **Fortitude**
- At the time of knowing and caring for the created order as a gift from God... **Knowledge**
- At the time of experiencing God's presence and feeling God's infinite tenderness... **Piety**
- At the time of fearing to be separated from God and resisting evil... **Fear of God.**

7

Continue the dialogue. Invite them to share. Have they ever experienced God's presence in similar situations? At the end of your visit, pray for that family, and say goodbye, wishing them peace. When you get home, write down the most important ideas from the conversation in the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*.

SESSION 4

Bearing Fruits of New Life



KAREN CALLAWAY PHOTO

OBJECTIVES

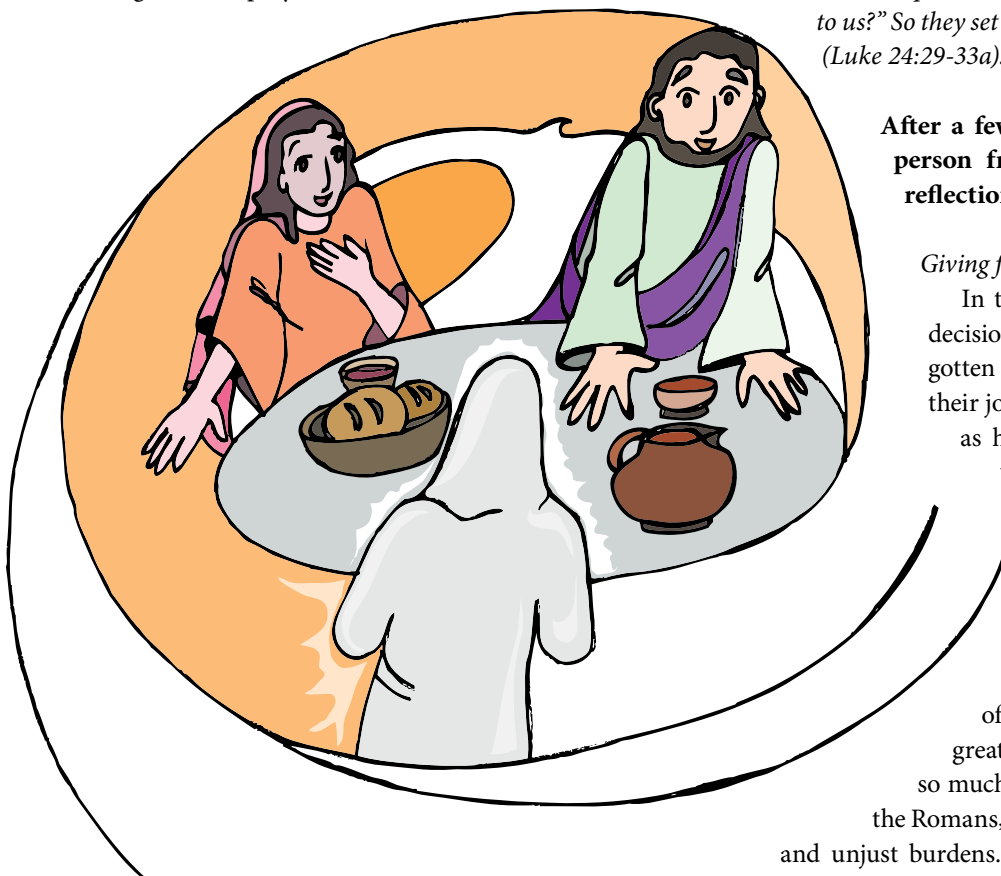
- Share the personal and communal fruits gathered during the past three weeks.
- Identify the fruits that remain to be cultivated in the faith community and the neighborhood where the parish is located.
- Reflect about the fruits of the Holy Spirit and their transformational power.
- Prepare for missionary action this week.

SYMBOLS

Candle (light), Bread (shared)

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before starting the session, prepare the space where the small group will meet. Arrange the chairs in a circle and place the image of a path in the center. Near that image, place a lit candle and a basket with some bread to be shared. There should be a tea light for each participant to be distributed during the final prayer.



PRAYER



Song: *Ardía Nuestro Corazón/Our Hearts Burned Within Us* (Pedro Rubalcava) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth session of the V Encuentro. In this session we will share about the fruits that our missionary action has produced since we started the process of the V Encuentro. We will reflect particularly about the fruits of friendship, joy, the Eucharist, and mission.

The session starts with the following reading from the Scriptures:

“Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem. (Luke 24:29-33a).

After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

Giving fruits of new life...

In this biblical passage the disciples make a decision—they invite a stranger that they had gotten to know as trustworthy in the course of their journey. We all know from experience that as human beings we feel more comfortable with people who are from our community, share our beliefs, customs, traditions, and values. It is also very human to feel suspicious or to assume a defensive attitude when we find ourselves facing someone from a different culture or nationality. This lack of trust and even fear of a stranger was even greater for the Jewish people, who had suffered so much at the hands of other nations, including the Romans, who had dominated their lives with taxes and unjust burdens. Mindful about our human nature, the



KAREN CALLAWAY PHOTO

Scriptures offer many references about treating the stranger well, being hospitable, and not harming others. After all, the Hebrew people were strangers in Egypt.

There is no doubt that the disciples on the way to Emmaus saw something in that stranger that inspired trust. Perhaps it was the way this stranger walks near them; the way he asks about their conversation; the way he kindly, yet directly, addresses their misreading of the events; the way he interprets the Scriptures; the way he signals that he is continuing on. Perhaps it was all these gestures of intimacy and tenderness that created trust between the stranger and the disciples, that generated a familiarity that would conclude in the breaking of the bread while sitting at table.

The fact that Jesus accepts the invitation to stay with the disciples, even when they do not recognize him, teaches us to gratefully welcome the trust and care that people extend to us when they invite us into their homes to eat with them, to continue the conversation that began during a catechetical session, the celebration of a sacrament, or the particular instance when we met them. Such encounters are invitations to have a more intimate experience of faith, sharing bread, and building a friendship in his name, so that the Risen Jesus can become present through us.

This is the moment that Jesus most likely anticipated when he came to his disciples and joined them along the way to Emmaus. Jesus is finally with his disciples in a safe space, a place of trust around a table, and ready to share. It has been a long and intense day, but they are now more relaxed and ready to quench their thirst and eat something before going to sleep. The disciples expected to continue the conversation with the stranger. It is in the gesture of breaking and sharing the bread that the grace of Jesus' walking with them comes to fruition. The eyes of the disciples are opened and they recognize the Risen Jesus. Now, the "confused travelers on the road to Emmaus" are filled with joy and hope and are recommissioned as disciples and missionaries. They immediately return to Jerusalem to share the good news of the Gospel of the Risen Jesus.

Our pastoral work gives us many opportunities to accompany so many people in our community of faith and in the periphery. This accompaniment is a work of the Lord's grace prompting us and which generates fruits of friendship, joy, hospitality, solidarity, and hope. The grace of the Risen One accompanies us as we accompany others, and leads to personal and pastoral conversion, as we have seen in the passage of Emmaus

SEE

The facilitator invites the participants to get ready to share in light of their own experience and to listen with an attentive heart.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that while a person is sharing his or her experience, the other is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

Let us consider for a moment how our intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus has been the source of many fruits that make it possible today for us to give witness as missionary disciples.

What are the spaces or moments when you feel closest to God and to his Son, Jesus Christ? Describe briefly one of those spaces and moments. How do you feel? What do you discover about God? What do you discover about yourself? What do you discover about others? How do these spaces or moments motivate you to live your faith in a more committed way? How are you changed/transformed after this personal encounter with Jesus?

If they asked you to identify one or two characteristics that define your identity as a Catholic, what would you say? What would you say is a characteristic that identifies your faith community as truly Christian? Why did you choose those particular characteristics?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

The Hispanic Catholic presence has been like leaven for the Church and for the rest of society in the United States. Sometimes this history is not properly affirmed and recognized, but it is important to know that many are the fruits produced and many more are being produced in our day.

The first Catholic communities in the United States territory were Hispanic. The first Catholic mission was established in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1566. A network of missions throughout the South and the West of the country made it possible for Catholicism to grow important roots in these parts of the country. The hard work of Franciscan, Jesuit, and Augustinian missionaries, among others, through catechesis and evangelization, transformed entire



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communities. Today, we see the footprints of that influence in the architecture, the artistic expressions, many writings, and even the names of cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Corpus Christi, etc..

Today, the places where Catholicism grows fastest in the United States are the South and West of the country, and that is precisely due to the Hispanic presence. More than 4,500 parishes offer some form of Hispanic ministry; the majority of baptisms and First Communions in these parishes are of Hispanic children; almost two-thirds of U.S. Catholics younger than 18 are Hispanic, the great majority of these (93 percent) were born in the United States. This is a very special moment in which a new chapter of the history of the Church in this country is being written, a moment when Hispanics are playing an important role in the evangelization and transformation of society. More and more Hispanic Catholics have influence in the worlds of politics, education, the arts, business, sports, entertainment, and the legal system of the country. This is a moment for Hispanic Catholics to affirm and share the best of their cultural, social, and religious values and beliefs.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- What do you think is the most notable contribution of Hispanics to the Church in the United States?
- In what areas do you think that the faith of Hispanic/Latino Catholics have most influence in the U.S. society?
- What challenges do Hispanic Catholics face, particularly Hispanic young people, in order to preserve their religious and cultural identity in the United States?

JUDGE

We were created for the glory of God. And the nature of God is love, relationship. It is when we place ourselves at the service of others that these gifts become fruitful and begin to affect others. In this way we give witness as disciples of Jesus Christ in our lives. The Word of Jesus frees us and guides us with his life and presence among us, through the Holy Spirit, in order for us to know and liberate the love of God to be given to others. In this way, we know God's love for us while loving our neighbors with freedom. God nourishes the Church and the world with the gifts he has entrusted us with. When we allow these gifts to be used for others, through our attitudes and behaviors, our words and actions, then we can actually see how Jesus is present in our own lives.

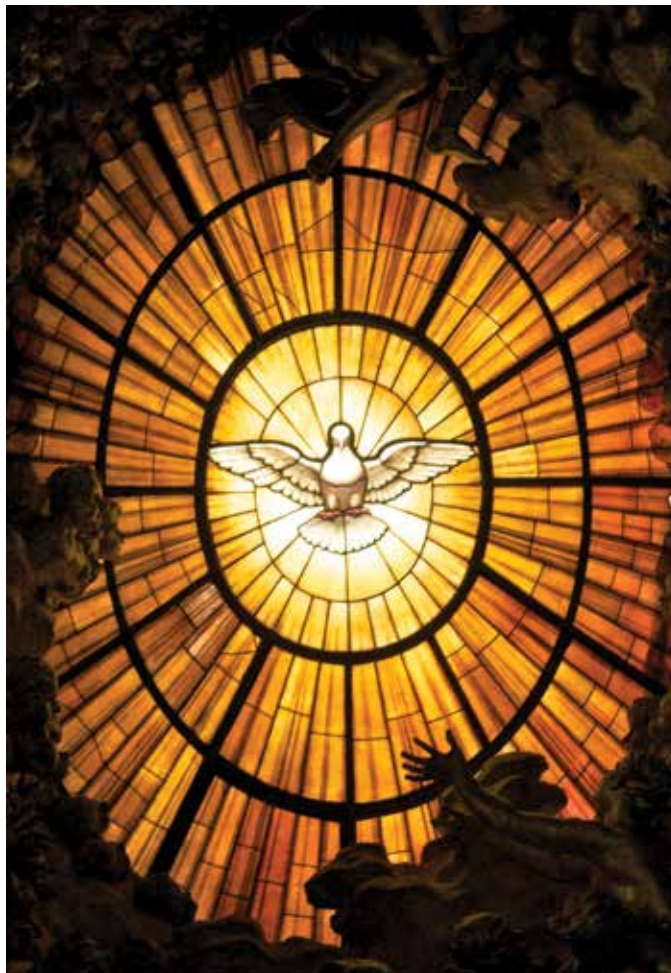
We Christians share in the conviction that the presence of the Holy Spirit produces evident fruits in our lives. We frequently speak of 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.

A missionary disciple of Jesus, Pope Francis reminds us, "finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 24).

A tree is known by its fruit! If Christ is in the midst of our communities, we will be a reflection and continuation of his saving work and his healing presence. As he did back then with the disciples of Emmaus, he breaks the Eucharistic bread with us. At the same time, as he did with the hungry crowds gathered around him (see Jn 6:5-13), he breaks with

the poor the bread that nourishes the body. Our encounter with Christ at the table of the Word and at the table of the Eucharist becomes real as we open ourselves to the encounter with Christ in those who are poor and most in need among us, and those who live in the peripheries of society.

God accompanies us throughout our lives. We experience God's presence visibly and unmistakably through our Baptism, through the other sacraments, and the many expressions of popular Catholicism of our people. We feel God's presence when we generously share our time, talents, treasure, and love with others; when we forgive and are reconciled with someone who has trespassed against us; when we practice mercy and compassion toward those who need our presence, help, and encouragement; when we share our material goods, open the doors of our homes, visit the sick and the imprisoned, are present and console those who suffer, share with words and actions the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who need to hear them the most.



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- What fruits have grown in me as a result of my relationship with Jesus? With whom do I share those fruits?
- What fruits am I bearing in my ordinary life as a missionary disciple in my family, in the parish community, and in society?
- God works in the community through each one of us: How am I allowing the Good News of Jesus Christ to become part of me, and how do I share it with others?



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

ACT

Jesus' words are very clear: "By their fruits you will know them" (Mt 7:16). Christian witness cannot remain limited to words only, or mere good intentions. We need to act. It is urgent for our Christian commitment to become real through specific actions that translate into fruits of new life. The fruits that emerge from our Christian commitment confirm that the Holy Spirit continues to work in our lives and in our communities. These fruits are born of our intimate union with the Lord: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing"* (Jn 15:5).

According to the Christian tradition, one of the most concrete ways to bring to life the fruits of our relationship with Jesus Christ as his disciples is to *live in full solidarity* with Christ in those who are poor and those most in need: *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me"* (Mt 25:34-36).

The preferential option for the poor and the most vulnerable has been a constant dynamic in all the processes of Encuentro of Hispanic ministry in the United States. It still is today! In a world increasingly polarized by injustices and social inequality today, more than ever, we are called, as truly missionary disciples in the United States, to be a

prophetic voice and to act concretely on behalf of unborn children, immigrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking, workers who are exploited under different circumstances, people who are discriminated against, people who live in conditions of extreme poverty in rural and urban areas, families experiencing difficulties staying together, people who suffer the direct consequences of climate change, and many other sisters and brothers who are the face of Christ and thirst for someone to accompany them.

Where do we begin? Return to the young person or family you identified at the beginning of this process of Encuentro, with whom you were involved and whom you decided to accompany. Invite them to join you to:

- Celebrate the Eucharist in your parish or local community.
- Observe how your parish or community serves the poor and most vulnerable.
- Consider the possibility to join a parish or community group.
- Be a prophetic voice and to act concretely to bear fruit.
- Go to a periphery where there are people who are far away from the Church or are experiencing a major need for someone to listen to them, to get involved in their lives and accompany them.

During this week, make a missionary commitment to go out into the peripheries of local and global society.

CELEBRATE

Lord, your light is forever, your bread nourishes us



Song: *Un Pueblo en Marcha* (Silvio Cuéllar) or *Canción de San Francisco Javier* (Cristóbal Fones)

[A candle is placed high and should visibly light the room. Below it is a basket with enough bread for all participants.]

LEADER 1

The first Christians gathered on the eve of Sunday, the day of the Lord. The leader of the community would light a candle remembering Christ, who is the Light of the world, and sing hymns. Each baptized member of the community took their light from that candle. This celebration was called *the Lucernarium*. Let us also recall the evening meal at the home of the disciples in Emmaus and begin our prayer saying:

ALL

Stay with us, Lord; it is getting dark and we cannot see.
(*The main candle is lit.*)

LEADER 2

Darkness has no power. If we lose electricity at night, we worry that we might be disoriented, fall, or may break something. A small light is enough to restore our trust. Thousands of our sisters and brothers, and sometimes we, too, are in darkness and need light. A glimpse of the light of Christ in their hearts would be enough to restore courage and life. We must say over and over: darkness needs not have power, neither do the works of darkness. Injustice needs not have power. We just need the courage to defeat them. Lies have no power. We just need a spark of truth to conquer them. Let us pray for all who live away from the light.

- God of light, bring closer those who do not experience love: may they have the courage to cross their own boundaries.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light, instruct us when we are in error: may we recognize the way of truth.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light, raise us whenever we fall into vice: may our health be restored.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light, free the prisoners: so they may return to life.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light strengthen us when we are weak and lack courage: may we be nourished by the Gospel.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light, affirm anyone who feels rejected and misunderstood: may their dignity be restored.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

- God of light, rekindle the fire when we are lukewarm: that we may bear abundant fruit through works.

R/May the light of Christ shine.

LEADER 1

On the day of my baptism, Lord, you gave me the gift of your wonderful light; you led us out of the darkness and called us by name to be a light to the world.

ALL

Here we are, gathered in your name. We are your missionary disciples. Send us to be your light.

(*Song. Participants come forward to light their individual candles.*)

LEADER 2

Jesus, we know by faith that you walk with us. You do not need our hospitality, and yet you give us your friendship when we invite you into our humble homes.

ALL

Stay with us, Lord, and bless our table.

LEADER 1

Lord Jesus, we walk with you without knowing you are the Bread of Life come down from heaven, the bread that nourishes and restores the strength of those who are overwhelmed by the journey of life. You are bread that gives itself, bread broken as an offering of solidarity, and bread shared in sincere hope.

ALL

Lord, give us of your bread to work together for the fruits of light: peace, justice, and truth.

[Leader says: As a community of faith, we celebrate the Mass which brings to us the real presence of Christ as the Bread of Life. In our daily lives, we share another type of bread, the bread of solidarity and hospitality, and the bread broken with the poor. That reminds us we are part of a community. We are not celebrating the Eucharist here, but sharing bread as a symbol of our union.]

The bread is broken and shared among all present.

LEADER 2

Lord, grant that all who are part of the process of the V Encuentro work for justice and hear your voice in the lament of the poor. May your light open our eyes to recognize the unmistakable gestures of a friend. May the Eucharist nourish us to be hospitable to others and face adversity with strength.

ALL

We want to be a Church that goes forth.
We want to be a missionary Church.
We want to bear abundant fruit.

LEADER 1

Christ, perfect image of God the Father, just as your disciples recognized you in the breaking of the bread, you recognize us whenever we are able to share our bread with the hungry, our clothes with the naked, our home with the stranger, or our presence with the sick and the imprisoned. May we one day hear our names being called as you welcome us into your presence: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The deepest yearning of our hearts is that you find abundant fruits in our lives and that this harvest be celebrated in union with the Father and your Holy Spirit forever and ever.

ALL

Amen.



Song: *Somos Discípulos Misioneros* (Albert Coppo) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

During this week let us make a missionary commitment to go to the peripheries of our local or global society. What can we do to make our missionary action real? Here are some practical suggestions:

- Visit a nursing home or a prison, a hospital, someone who is sick and homebound, a family of farmworkers, a young person or a child who is alone . . .
- Feed the hungry and live in global solidarity through Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl: <http://crsricebowl.org/solidarity>
- Explore in more detail some of the efforts related to social services that the Catholic Church provides in the United States:



CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

- Communities of Salt and light.
<http://www.wearesaltandlight.org>
- Catholic Charities:
<https://catholiccharitiesusa.org>
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD)
<http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development>
- Justice for Immigrants
<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org>
- USCCB pro-life activities: www.usccb.org/prolife
- Catholic Legal Network/Clinic
<https://cliniclegal.org>
- Catholic Climate Covenant
<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/>
- Visit the electronic page of your arch/diocese or of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org>) in order to learn about projects at the local and national level to protect life, fight poverty, educate new generations, confront human trafficking, etc.
- Make sure to write in your *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journals* what you heard and saw during your missionary action and how the experience made a difference for those you visited and for you as well.

SESSION 5

Celebrating the Joy of Being Missionary Disciples



GIULIO NAPOLITANO / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

OBJECTIVES

- Share the wisdom learned from the missionary experience during the previous week.
- Celebrate an important event in the life of each member of the small group.
- Reflect on the importance of celebrating great and small events in life with gratitude and joy.
- Prepare for the fifth missionary action, with emphasis on celebrating.

SYMBOL

The V Encuentro Cross

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before starting the session, prepare the place where the small group will meet. Arrange the chairs in a circle and place the image of a path in the center. Near that image, place a candle and an open Bible. Prepare a basket with the crosses of the V Encuentro to be distributed among all members of the small group during the final prayer.



PRAYER



Song: *Santa María del Camino* (Juan Antonio Espinosa) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this fifth and final session of the process of the V Encuentro. We have walked together as a small group and now have become a small missionary community. Our focus today is to celebrate with gratitude and joy the achievements and worthy moments of our lives, big and small. In this session we are sent once again to reach out to those who are most in need. We also begin the process of preparation to celebrate our Parish Encuentro [Note: If your group did not meet in the context of a parish, you should plan an Encuentro gathering with other small groups that also met in the particular context where you are (e.g., school, prison, etc., using the Parish Encuentro model).]

The session starts with the following reading from the Scriptures:

"Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:32-35)

After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

Celebrating the joy of being missionary disciples . . .

The last thing Jesus does in this passage is to vanish from the sight of the disciples shortly after they recognized him. However, the passage shows the disciples excited and ready to be missionary disciples once again. The disciples are full of joy because they recognized Jesus. Their eyes and hearts are open to the truth of the Resurrection. The certainty that Jesus is alive leads them to realize that Jesus has been with them practically the entire day, and they are not surprised or disturbed when he vanishes. On the contrary, the disciples remain joyful and share with one another how they felt along the way while the stranger was interpreting the Scriptures. With astonishment, they exclaim: "*Were not*

our hearts burning . . . ?” This confirms that their faith was rekindled by first hearing the Word of God. This experience of conversion touches the minds and hearts of the disciples and prepares them to recognize the Risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread. It especially prepares them to understand that they, with the entire community of disciples, constitute, from this moment, the Body of Christ, the Church in the world.

Jesus has been with them practically the entire afternoon. It took about two or three hours to walk the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus. What else could Jesus do to give example and to teach his disciples everything they need to know and do in order to carry out their mission? Jesus vanishes from their sight at the exact moment when his disciples no longer need to see him to believe that he is risen. He does not need to explain the Scriptures again or tell them how to resume their mission of announcing the Good News, or what to do at that moment. By the enduring grace of the presence of the Risen Christ in their midst, they are entrusted with making decisions in the future, starting with their immediate return to Jerusalem. Jesus knows that this encounter, this intimate moment in which they recognize him, will lead them to conversion, to build the community of disciples, to live in solidarity with one another, and to embrace permanently the mission of proclaiming the Good News to all nations, moved by their burning hearts.

This urgent call to be missionaries is what leads the disciples to immediately rise from table and set out on their journey back to Jerusalem. Imagine the difficulties of walking for several hours in the darkness of night on a solitary and potentially dangerous road. The urgency to meet the rest of the disciples to share with them the great news about the Risen Jesus cannot wait until the following day. Their burning hearts light up the road from within them and their faith in Jesus frees them from fear and any fatigue they may have felt. Any dangers they may face, including the possibility of dying on the way, are now perceived from a very different perspective in light of the promise of the Resurrection.

The lives of these disciples have acquired a new meaning in light of the recent events. The fear, disbelief, doubt, and sadness with which they left Jerusalem only a few hours before have now completely disappeared from their minds and hearts. As they return to Jerusalem, they see with their eyes wide open and are moved by joy (what a great joy!) and hope, overflowing with faith and love for Jesus, for the other disciples, and for the life that has conquered death. The disciples know that they are

now the eyes, the feet, and the hands of Jesus in the world. They are now the strangers reaching out to those without hope on the journey of life, whom they must accompany with closeness and tenderness, sharing the Scriptures with them, accepting their invitation to stay with them, and sharing the bread of love in the Risen Christ.

The return of the disciples to Jerusalem is a great inspiration for our missionary commitment. At the end of the celebration



ENAVE

of the Eucharist, we are sent to encounter others on their own life journeys to accompany them. We do this just as Jesus did it with the disciples of Emmaus and countless Christian disciples have been doing from generation to generation for nearly two thousand years. This missionary activity implies making a decision to go forth and reach out to others, to accompany them as the missionary disciples of today. It implies to live and understand the mission of the Church as a community that goes forth inspired by a pastoral commitment to encounter and accompany. This is the

vision of Church that Pope Francis lives and proposes to us in each action, gesture, and message of his life. His secret consists in the deep and free conviction that he, and all the baptized, are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.

The last scene in this passage shows the disciples of Emmaus sharing with other disciples in Jerusalem the Good News that they have seen the Risen Jesus. Other disciples have also seen Jesus, and there is great joy among all of them. It is important to highlight that the disciples who just arrived from Emmaus, most likely exhausted after a long journey, share specifically that Jesus interpreted the Scriptures for them and that they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. These two realities, Word and Sacrament, are inseparable in the encounter with the Living Jesus Christ that leads to conversion, communion, and solidarity within the community of missionary disciples gathered in Jerusalem.

SEE

The facilitator invites participants to get ready to share in light of their experience and to listen with an attentive heart.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that while a person is sharing his or her experience the other one is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

As missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize that we have received many blessings and now are called to share about these with others through our witness. Let us share with enthusiasm the importance of celebrating the wonders that God has done in our lives.

For what are you grateful to God at this moment in your life (mention one or two reasons)? How do you celebrate important moments with your family and friends? How would you describe the joy you feel when you celebrate an important moment in your life or in the life of someone you love? What elements of our Christian faith invite us to celebrate?

Do you know someone who is experiencing difficulties or sadness? What can you do to share the joy that God has brought to your life with that person and thus accompany him or her?

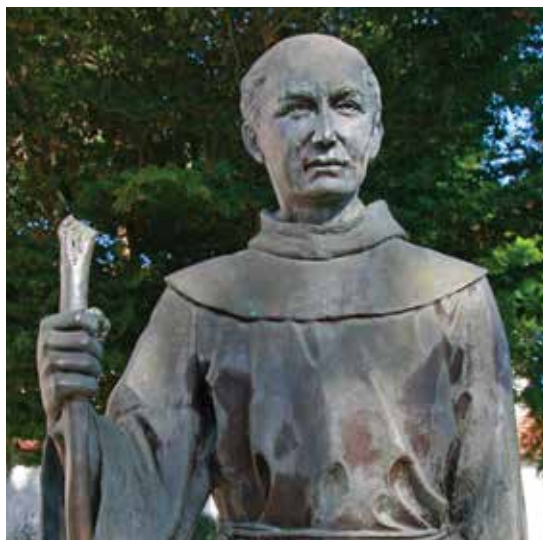
Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

A core characteristic of Hispanic cultures is the profound sense of *fiesta* with which Hispanics/Latinos celebrate many events in their lives. Such sense of celebration is closely associated to the influence of Catholicism in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Hispanic/Latino cultures in the United States. Many are the reasons to celebrate: the birth of a child, the passage from one stage of life to the next, the memory of those who are already in God's eternal presence. It is not an exaggeration to say that Hispanic Catholics always find an excuse to celebrate, even at the most difficult moments.

Although the Hispanic/Latino presence has been integral in the shaping of the experience in the United States, in the Church, and in the larger society, such presence has not always been properly recognized. Every time a Hispanic/

Latino person achieves a major goal is an opportunity to celebrate.

The canonization of the first Hispanic Catholic, the Franciscan priest Fray Junípero Serra, reminds us that there are many Latinos whose holiness and commitment have made a great difference in the United States. Venerable Bishop Alphonse Gallegos (1931-1991), former auxiliary



THE CROSIERS



AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS

bishop of Sacramento, known as the "Bishop of the Barrio" for his unyielding commitment to the poor, is currently on the path to beatification. Most likely, we all know many Latinos whose lives deserve being celebrated.

In recent history many of the marches advocating for better working conditions for Hispanic/Latino farm and factory workers, or seeking a comprehensive immigration reform, are characterized by having a celebratory and religious nature. The marches often look like processions preceded by vigils, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is almost always present, religious hymns are sung, and many religious leaders accompany their people. Marian devotions from each of the Latin American and Caribbean countries are also cause of great joy, hope, and consolation for millions of Catholics with roots in those countries now living in the United States.

During the last half century, the number of parishes with Hispanic ministry has rapidly increased in the United States. Today, nearly 4,500 parishes celebrate Mass with a unique festive spirit incorporating

the music, preaching, and expressions of Hispanic/Latino cultures. To those celebrations we must add the many expressions of popular Catholicism that also give joy to our communities and are an explicit way for Hispanics/Latinos to bear witness of their faith in Jesus Christ.

A fast-growing number of lay ecclesial movements, which are true fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit, sustain the spiritual lives of countless Hispanics/Latinos.

JUDGE

To participate in a *fiesta* is to celebrate what is important to us as individuals and as a community. It is a profoundly human expression that demands that we be present to one another. It is interesting that the first miraculous sign in Jesus' public ministry took place at a wedding, an event that normally involves music, food and drink, dancing, and much joy. Pope Francis affirms that "an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

- Do you know a Hispanic person in your family or in another context who has done something extraordinary that deserves to be celebrated? Was that accomplishment inspired by his or her Christian faith?
- What is the biggest celebration in your faith community? Describe it. What makes that celebration so special?
- What can your parish or community do to more fully incorporate the ways in which Hispanic Catholics celebrate?
- How does your community incorporate the expressions of popular religiosity and the cultural traditions of Hispanics/Latinos as well as those of other groups? What would you recommend to the new generations of Catholics to help them better appreciate these religious and cultural expressions?

beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 24).

Our liturgy, as well as the rituals of popular Catholic devotion, recognize the Risen Christ. They also affirm the new life we have received through his death and resurrection. Along with the celebration of the Eucharist, Baptism, Matrimony, and the rest of the sacraments, there are many other religious expressions that help us celebrate that God walks with us and has done great things in our lives. These include religious images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints, special celebrations within the liturgical year, such as Advent, Christmas, All Saints, All Souls Day, Epiphany (and the Spanish tradition of *la Rosca de Reyes*, a special bread that resembles a crown), Our Lady of Guadalupe, Lent, Easter, etc.

A Christian disciple is grateful for all the good that comes from God, and he or she celebrates. Today we are invited in a special way to be grateful for creation. To celebrate is to recognize that we need God and that we need to give thanks through our encounter with others in a festive way, in our achievements as well as in our failures. God walks with us. A Church that goes forth is a Church that celebrates that the



EL CATÓLICO DE RHODE ISLAND



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

Lord accompanies it, and, because of that presence, it yields many fruits.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus received grace and strength from the mysterious gift of the Risen Christ among them, and he manifested himself fully at the breaking of the bread. The parish Sunday Eucharist is exactly where we as disciples from many cultures and backgrounds receive the grace and strength to go forth to be missionary disciples. In the Sunday Eucharist Jesus the Lord himself teaches us the Scriptures, enlightens us to recognize his presence, nourishes us by his sacrifice, and sends us forth. It is at the Eucharist that we are formed into the gift we receive, the Body of Christ. The mission he gives us depends at every turn on his grace accompanying us as we move forward.

In what way can my celebration and respect for my neighbor help me to be a Christian witness and bear fruit in our society? Do I recognize that Jesus is the reason for which I celebrate? Do I remember the poor and those most in need when I celebrate? Did I seek reconciliation with someone with whom I had a difficulty before I celebrate?

ACT

In this last session of the V Encuentro process we reflect on our experience as missionary disciples reaching out to our brothers and sisters. We ask the Holy Spirit to inscribe the Word of God in our minds, our hearts, and our whole being. We also ask to be deeply rooted in the Church, walking in faith, love, and hope with our Holy Father, our bishops, our pastors, and all the saints as we take to heart the great command: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:18-20).

We are never alone as we go forth into the mission as a community! Christ is always present in an evangelizing community. He does not say “Go” individually, but “Go as a community!” Go without fear and without doubts for Christ will be with us until the end of time!

Doubts may linger in the heart of some lay leaders: Do I have the talents and the capacity to carry out the mission? Should this not be something I need to leave in the hands of people better prepared than me? Should I just share my faith with people from my own parish or ethnic community? No! This is the vocation of everyone who is part of the Church of Christ! The V Encuentro is a New Pentecost experience in the life of the Church of the United States, a Pentecost from which no one is to be excluded.

The Spirit moves us to be protagonists in the work of the Church in the United States and beyond. All Catholics have a responsibility to know and sustain, to the best of our ability, the local faith community: parish, movement, etc. At the same time, we are all called to live in solidarity making a preferential option for the poor and most vulnerable in the world and to support the evangelizing mission of the Church in all nations.

One way to bring our lives into action is by celebrating in simple ways, in the rhythm of our daily routines, the fact that God calls us to be missionary disciples. This week...

- Plan a special celebration with your family by preparing a special dinner, going out together, toasting with your loved ones to acknowledge the blessings from God during the past year, etc.
- Invite your relatives, particularly the young person with whom you shared this V Encuentro experience, to go to Mass together.
- Invite the group of young people or the group of people in the periphery with whom you shared during the past few weeks out for coffee or tea or snacks, or to share a meal. Invite them to an activity or a celebration in the parish—it could be the Parish Encuentro. Perhaps they are willing to go to Mass.
- Offer to help in the preparation and celebration of the Parish Encuentro.
- Use some of the missionary actions proposed in Session 4 that you might not have taken yet.
- Discern, list, and prioritize the things that we can do as a parish to grow in being missionary disciples and identify areas of priority that need to be addressed at the diocesan level.

CELEBRATE

With this sign we will conquer!



Song: *Guíame, Señor* (Estela García-López) or *Porque Me Ha Ungido* (Jaime Cortez)

[Place a large cross in a central place visible to all. On a side table, place a wreath with flowers or a similar flower arrangement along with a white cloth. Each participant receives a white paper cross.]

LEADER 1

Sisters and brothers: As we conclude our fifth session in this process of the V Encuentro, we are called to contemplate the cross. The Church invites us to venerate the cross not as an object or as a decoration, but as a symbol of life. The cross is the greatest proof of Jesus's love, his ultimate "yes" to the Father, his seal of love for his people. The crucified Jesus is a bridge between God and humanity that invites us to follow the true way. The Cross leads to life.

LEADER 2

We all participate in the mystery of Jesus Christ's Death and Resurrection. Saint Paul repeatedly taught that the Cross sums up the saving work of Christ. The Cross is the Tree of Life that bears fruit of new life through the Resurrection.

Let us write some of the signs of life and resurrection we have discovered as part of our journey together during the past five weeks.

[Brief silence to write on the paper crosses.]

Let us now place our crosses on the Cross of Jesus to share in its mystery.

[Pieces of tape will be provided. While singing, participants paste their paper crosses on the large cross.]

LEADER 1

The first Christian communities reflected on the Cross as the Tree of Life. Adam had lost God's friendship because of the fruit of a tree, but Jesus restores that friendship, bringing us salvation by the forgiveness of our sins through the tree of the Cross. One of the most ancient Christian hymns invites us to contemplate the tree of the cross as the best tree, a tree for which the nails and blood of our Savior

were its leaves, flowers, and fruits: "Sweet tree where life begins!"

I invite you to turn your eyes toward this tree in awe. The Cross must fill us with awe. The tenderness and love of God for us was so great. Let us contemplate also the fruits of the efforts of Hispanics and many other Catholics who have dedicated their lives to proclaiming the Good News in the United States. Their prophetic voices and commitments are a true sign that the Cross of Christ continues to give life.

[One or two participants place the flowers and the white cloth on the cross.]

LEADER

"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. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity" (Evangelii Gaudium, n. 268).

VOICES FROM AMONG THE ASSEMBLY

- Lord, we bring to you the life of our families, communities, and friends; let us share with them the fruits of your Cross.
- Lord, we have shared along the way the fire in our hearts with those we have met. May we continue to be witnesses of the mystery of your Cross.
- Lord, you saved us by giving your life for us; by uniting our lives to your Cross, may we be instruments of your salvation in the world.
- Lord, you broke open the Scriptures for the disciples on the road to Emmaus to explain the mystery of your Passion; may your Word be our light on the journey.
- Lord, walking with you has filled our hearts with joy;

may your Cross give us the determination to share that joy with others.

- Lord, you turn death and suffering into victory and life; may we be filled with hope and strength as we go into the world to announce the Good News.
- Lord, on the Cross you embraced all humanity with infinite love; may we be inspired by your Cross to welcome all Hispanic Catholics into our communities and all other Catholics who are the Church in the United States.

ALL

Stay with us, Lord, and fill us with your light.
To walk with you is to rediscover Easter.

LEADER 2

Sisters and brothers, before we receive the Cross of the V Encuentro, let us make the Sign of the Cross on one another's foreheads, as many generations of Catholics have done, wishing for all the blessings of God.

[All participants make the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of another person next to them saying, "Sister/Brother, continue being a faithful missionary disciple of Jesus Christ."]

[Next, participants move forward and receive a V Encuentro Cross.]

LEADER 2

We ask you, God, to strengthen us as we continue onto the next stages of the V Encuentro. Grant that we may grow in your friendship to be true missionary disciples and thus proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ with the fire of the Spirit in our hearts. May our commitments reflect the fruits of the Cross and the Resurrection, and may each of our missionary actions glorify you. Listen to our prayer and the prayer of your Church in the United States, through Jesus Christ, your Son, through whom you sent the Holy Spirit to guide our way to you, and who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.



Song: *Nuestra Alegría* (Iván Díaz) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION



V ENCUESTRO

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



Members go out in pairs again to continue bringing the Good News of Christ to the people they met in the peripheries since the beginning of the process. They extend an invitation to them to participate in the Parish Encuentro. It is recommended that each parish develop a promotional flyer or electronic ad for the parish website to make sure the people invited have the date, time, and location of the Parish Encuentro.

Post Consultation Questions for Parish Team Members

INSTRUCTIONS

The following questions should be answered by the Parish Team Members and submitted through the V Encuentro website or the V Encuentro Mobile App. Questions should be answered after the Five Sessions of Mission and Consultation have taken place and prior to the Parish Encuentro. Parish Team members must first review the answers to questions answered and submitted by all participants. Submissions submitted via the Mobile App and website will be available via a link sent to dioceses. All answers submitted via hard copies must be entered by the parish via the V Encuentro Mobile App or website.

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE PERIPHERIES

1. What are the most significant hopes and dreams expressed by Hispanics/Latinos living on the periphery?
2. What are the obstacles that prevent Hispanics/Latinos living on the periphery from reaching their potential in U.S. society?
3. How can the Catholic Church be more present in their life?
4. What gifts and talents do Hispanics/Latinos bring to the Catholic Church and for the common good of society?

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

1. To what extent does our faith community offer a space that truly allows Hispanic/Latino Catholics to feel that they belong, can make decisions and can contribute?
2. What can we do to increase a sense of welcome, belonging, and stewardship among Hispanics/Latinos?
3. How does our faith community accompany young Hispanics/Latinos, both U.S.-born and immigrants, and affirm their experiences and gifts? How can we improve in this area?
4. How does our faith community accompany Hispanic/Latino families, especially those who suffer from poverty, those who are separated by immigration and imprisonment, and those who care for the elderly or the sick?
5. What should we do to foster family ministries that genuinely support Hispanic/Latino families?
6. What does our community of faith do to seek out and accompany Hispanic/Latino Catholics who have left the faith and those who live in at-risk situations? What do we need to change to make them a priority in our evangelizing efforts?
7. What do we currently do in our faith community to promote our Hispanic/Latino leaders and how do we accompany them in their leadership development? What kind of commitments and investments are needed for a greater number of Hispanic/Latino Catholics to discern the vocation to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life, and lay ecclesial ministry, at the service of the entire Church and the common good?
8. What do we currently do as a community of faith, to promote the values and gifts of all Hispanic/Latino Catholics, so that they use them to impact society? What can we do to have a greater impact?

Instructions to Plan the Parish Encuentro

The Parish Encuentro is an opportunity to:

- **Gather** members of the different parish groups who participated in the five sessions to share what they experienced in the five weeks of reflection, discernment, and evangelization.
- **Reflect** together on the Church, and the social and cultural realities that impact the Church.
- **Propose** practical responses to specific needs in a process of reflection and discernment.
- **Undertake** concrete commitments to advance the New Evangelization as a whole parish, small communities, and other groups.
- **Celebrate** through our sharing, prayer, and in the Eucharist.

All Parish Encuentros are to be planned as one-day events (about eight hours), ideally concluding with the Eucharistic celebration.

The following is a recommended structure for the Parish Encuentro:

- Registration (30 minutes)
- Introduction, Welcome, and Prayer (1 hour)
- **Presentation 1: “Taking the First Step and Getting Involved.”** A pastoral reflection by the pastoral minister that normally accompanies the Hispanic/Latino community. The presentation highlights the blessings of being missionary disciples and identifies some opportunities to evangelize. (30 minutes)
- Break (15 minutes)

• **Small group sharing** (45 minutes):

1. Share some of the blessings you have experienced during the five sessions as a missionary disciple in your personal journey and the life of the parish.
2. Identify what is needed to enable us to continue to live this calling?

• Plenary (30 minutes)

• Lunch (1 hour)

- **Presentation 2: “Being Fruitful.”** A motivational talk by a new leader giving a reflection on God’s call to evangelize, beginning with their personal encounter with God that leads them to share their personal gifts, talents, limitations, and personal journey as a gift to the Church. (30 minutes)

- **Small groups:** Based on the outcome of the consultation, discern, list, and prioritize the things that we can do as a parish to grow in being missionary disciples and identify areas of priority that need to be addressed beyond the parish. (1 hour)

• Break (15 minutes)

- **Plenary:** Based on the outcome of the post consultation questions for parish team members, what needs to move forward at the parish and at the diocesan level? Prioritize three to five areas that most need support beyond the parish. (45 minutes)

• Preparation for the Mass (30 minutes)

• “Rejoicing” (1 hour)

- Celebration of the Mass—presided by a Pastor
- Commission the participants as delegates to the Diocesan Encuentro

Each diocese will establish the best date and schedule to celebrate the Parish Encuentro. Please maintain the proposed structure so that all parishes and dioceses throughout the country share a similar experience.

Resources for the V Encuentro Process

1 METHODOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE V ENCUESTRO

The V Encuentro follows the evangelizing methodology that Jesus himself teaches us in the biblical passage of the disciples on their way to Emmaus. This methodology also reflects the five movements inspired by what Pope Francis presents to the Church in *The Joy of the Gospel*, a *ministry of encuentro*....: *Taking the first step, getting involved, accompanying, giving fruit of new life, celebrating.*

Taking the First Step

The first action Jesus carries out is to join his disciples on their walk. With this action, Jesus takes the first step (*primerea*), reaching out to the disciples. Jesus approaches them with deep respect knowing what it is his disciples think, feel, and do, and seeing it in their own words and gestures. In the process of the V Encuentro, this first step consists of going out, moving past our fear, to meet Hispanics/Latinos in their daily reality, to know their problems, challenges, joys, and dreams. This involves going into their environments, perceiving their reality, observing through the eyes of a disciple, and listening with attention and respect.

Getting Involved

Jesus' second action is surprising. Jesus knows full well what has happened in Jerusalem, and he is very much aware of the difficult situation afflicting his disciples. Why, then, does Jesus ask his disciples what they are talking about along the way, as if he himself did not know the answer? This surprising action by Jesus of asking first is a very important step in the methodology of the V Encuentro. The encounter with others, particularly with persons who are going through very difficult moments, must be initiated by asking them about their lives, their concerns, their hopes, their ideas, their needs, their dreams. It means listening deeply and creating a space of trust and safety that allows for people to unload their burden and offers the healing balm of felt from being heard.

Accompanying

The third action of Jesus seems quite natural for a teacher: to teach. The way Jesus chooses to teach, however, is surprising. Jesus chooses the most appropriate moment to share with the disciples a very different way to interpret what had happened in Jerusalem over the past few days. Jesus takes the time to explain patiently. In the methodology of the V Encuentro, accompanying consists above all of creating a relationship of trust inspired in the promises of the Gospel and a deep respect for the faith journey of others. This respect takes on a particular importance in the encounter with young people on their own faith journey. At this critical time in their lives they are actively seeking a personal encounter with Jesus that, if realized, will lead them to conversion and communion in their life as young people, thus giving the Church her young and irreplaceable face.

Giving Fruits of New Life

The Emmaus disciples also accomplish an extraordinary action: they invite a stranger whom they hardly know to stay with them. Another extraordinary aspect of this event is that the stranger accepts the invitation to stay with them, to continue the conversation in an environment of closeness and intimacy that inspires trust and tenderness and where the disciples feel safe in an environment of trust and friendship. The methodology of the V Encuentro recognizes the friendship, closeness, and hospitality in this biblical passage as fruits of missionary action. Just as Jesus did, we must gratefully accept the hospitality extended to us as people invite us into their homes to eat with them, to continue the conversation initiated at the catechesis, at the celebration of a sacrament, or on the path where we met them.

Celebrating

This is the moment Jesus anticipated since he sought out his disciples and joined them on the way to Emmaus. Finally, Jesus is with his disciples in an environment of safety and trust around a table, ready to share. The

disciples are overjoyed when they recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. The missionary action of the V Encuentro offers many opportunities to reach out to others and celebrate with them in a simple way. Each of these intimate encounters allows us to open our eyes, minds, and hearts to the presence of the Living Christ among us, in daily celebrations, and, above all, in the Eucharist. The return of the disciples to Jerusalem is cause of great joy and missionary inspiration for the V Encuentro.

2 HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE ENCUESTROS

The National Encuentros of Hispanic/Latino Ministry and Their Importance

The Process of Encuentro in the context of Hispanic/Latino ministry has been a deeply ecclesial experience. It is motivated by a reading of the signs of the times and convoked by the bishops, who have called the Hispanic/Latino people to raise their prophetic voice. In the context of this dialogue among bishops and the people emerges an experience of ministerial collaboration (*pastoral de conjunto*) guided by an ecclesiology of communion and a missionary vocation that seeks to reach out to those who are far from the life and vision of the Church. The main goal of the process of Encuentro is to discern the pastoral response of the Church to the Hispanic/Latino presence while empowering Hispanics'/Latinos' response as Church.

The **I Encuentro** (1972) drew many Hispanic Catholics from anonymity to express their needs, aspirations, and contributions as baptized Christians and members of the Church of the United States.

The **II Encuentro** (1977) affirmed the experience of Hispanics being a diverse Catholic people (*Pueblo Hispano Católico*), yet united by a common faith, history, and culture. The II Encuentro facilitated discernment of a style of being Church based on an ecclesiology of communion and a preferential option for those who are alienated and for all people living in poverty.

The **III Encuentro** (1985) inspired Hispanic Catholics to raise their prophetic voice in order to articulate a clear direction for the Church's pastoral response to the Hispanic presence and the response of Hispanics as Church. This vision was expressed in the *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry* while embracing a model of a Church that is evangelizing, communitarian, and missionary.

The **Encuentro 2000** provided a platform for Hispanic Catholics to host and share an experience of Encuentro with all the cultures and races that constitute the Church in the United States. The vision of a Church where all are welcome is rooted in the depths of the identity of a mestizo and mulatto people that understands itself as a pilgrim on this earth and is called to being in solidarity with the *Many Faces in God's House*.

The **First National Encuentro of Hispanic Youth Ministry** (2006) was an occasion to listen to the voices of Hispanic/Latino youths and to discern better ways to respond to their needs and aspirations, as well as to recognize their contributions as privileged protagonists of the present and the future of the Church in the United States.

The **V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry** invites all Catholics to continue our journey as People of God, to elevate our prophetic voice once again, and to discern the most appropriate pastoral priorities and strategies for our times, particularly at a time when the Hispanic population grows rapidly and the Church in the United States is ever more diverse.

3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR THE V ENCUESTRO GUIDE

When should groups form?

The V Encuentro process formally begins in January 2017. Faith communities, movements, and organizations throughout the country are invited to encourage their members to consider forming or joining small groups to be part of the five-session experience during the first half of 2017.

When should the five-session experience begin?

Faith communities should decide the best time for them to have the five-session experience. The season of Lent and the season of Easter are perfect moments to do it. Other alternatives are fine also, as long as participants have the opportunity to meet in person, reflect, and engage in the recommended missionary activity.

Does the group need to meet weekly?

Weekly meetings are proven to be effective for small-group interaction. There are five sessions, therefore the process involves at least five meetings. Because the V Encuentro process involves missionary activity and discussion about that activity, it is important to allow adequate time between meetings. A weekly meeting should be ideal. However, groups and communities can be creative and flexible. Perhaps a group of Catholics in

campus ministry or a group of Catholic schoolteachers may decide to meet every two weeks; groups formed in the context of prison ministry could meet once a month. Just make sure that you have five meetings and that these are not too distant from one another.

How large should the groups be?

The ideal size of the groups should be between seven to twelve people. This experience encourages participants to share and contribute as much as possible. Larger groups are possible, yet facilitators must find ways to ensure that all participants have a meaningful experience.

Where should the groups meet?

Wherever possible: parishes, schools, homes, prayer groups, prisons, hospitals, universities, seminaries, offices, fields, parks, etc. Just make sure that your group communicates with the Encuentro Parish Team to receive support and share the results of the group experience.

How long should each session last?

The length of the session can vary according to the availability of each small group. It is recommended that on average each group aim for meeting for a period of ninety minutes.

Where do I find the music recommended in the sessions?

Each session will start and end with a song. Some of these songs are part of the traditional repertoire with which Spanish-speaking Catholics are familiar. Others are part of the Encuentro songs produced and distributed by Oregon Catholic Press. All suggested songs for the sessions, including lyrics and music, are available on the V Encuentro website: <http://vencuentro.org/>

Can we change the songs?

It is recommended that the proposed songs be used as much as possible in order to build a sense of communion and shared identity as we journey through the V Encuentro process. However, it is fine for groups that do not speak Spanish or feel that other similar songs capture the spirit of the sessions to use those songs.

Should children and youth be invited to participate in the five-session experience?

Yes, as long as they can follow the conversation and, ideally, participate in it. Some leaders working with groups of young people and children may decide to adapt the sessions of the guide to better engage these populations. If that is done in your faith community or group, please send those adaptations to the National Encuentro Team (contact@vencuentro.org) in order to make them

available to other Catholics in the country working with this population. The participation of underage persons should follow all child protection guidelines stipulated by the USCCB.

Who coordinates the groups?

Every parish, movement, institution, or organization participating in the Encuentro process should have an Encuentro team. Parish Encuentro Teams will be the most visible leadership group at the parish level. Ask your pastor or the person in charge of this process who is on that team. Procure the leader's contact information (e.g., email address or phone).

Does each small group need a facilitator?

Every small group should have a facilitator. Facilitators have five simple responsibilities:

1. Prepare the space for the group to meet.
2. Guide the conversation, ensuring that everyone is welcomed and has a chance to participate.
3. Procure and distribute the symbols and any other materials to be used for each of the sessions.
4. Keep records of who participated in the sessions, respecting privacy and confidentiality.
5. Submit a report to the Parish Encuentro Team (or coordinating team) at the end of the five-session experience (see *Small Group Facilitator Final Report* resource in the appendix).

Who will train the facilitators and be in communication with them?

The Parish Encuentro Team is the most immediate resource for small group facilitators. See also the page for small group facilitators on the V Encuentro website where there are helpful videos, resources and tips: <http://vencuentro.org/>

What does preparing the meeting space imply?

Facilitators will make sure that there are enough chairs for all participants. All groups should ideally have a small altar or table with a Bible and a crucifix and, ideally, one or two other religious symbols that are meaningful to the members of the group.

Are these meetings only for Hispanic Catholics?

No. All Catholics of all backgrounds are encouraged and welcomed to be part of the V Encuentro process while being mindful of the general objectives of this important experience of evangelization.

In what language should the sessions be conducted?

Groups should choose the language in which participants feel most comfortable. The guide has been written in English and Spanish, which are the most common languages among Catholics in the United States. Small groups advancing their conversations in English are strongly encouraged to invite and engage U.S.-born Hispanic Catholics, unless they prefer to participate in Spanish.

How do Catholics who do not speak English or Spanish participate in the V Encuentro process?

This is a bilingual guide, English and Spanish. If there are Catholics who do not speak either of these languages and desire to be part of the five-session experience, members of the small groups should try to identify someone in the community who speaks this person's language and one of the languages in which the guide was written to offer simultaneous translation. If small groups of Catholics who speak a language other than English or Spanish want to engage in the process, we encourage local communities to develop translations of relevant sections of the guide (particularly the five sessions). In that case, please send those translations to the National Encuentro Team (contact@vencuentro.org) in order to make them available to other Catholics in the country who speak that language.

Why the special focus on U.S.-born Hispanics?

Every group of Catholics has the obligation to pass on and nurture the faith of the next generation. In the United States, about 60 percent of all Catholics under eighteen years old are Hispanic. About two-thirds of Hispanic Catholics are U.S. born, yet most are not actively involved in the life of the Church. The V Encuentro process intentionally aims toward reaching out to this particular group, without dismissing other important groups, mindful of the impact that they will have in shaping the U.S. Catholic experience for the rest of this century.

What is the Mission and Consultation Journal?

During the first session all participants in the five-session experience will receive a notebook called *The V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*. This book will have a number of questions and instructions for participants to record basic details about their own reflections and the missionary activities they will be taking part in during the process.

What does it mean that everyone will take part in some missionary activity?

The V Encuentro embraces a spirit of the New

Evangelization and the vision of a Church that goes forth and reaches out. At the end of each session, all participants are invited to take part in a simple missionary action. This action is an opportunity to witness one's identity as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ. Also, it is an invitation to go into the peripheries of our Church and our society.

What are the peripheries where those who participate in the V Encuentro process are being sent?

Pope Francis reminds us that as baptized Christians, Catholics must embrace the call from Jesus Christ to "to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel." The "peripheries" are all those circumstances in which many sisters and brothers are experiencing some form of hardship—material, social, cultural, or spiritual. Not all peripheries are the same. Each community, each family, each person must identify the immediate peripheries and then go and meet people there with a message of love and hope in a spirit of accompaniment. Many Hispanic Catholics—as well as other Catholics—live in the peripheries of our Church and society: the young people who do not see the Church as their home anymore, the disaffected, the undocumented, the poor, the victims of abuse and prejudice, the farmworker and the factory worker who cannot make ends meet, the elderly, the broken family, the lonely, the addict, the imprisoned, the sick, etc. To all these groups we are called to bring the light of the Gospel.

Where can we get more information on the V Encuentro Process?

Visit: <http://vencuentro.org/>

There is an incredible wealth of resources related to the V Encuentro process and evangelization within Hispanic ministry that will likely expand the pastoral imagination of our communities. These resources include: studies, videos, manuals, support materials, documents, newsletters, etc. All materials are accessible to everyone at no cost. If you have a recommendation about materials that could go on this website to support this important process, please write an email message to the following address: contact@vencuentro.org

If our group has any questions about the five-session experience or the Guide, who should we contact?

Your most immediate resource at the parish level is the Parish Encuentro Team. Also, participants in small groups and facilitators are strongly encouraged to regularly visit the V Encuentro website (<http://vencuentro.org/>).

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The *V Encuentro Guide Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love* was developed by the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was reviewed and approved by the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church chairman, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller and authorized for publication by the Administrative Committee. It has been directed for publication by the undersigned.

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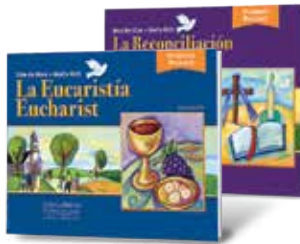
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