



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

POPE FRANCIS: TEN YEARS OF GRACE, GOD'S MERCY, RENEWAL, AND CALL TO MISSION

Maria del Mar Muñoz-Visoso, M.T.S. | Executive Director, Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church, USCCB

I had the tremendous grace of being at St. Peter's Square on the evening of March 13, 2013, when the *fumata bianca* started to come out of the Sistine Chapel and the bells of St. Peter's Basilica ringed in the election of a new successor of Peter. From the minute he came out to the balcony and asked for the prayers of the faithful so that he could receive God's blessing on his Petrine ministry, even before he imparted his apostolic blessing upon us, we realized he was a humble shepherd that is always close to the grey that the Good Lord has entrusted to him.



It is difficult to overstate the impact that Francis' pontificate has had in the universal Church. In ten years, he has not ceased to remind us, both by teaching and example, of the merciful face of God the Father and that the call to abide in His love is for all of us. More so, it is that love, the awareness of it, that compels us to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to all who are willing to listen and accept it as theirs; and to anyone that is looking for answers to life's big questions, for human fraternity and for a community of missionary disciples to call home.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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He knows that, while holding fast to the deposit of faith and with Christ always at the center, the Church's must adapt its ways, methods, and structures to fulfill its mission in the world (*aggiornamento*), always animated by the Holy Spirit of the Lord, who blows where it wills. The "Holy and Faithful People of God" (he loves using this expression of the Second Vatican Council), that is, everyone from the Pope himself and the bishops to every baptized member, also need to be constantly reminded that the call to go and make disciples of all nations is for all of us, lay and ordained alike. That makes us co-responsible for the Church, both its upkeep and its mission, each according to the gifts, charisms and responsibilities the Spirit has entrusted to us.

For this reason, the Synod on Synodality called forth by Pope Francis is such a gift to the Church in this day and age. As Vatican II proposed, the Church needs to return to its sources, to its roots (*ressourcement*), which are not only Scripture and the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, but also synodality as a *modus vivendi et operandi* (the way of being and operating in the world) of the Church, as these sources reveal to us, particularly in the first millennium of its existence. In many respects we are facing similar challenges today.

Synodality is the path to communion, participation, and mission. A prayerful listening of one another and a common process of discernment of the will of God will necessarily lead to an enhanced sense of co-responsibility for the action to be taken, as determined by the authority of the Church. There is no possible confusion of roles and responsibilities here or a challenge to the legitimate authority of the Church. It is just an invitation to all the baptized to take their place in the circle of communion, and to keep ever present our responsibility for building up the Church. It is a reminder to church authority that God often speaks through His people, especially the meek and humble, the little ones, the poor, the outcast and marginalized, and to turn a listening heart to them

and what they have to say to the Church. It is also an invitation to pastors everywhere to love their flocks with Christ's heart and to remember that the Good Lord has not given them a bunch of "mindless sheep" to shepherd, but an extended family of companions on the journey. And so, it is their duty as priests and pastors not only to guide and teach the flock and to provide the sacraments, but also to discern the gifts that the Holy Spirit has blessed that community with and invite them in (both the people and the gifts!)

Like the popes before him, Francis has brought with him his own ecclesiological experiences, and cultural traditions and influences, offering the rich tradition of collegiality and common discernment process of the Latin American episcopate and church as a contribution to the Universal Church.

As a pope that emerged from the global south, he also cannot ignore the common problems that affect the entire planet, and the lived experience of the churches outside of Europe. He purposefully keeps bringing those realities and experiences, hopes, needs and contributions to the consciousness of the universal Church. And we should thank the Holy Spirit and the cardinal electors for it, so that we may never forget we are members of the "Catholic Church."

I admire how at peace Pope Francis seems with this call and the purpose of his pontificate. I also respect his determination and steadfastness despite much criticism. Pastoral conversion is not easy. And many will resist change, for their own reasons. But judging by the response to the synodal process around the world, the People of God is with Pope Francis and appreciate the opportunity and the call to fully take responsibility for their baptismal call.

I join the vast majority of the faithful in praying for him and his Petrine ministry constantly, and otherwise thank God that he is the man to guide the boat of Peter in this time and age.

Congratulations on the tenth anniversary of your election, Holy Father Pope Francis! *Ad multos annos.*
¡Viva el Papa Francisco!



CHAIRMAN'S REFLECTION

ENLARGE THE SPACE OF YOUR TENT!

Most Revered Arturo Cepeda | Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit | Chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity

My Brothers and Sisters, as we continue to journey the Continental Stage of our worldwide “Synod on Synodality” (2021-2024) I find it appropriate to refresh our minds and hearts to the biblical icon and image, proposed to us, becoming the vocation for God’s people as proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah, “Enlarge the space of your tent.” (Is 54:2)

At the very heart of this journey, through the Synod, we can see this tent as a sacred space of communion, of active participation and as our foundation for mission.

As sacred space, our tent begins to grow to “enlarge” by a personal and communal listening to one another. Where no one is excluded. It begins with a deep understanding of our communion with God and with our sisters and brothers around the world. It is an invitation to follow the example and attitude of our God who constantly listens to his people.

This active listening has the potential to bring us towards

an all-inclusive participation as people of God in our communities and in the world. Perhaps, asking ourselves the question: “what can we do?” First, we can intentionally take the step towards an open, non-judgemental listening of their stories, their experiences, their fears and doubts, their struggles and hopes, as well as their dreams and aspirations.

By acknowledging their presence in our communities and with an open listening heart we can undoubtedly “enlarge our tent” with a firm foundation for mission. A mission to transform our communities into care and proclamation of our Lord who gave his own life so that we can have it in abundance. A mission so much needed in our times. A mission that can be carried by us!

“Enlarging our tent” requires, therefore, constructing concrete possibilities of communion, participation, and mission. This is the invitation of the Synod of Synodality. May we be wide open today to such a wonderful opportunity.



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ALIVE IN CHRIST

Patrick Tam | Director Adult Faith Formation | Diocese of Fairbanks

In 2016 Pope Francis asked the church to start a process of reflection and discussion to listen to the concerns, hopes, and desires of young people. In 2018 bishops around the world invited young people to listening sessions. And in 2019 Pope Francis wrote a letter called *Christus Vivit* (Christ Is Alive!) calling the church to become “more welcoming to young people. Pope Francis reminded young people that God loves them, that Jesus saves and suffers with them, and that Christ is alive and present in their lives.

Inspired by Pope Francis’ letter, the bishops of the United States started a process of listening to young people in our country. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these listening sessions were originally limited to Zoom meetings of young adults from many different cultural groups. But as the pandemic subsided, an in-person gathering in Chicago in 2022 was planned as the culminating step of this long process of listening to young people in the church.

Having participated in several of the Zoom meetings, I was asked to gather Alaskan Native young adults to participate in the national multicultural gathering. The “Alive in Christ: Young, Diverse, Prophetic Voices Journeying Together” gathering convened about 300 Catholic ministry leaders, young adults and bishops from dioceses and parishes around the country in Chicago on June 23-26. The event was hosted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and led by several USCCB secretariats.

The USCCB made an extra effort to invite the participation of Alaskan Native young adult Catholics. Our group of 10 Yup’ik participants came from several villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region, including Emmonak, Hooper Bay, Cheforanak, and Kotlik. The event organizers awarded generous scholarships to the group to cover the cost of conference fees and room and board. Our Fairbanks Diocese covered the cost of airfares. Two women in the group currently live and work in Anchorage. After some discussion with

Daughter of Charity Sister Frances Vista, the director of Native Ministry for the Anchorage-Juneau Archdiocese, she agreed that her office could cover the cost of travel for the two Yup’ik women.

Sr. Frances and I also attended the conference and served as unofficial chaperones. For most of the young people in the group, this was their first trip outside of Alaska. Bishop Chad Zielinski, chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on Native American Affairs, had an active part in the gathering and encouraged us at every opportunity. We also had the wisdom and guidance of Yup’ik elder Nita Rearden, originally from Kotlik. She has been a consultant for the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs.



The conference consisted of three and a half days filled with plenary sessions, keynote speakers, small breakout groups, and daily Eucharistic liturgies lead by various cultural groups. Our group was a bit surprised when we were asked take an active role in the opening Mass. Although we were not given much

time for preparation, every one of our Yup’k participants took roles in the Mass as lectors, singers, servers, and bringers of the offertory gifts. Elder Nita Rearden and young adult Stephen Kelly used the tundra ayuk (Labrador tea) as a prayerful blessing like smudging ahead of the opening procession. Waylon Buckles from Cheforanak brought beautiful hand-woven baskets from his home to be displayed near the altar while Nita added pictures of elders and ancestors. It was a moment of pride to see our Yup’ik young adult Catholics in the spotlight.

We had arrived in Chicago a day early to give ourselves a chance to rest after the long flights from “the bush.” The heat, 3-hour time difference, urban noise, crowds, and change of food were challenging to our group. Another challenge for the young adults was participating in discussions where people spoke quickly and used a lot of “churchy” language. Both the gifts and the difficulties of cross-cultural communication were obvious. Still,

it was the small informal one-on-one interactions at meals or breaks where our young people were able to open up windows to their Yup'ik world—the realities of rural village life, the spiritual depths of Yup'ik culture, the daily struggles of young adults, and the wonders of subsistence activities. At many meals, people from large cities were amazed listening to a Yup'ik young man or woman talking about hunting moose or gathering berries or dancing in Curukaq (Potlatch).

The topics discussed in breakout groups included: Accompanying Young Disciples, Communicating the Gospel, Fostering Healing and Peace, Journeying Through Identity and Morality, Nurturing Diverse Families, Pathways for Young Protagonists, Developing

Vibrant Ministries, Diversity and Sacred Spaces, Encouraging God's Call, Fostering Important Conversations, and Overcoming Division with Diversity, Marriage and Parenting. There were also sessions with Action Planning Groups on Active Inclusion, Embracing Historical Memory, Formation Possibilities, Practicing Accompaniment, and Diversity and Giftedness. The intention is to continue the process with reflection on how to move from discussion to action, from a national gathering to dioceses and parishes.

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their voices were heard. At the same time, their own imaginations were stretched by the encounter with other cultures, other forms of prayer, and other ways of living out the Gospel. On our last evening together, Bishop Chad invited our group out to dinner.

At table we had a chance to share our experiences and debrief. Jessica Hunt took notes on the sharing, and she says, “Most of the Alaskan members expressed their appreciation for connectedness with people of other cultures as well as people within our group.” About a week after our return, I emailed our group to see if

people had any more reflections on their experience. Jessica shared this insight, “Attending the conference brought to light the dire need we, as young Catholic Christians, have to step up, see the concerns of our people and take action in recognizing Jesus within us. If our people don't claim Jesus within our hearts, then devastation, hurt, and pain will continue to guide our culture and continue to lead our people through more hard times. Hardship will never be avoided but with Jesus it can be managed in a way that brings glory to God.”

JOURNEYING TOGETHER: A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE FOR GREATER DIVERSITY AMONG YOUNG ADULT CATHOLICS

Michael Gourdin | Assistant Director of Black Catholic Evangelization | Diocese of Charleston

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church sponsored a national gathering in Chicago from June 23-26. This national gathering brought over 300 registered participants together in a diverse group of young Catholic adults representing dioceses across the nation to continue dialoguing on the experiences of young adults in today's world.

I represented the Diocese of Charleston, with a generous grant from the USCCB, and it was an enlightening experience to engage in discussions, questions and celebrations with other young Catholics. Some of the topics included *Alive in Christ: Young, Diverse, Prophetic Voices*; *Journeying Together*; *Rooted in Jesus Christ*, to develop action plans; *Accompanied by Mary*, to explore engaging in active inclusion by her example of saying yes to the Lord's call; and on the final day, *Going Forth in the Spirit*, where we committed to the action plans.

Journeying Together began under the direction of the USCCB office of Cultural Diversity in the Church. It was based on the 2016 invitation from Pope Francis to Church leaders to hear the voices of young people. He said the pastoral priority of the Church is to take care of its young people (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 2018). After an initial synodal process, the pope developed *Christus Vivit* (*Christ is Alive*), which addressed young adults' experiences, and he stressed the importance of making the Church a more welcoming place for them.

The first series of dialogues were intracultural conversations where bishops listened to families discussing and reflecting on the unique experiences of being Catholic within their own cultural groups. The families included Asian and Pacific Islanders, Black and African Americans, Whites, Hispanics and Latinos,

Native Americans and young adults who work with the pastoral care of migrants, refugees and travelers. Leaders of each family presented what was discussed in the intracultural dialogue, then returned to reflect and plan for the national gathering in Chicago. Kathleen Merritt, director of the diocesan Office of Black Catholic and Native American Ministry, and Deacon Larry Deschaine, also of Native American Ministry, were among the leaders who participated in the endeavor that created *Journeying Together*.

We were joined by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., who delivered words of inspiration directly from Pope Francis. It was also an honor meeting

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He is the diocesan postulator for the cause of canonization of Ven. Augustus Tolton, one of six Black Catholics on the road to sainthood.

On June 24, I had the pleasure of serving on the altar at Mass for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was led by my Black and African American cultural family. Callout: The choir sang from the traditional "Lead Me, Guide Me" hymnal, beautifully expressing Black spirituality through song. Although



racism in the world was acknowledged during the conference, the issue was not included in the homily during this Mass. The omission was brought up and discussed in an impromptu intracultural meeting before the end of Journeying Together to make sure our voices were heard on this important issue affecting us as Black Catholics.

The final parts of Journeying Together were the proceedings and implementation. The implementation about what was learned and disused is to be utilized by local parishes and dioceses.

The presence and participation of our U.S. bishops sends the message that we young adult Catholics are significant to the Church. We are her future.

Donna Grimes, assistant director of African American Catholics for the USCCB, spoke about

the conference. "I was very pleased with Journeying Together: an Intercultural Encounter for Youth & Young Adult Ministries," she said. "In retrospect, we were somewhat successful in facilitating an encounter, not a typical conference. Participants and staff learned a lot on ministry and interpersonal levels. I expect to build on our accomplishments which I am sure will require rethreading a few needles going forward as well."

I see Journeying Together as the next steps for dioceses in our country. It is my hope to collaborate with other young diocesan leaders, and to schedule dialogue and listening sessions with our cultural family groups using this model. This is a tool for greater evangelization and unity in the Church. So much was learned, and I am eager to pass it on!



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BEING CHURCH

Matt Kresich | Director of Young Catholics, Holy Name | Diocese of Gary, Indiana



are doubts St. Nicholas went to blows with Arius, but it makes for a compelling story of how messy being Church really is.

Last summer, young adults from across the country gathered in Chicago for *Alive in Christ*. The weekend was the culmination of the multi-year process called Journeying Together. Its aim was to provide opportunities of encounter and story sharing. A plethora of Zoom meetings and virtual preparation sessions set the stage for what was hoped to be a beautiful weekend of community and action. But even in a diverse gathering, mistakes were made, hurtful mistakes. A palpable feeling of the event coming to an early end was present to all. Old scars were shown, and we were reminded how even non-malicious actions can cause the same pain as those done on purpose.

And here was a great mystery of the Faith

We take the basics for granted. Our belief in Jesus as fully God and fully man, the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity, and Mary as Mother of God were not always *de facto* dogma. Each took much discussion, debate, and in some cases, punches. Yes, there

present to us all. We belong to a Church which is divinely instituted but made up of us, feeble and fallible. It is in this mess, the Holy Spirit works, and I believe is at work even harder when the pain and hurt are greatest. The event did not end. Instead, we continued to move. Not move on but move as one. We addressed the hurt. We called out the hurt. And we tried to reconcile the hurt. We were not perfect. We did not solve world peace over the weekend. We did not bring healing to the racial hurt so prevalent in society. Instead, we provided hope of what the Church can be.

It is this hope which was brought to the USCCB's Plenary Assembly Meeting in November. "We spent time in Chicago to talk about these dreams and how we can make it happen together, to be Catholic in the truest sense of the word," shared Rudy Dehaney with the bishops of the United States. Fellow *Alive in Christ* organizer, Cecilia Marie Flores, echoed this hope, "we are committed to model and embody the community that we wish to build in the church." Here is the real Church. It is

us, broken and messy, but only here that God can transform.

At a time when our Church and country need unity more than ever, *Alive in Christ* offers a valuable lesson. Being Church might be messy and our path might not be perfect but that's why we go on the journey. By allowing God to work through our brokenness only then can the dream of Journeying Together be realized. It is an invitation not just for those at *Alive in Christ* but for the whole Church. Let us keep working through the mess, trusting that God is right there with us.

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UNITED BY FAITH, TESTED BY THE ABILITY TO UPHOLD SUCH FAITH IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY. HOLY SPIRIT ACTIVATE!

Woodlyn Sance, LMSW | Diocese of Brooklyn



As a testament to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, let us go down memory lane to a specific date and time in history, June 23 - June 26, 2022. Chicago, IL was the location and Alive in Christ was the topic of discussion. These four dates marked a key moment in a beautiful journey

of a group of God fearing, truth-seekers, known as the young adults of the Journeying Together team, who took an Alive in Christ gathering by storm. Indeed, they came alive, along with the Holy Spirit. Right by their side, were strong supporters and members of the USCCB who could not have foreseen the turn of events, but rose to the challenge, allowing themselves to get comfortable being uncomfortable. The true mission of all those involved began!

We often say, “be careful what you ask for, you just might get it”, and fail to realize the power in that statement. Until of course, we are faced with the reality of receiving exactly what we asked for, in all of its glory. God has a way of subtly or overtly testing his children. The bad news is that when tested, we quickly

grow fearful and start to doubt our connection with God. The good news, however, is that God has vowed to us, that he will always remain at our side through all obstacles, trials and tribulations. We only need to trust in him and keep the faith. So, we did just that!

You might wonder what could have possibly gone wrong at a religious gathering, with bishops, priests, laymen, and sisters in attendance. Well, let us not forget that even the disciples had their mishaps in the presence of the son of the Almighty God. We are no different. The bible teaches us lessons and gives clarity through adversity, the same remains true today. The beauty and the lessons in the events that took place in Chicago, one being the public display of the lack of representation of a cultural group in a staple prayer, is that unity and accountability was pushed to the forefront. Many prior events, gatherings and sessions were met with outcries of the lack of unity and accountability in the church. Thus, further gatherings were put in place to address the outcries. Yet, just when we thought we had reached a significant milestone in addressing the outcries, we

were met with what appeared as a setback. In hindsight, it was only a blessing in disguise.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, to be Alive in Christ, you must ask yourself what would God do? When in the presence of injustices and divisiveness ask yourself, what would God do and let his words and actions be your guide.

“I alone cannot change the world,” Mother Teresa once said, “but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

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JOURNEY TOGETHER TO CAPITOL HILL

Lisbeth Guadalupe Valladares Hernandez | Member of the Advisory Council on Racism |
Diocese of Arlington, Virginia



Journey Together has been a breath of fresh air, through the turmoil that society faced through a life changing with a worldwide pandemic. I am thankful to my friend Niru, who was the first to invite me to attend a Journeying Together listening session, who was also the director of Young Adults back in 2019 in the Diocese of

Arlington.

He knew I was in a place where I was seeking a rich young adult community and He was willing to accompany me through my search. While being an active participant of the Hispanic/Latino cultural family, spaces for dialogues were created in which many of the aches and pains I had were shared with many, and from there friendship ties were created.

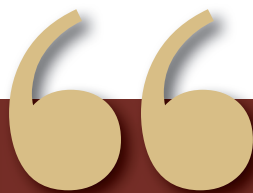
It was via Zoom that I felt empowered and fully trusting in the Spirit of God that He led me to meet the people I was destined to meet. He guides our path of life based on our own decisions from our free will. I have traveled from El Salvador to the United States, and to the many states within this nation. But one of those cities was Chicago, where long

awaited hugs and encounters took place. Investing time together was life-giving, but our Journey did not end there, we continued our own works in ministry all throughout the many states we live in and the many dioceses we all represent.

It was towards the end of January 2023 that members of Journey Together took to Capitol Hill. Through USCCB, the Justice, Peace, and Human Development department hosted a Journey Together group to present a workshop at the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. In this workshop I facilitated a thought provoking small group discussion on how to best diversify our church and properly create a safe place for all.

During my time at CSMG, the Journeying Together family, which is made of many cultures, languages, and traditions had the great opportunity to go and advocate for peoples whose voices aren't heard. As a DACA (Deferred Action Childhood Arrival) recipient and daughter of a TPS (temporary protection status) I had the great opportunity to meet with members of Congress and speak on the issues of migration in our nation and how to best provide peace and safety to the vulnerable who, like me, feel they often do not have a voice. Along with my brothers and sisters, I continue my walk and we continue to Journey Together as One Church with Many Cultures.

We know that every effort to improve society, above all when society is so full of injustice and sin, is an effort that God blesses; that God wants; that God demands of us.



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JOURNEYING TOGETHER: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Young Hoang, Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement

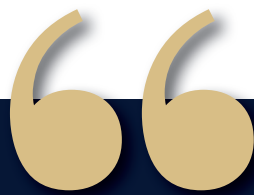
The Journeying Together experience cannot be overstated as it allows opportunities for the faithful in a concrete way, to recognize and encounter the presence of God in all people. This recognition is a vital tenet of our faith as it acknowledges the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings. It further reaffirms the Church's mission to spread the Gospel of Christ, a message of love and compassion to all people, regardless of one's race, ethnicity, or cultural background.

In Genesis 1:27, we are reminded that we are created in God's likeness, which makes us one. Though we are one body in Christ, we are uniquely created and genuinely loved. We are called to embrace God's love and personalized design for each of us. In doing so, we worship and give glory to God as we see and understand the beauty that God saw in His creation. Throughout the Journeying Together process and at each gathering, the richness and unique splendor of different cultures were highlighted and in a concrete way, moved us to honor the image that God chose to create us in through the various programming and liturgical celebrations.



Journeying Together further emphasizes Christ's love for us through His mother. Our Lady's countless appearances across the world, while many, all centralize on a single message of love and compassion. Her universal appeal transcends boundaries of cultures, and it propels us for greater motivation towards unity. She is our one and only Mother. At the Alive in Christ event in Chicago, the parade of Mary's appearance in different cultures is a testament to this. Her image and story have been reinterpreted and reimagined in various unique ways to accompany the beliefs and practices of different cultures, while still maintaining her central role as Our Mother, a holy figure of faith and devotion.

While much work remains ahead of us, we are most blessed and we give thanks to God for the Journeying Together initiative as it is a step in the right direction to enrich the spiritual experience of the faithful and fosters a deeper appreciation and acceptance of different cultural practices and values. The Church must continue to embrace diversity and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society that reflects the richness and diversity of God's creation.



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HONORING REVEREND FATHER JERRY HOGAN

Circus Ring of Fame 2023 Induction Awards Show

The Reverend Father George G. Hogan, known affectionately as “Father Jerry”, was ordained in 1974 and served in the Archdiocese of Boston. He was assigned to the Circus Ministry by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1990. For nearly 30 years he served as National Circus Priest, celebrating life’s most cherished moments – births, baptisms, first communions, confirmations,

weddings, and memorial services with the greater circus community, being a friend to all and stranger to none, regardless, of religious affiliations. His favorite project and lasting legacy is the Showfolk’s Winter Quarters in Seffner, FL, a site he founded, offering affordable housing to retired show people. Father Jerry is the first Minister of Faith inducted into the Circus Ring of Fame.



Father Jerry

Internship Possibility



Interested in breaking the cycles of poverty in the US? Come support the work of the Church to empower people to help themselves. The [Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development](#) at the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has two paid internships available for the 2023 Summer and two for the 2023-24 academic year. All of these positions support domestic, anti-poverty, justice programs of the U.S. Catholic bishops, and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development to address the root causes of poverty in America. Undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduates are all encouraged to apply! [Apply here](#). Or contact [Emily Schumacher Novak](#) for more information.



Journeying Together

2022

November USCCB General Assembly

On November 16, 2022, Most Rev. Arturo Cepeda, auxiliary bishop of Detroit and chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, and young adult ministry leaders, Rudy Dehaney of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and Cecilia Marie Flores of the Diocese of Orange, California, together addressed the Fall General Assembly of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to present the lessons learned through the Journeying Together process, its national gathering “Alive in Christ” in Chicago earlier in the summer, and their hopes for the outcomes moving forward. What follows is the transcript of their historical address.



**Most Reverend Arturo Cepeda | Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit
Chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity**

“If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future... Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.” (CV 199)

Such are the words of Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*, which inspired the participants in the “Alive in Christ: Young, Diverse, Prophetic Voices, Journeying Together” earlier this summer in Chicago.

In fact, for the past several years, we have done just what Pope Francis suggests: We have rooted ourselves in the reality of the present as it is being experienced by young adults and those who minister among our young people now; but we also explored the historical memory from the perspective of every cultural group and dared to dream of where can go in the future.

This process included mutual learning and listening, intentionally creating safe and “sacred” spaces where young people can feel listened to and the warmth of belonging, the inspiration of our faith tradition, and actively working on future-focused projects.

Over the course of two years, from mid-2020 through mid-2022, we met regularly over zoom for hard, but necessary, conversations about faith and life, about the joys and sorrows afflicting young people today, their relationship with the Church, about the need for inclusion of young voices in all our deliberations, and about the valuing of the gifts young adults bring to the Church and, on behalf of the Church, to the society and communities where they live and operate. We also had an opportunity to dive deeper into the issues that young people raised up to our attention and that were of deep concern to them: immigration, racism, climate issues, and social justice work.

Despite the new wave of COVID cases around the country and the massive flight cancellations and delays of the early summer,

(continued on page ii)

General Assembly *(continued from page i)*

335 young adults, ministry leaders, and bishops were able to come together for a four-day in-person encounter experience in Chicago.

We had a planned schedule, to be sure. However, the synodal nature of the process allowed us to adapt the program as challenges arose – which they did – and to address the issues with directness and pastoral responsiveness. This was, to me, one of the highlights, and one great outcome of this synodal model. It isn't perfect but is effective. Or, in the words of Archbishop Nelson Pérez, during the closing homily, "it was real."

We prayed together, broke bread together, learned skills together, and worked on action planning together. The trust we had built up over two straight years of zoom meetings helped us navigate any rough waters we encountered.

Journeying Together demonstrated that there is a strong thirst for inclusion, addressing historical trauma and current wounds, an acknowledgment of gifts, and for innovation in formation and accompaniment of young people. It also revealed that young adults of all cultures are serving and want to serve and be an integral part of our Catholic Church.

We discovered that there is excellent leadership currently among the young within all our cultural communities – and we didn't have to dig far to find it through the Journeying Together process. In most cases all they needed was to be seen and heard, an invitation to serve, and a word of encouragement.

We also learned that young adults are not all in the same place. They have different needs and lived experiences. Spaces need to be created in faith communities at the local level to cultivate a sense of belonging for all.

Perhaps most importantly, we saw what Pope Francis has been telling us all along: that young people are not a commodity or goals on a strategic plan. Rather, they are protagonists in the history of our faith and in the Church's mission of evangelization, working side-by-side with us as their shepherds.

In that spirit, I will stop talking and yield my time to two young adults who have been actively engaged with the bishops in this process. Let me introduce to you Cecilia Flores from the Diocese of Sacramento and Rudy Dehaney from the Archdiocese of Baltimore.



Mr. Rudy Dehaney, Archdiocese of Baltimore

Director/Campus Minister, Faith Formation Center, Northeast Catholic Community/Notre Dame, Baltimore, Maryland; Co-Chair, Journeying Together Post Event Task Group

Thank you, Bishop Cepeda and the conference of Catholic Bishops for this opportunity to speak at the plenary session today about this journeying together process. I want to start today with a story. This story begins with my personal background and ends with a response to one of those real moments in Chicago mentioned and what we can take from that experience. As a young adult lay minister born and raised in Baltimore to Jamaican parents, I carry my faith and culture everywhere I go. I love different aspects of my work and life, but for those who know me, one of my greatest passions is music.

Most recognize me as the guy who is always wearing his headphones and who is singing a song for any and every occasion. It is these moments that I am happiest. Growing up, I was exposed to many different types of music but on Sunday mornings, Gospel music could be heard at home or at Church later at my home parish of Blessed Sacrament. I still like to sing my favorite hymns to clap to at random moments in a week or share my passion and love with others as part of campus ministry at Notre Dame Maryland. Gospel, a style of music shared with other faith filled African Americans, holds great cultural, historical and faith significance to me and has greatly shaped who I am today.

For many fellow young adults from the Black Catholic cultural family, it holds that same significance. So, as we were in Chicago and casually gathered together as a group on that first night, we were speculating and anticipating what songs we would hear the next day at Mass and started to sing a few of our favorite songs. You could hear us at the hotel bar area singing very loudly songs such as Total Praise or Hallelujah, Salvation and Glory. As we would sing together and remember the songs we grew up on, there were genuine moments of joy we had in our hearts together that night.

And so, when we did not hear the following day those songs that we thought represented our culture and our history at Mass, we

felt disappointed over the missed opportunity of authenticity. This is not the first and only time we have felt this way being in Church spaces, as this type of thing happens all the time. It's not even unique to our culture. You can say that you get used to it, but you never really do. You do learn to somewhat live with the expectation that nothing will really change. But is it something that can be fixed? In this instance, would it be possible? Turns out, it was. All the relationships needed to make it happen were already in place.

A group of young adults from the AA/Black cultural family invited Cecilia over that night in the Hotel bar area to be a listening ear on how we felt. She heard us lament and sing another round of renditions of songs such as Total Praise and Hallelujah, Salvation, and Glory again for all to hear. And so, Cecilia, as the good person she is, told her good friend Archbishop Perez, who could also hear us singing, what she heard from us. And through those built relationships, we were given the opportunity to sing at the closing Mass in which Archbishop Perez was the celebrant. With only 30 minutes of rehearsal, what were to sing? That's right: Total Praise and Hallelujah, Salvation and Glory. We have been rehearsing all of this time it seems and we were ready and willing to step up in the moment for an authentic encounter that we felt true to our culture and faith and made for a powerful experience to all who were there and a part of our Journeying Together experience.

This story is a representation of some of the "dreams" young adults, active in both their faith and culture, envision and work towards honesty, awareness, acknowledgment, inclusion, and healing.

In these dreams and others are why Cecilia, I and young adults from across the US engaged in this process of journeying together with many of the bishops here. My story and this experience are but one of many. We all carry our own experiences, histories, challenges, and gifts from God that we bring to this Church. Waiting to be in a relationship with someone to be heard. To truly know that all are welcome, served, and loved by God. To see the recognition and dismantling of systems of racism, violence, and marginalization wherever they occur. Hearing our stories told and acknowledging cultural elements that shape our lived reality while honoring the faith we collectively share. We spent time in Chicago to talk about these dreams and how we can make it happen together, to be Catholic in the truest sense of the word.

Thank you for this time, and now I will turn it over to Cecilia.



Ms. Cecilia Marie Flores, Diocese of Sacramento

Community Organizer. Chair, Young Adult Multicultural Advisory Committee, Journeying Together

Thank you to the USCCB and in particular to the Committee on Cultural Diversity for convening the Journeying Together process and persevering through the pandemic, and all of the bishops and who journeyed together with us along the way.

As my brother Rudy shared, throughout this process, there were moments of joy, but also moments of hurt and tension - which perhaps appeared and felt chaotic.

In the midst of it all, the Holy Spirit revealed to me a greater reality happening that brought me great joy and hope. It was the joy of seeing shepherds being shepherds, and disciples of the Lord being disciples. As young adults expressed their pain, elders listened and supported them, and Bishops tended to their flock in real time. This isn't the church we experience everyday - more often we experience rejection, division, and clericalism. But the Church that we long to have and be existed during this process, in those spaces, and in those moments.

I was reminded of a principle heard often in community organizing in difficulty, turn to wonder. I wonder what it would be like if we could live church like this every day? I wonder what could happen if young adults felt seen, loved, heard, fought for, and trusted? And I wonder what it would take for us to get there?

The issues that surfaced from the Journeying Together process echo and deepen what we young adults have been saying over the past several years and can be summarized in 2 points:

1. Our stories, our cultures, and our lived realities are important and must be considered when discussing our pastoral care.
 2. Creating sacred space for conversation, fostering personal relationships and intergenerational dialogue is desperately needed.
- Journeying Together provided us the opportunity to address these issues, and from the process emerged a new community of

Flores (continued from page iii)

leaders with a desire to embark on mission to share their gifts with the Church and the world. Perhaps you are all asking, so what happens now? Often when Church leadership has not provided what we needed, we have taken the steps to meet our own needs. We who participated in this process are committed to giving our all to meet the needs surfaced by our brothers and sisters. This has already started and is taking on many forms: creating virtual communities, holding post-event gatherings, forming regional support groups, and providing resources to replicate the process we underwent.

But most importantly - we are committed to model and embody the community that we wish to build in the church, recognizing that the change starts with us. With me, with all young adults, with our elders, but also with you, our shepherds, our fathers.

My Bishop, Jaime Soto of Sacramento, once said during a college Baccalaureate mass: *To converse is human. To converse well is divine. God created the world with a conversation. We are part of God's ongoing conversation with the world. He has something to say to the world, and that is why we are here. May your conversations be an extension of God's creative work. May they build up and not destroy.*

We have all heard that young adults are leaving the church. However, there are also amazing ministries being led by young adults throughout the US. And though we may seem jaded and discontent with church leadership, the reality is that this reveals something deeper - that we have a deep desire to be in relationship and conversation with you all, our shepherds, our fathers. To be known by you. To be loved by you. To be called by our names, fought for, and guided by you. There are countless young adults who deeply love our Lord and our Church, who are ready and willing to step into leadership that need guidance, mentorship, and support. Your support. Your encouragement. Your trust.

On behalf of all the young adults that Rudy and I represent, I now invite you, our shepherds, our fathers, to turn to wonder - What would it take for the young adults under your pastoral care to feel seen, loved, heard, fought for, and trusted by you? How can you enter an on-going conversation with them? And how can that conversation be part of a collaborative and co-creative relationship with the Divine?

Our journey together is not over - and we look forward to continuing it with all of you. Thank you.



Bishop Cepeda's Closing Remarks

Thank you, Rudy, and Cecilia. Thank you for your witness, thank you for your questions, and thank you for your service to the Church. I am happy to hear all the emerging ideas that are coming forth from this process. And thanks to all who participated both in Chicago and in the virtual process for your collaboration in this shared mission with us, your bishops.

In this process, we have learned that: we cannot make plans for ministries with youth and young adults—or any ministry in the Catholic Church, for that matter—without also looking at the rich diversity of cultures, communities, and expressions of faith present in our young Catholic population, and we must be more attentive to the wounds and what still needs healing and reconciliation. We also came to learn that this dialogue, and any planning for ministry, needs to be done in an intergenerational way.

The Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, which has been collaborating with us on this initiative, is currently working on a draft of the Conference's National Pastoral Framework on Youth and Young Adults, which should come before you in the coming year. We hope that lessons learned through Journeying Together and the wisdom of young people will be integrated into this important document.

However, another important lesson is that we need to connect and make room for young people in all the activities and work of the Church in this country, whether they relate to ministries with youth and young adults. In each of our Catholic communities and in every one of our initiatives, there must be a radical infusion of young voices from all cultures.

Finally, let's not forget the call that Pope Francis made in his message to all participants in the Journeying Together process and especially to us as shepherds. It is the Holy Father's hope that "under the guidance of their pastors, young people will be generous and active protagonists, committed to serving the poor, caring for our common home, and spreading God's kingdom of justice, mercy, and love."



Cultural Diversity in the Church *Committee Members & Staff*

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Most Reverend Arturo Cepeda STL, STD
Term: November 2018 – November 2024

Committee Members

Most Rev. Joseph Perry
Chairman of the Subcommittee on African American Affairs

Most Reverend Clarence Silva
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs

Most Reverend Eusebio Elizondo, M.SpS.
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, & Travelers

Most Reverend Chad Zielinski
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs

Most Reverend Jorge Rodriguez-Novelo
Member, CDC Representative to Subcommittee on Ecclesial Ministry and Service

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez

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Committee Chairman with Executive Director and Assistant Directors of the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church. From left to right: Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Sr. Myrna Tordillo, Mar Muñoz-Visoso, Bishop Arturo Cepeda of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Sr. Joanna Okereke, Fr. Mike Carson, and Donna Grimes
Photo Credit: Yolanda Taylor-Burwell



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Introducing New Staff

Please join us in welcoming CDC's newest team members!



Stefanie Miles, Executive Assistant

“I am looking forward to fully using my gifts and talents, doing my part, as a living stone in the continual build of God’s spiritual house (ref. 1 Peter 2:4-8).”



Juan Giraldo, Staff Assistant-Bilingual

Works with the associate directors of African American Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, and Native American Affairs

“I am looking forward to a new career experience, meeting new people, and learning a lot. I love to learn new things.”



Jaquai Ham, Staff Assistant

Works with the associate directors of Asian and Pacific Islanders and Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, & Travelers

“As a new hire in this office, I am looking forward to opportunities that improve and develop the skills I already have. Also, I look forward to all the challenges that comes with the job and what they will teach me.”

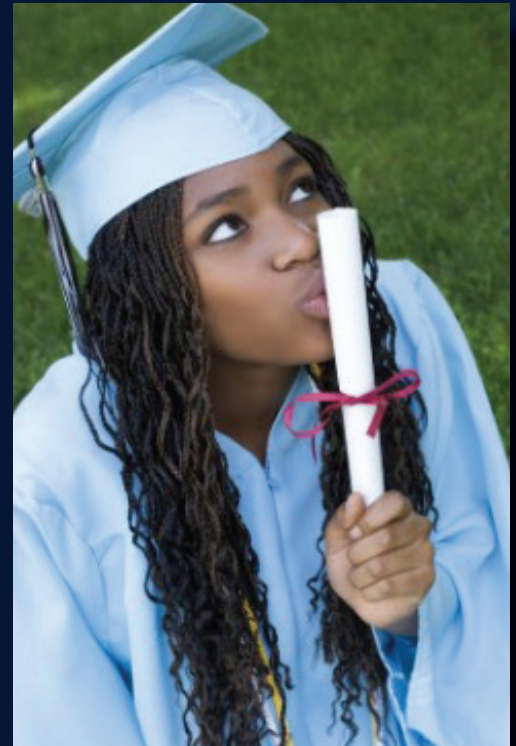
Subcommittee Updates

AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

WHERE ARE THE HBCUs?

A strategic goal of the Subcommittee on African American Affairs (SCAAA) is to encourage dioceses to include funding for Catholic Campus Ministry (CCMs) at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Typically, HBCUs are under the radar for young adult evangelization and ministry projects. While one can speculate as to the reasoning, a strategy workgroup has been laboring for more than a year to change the misperception that the Catholic landscape of Black/African Americans (BAAs) in higher education is a parched desert. Rather, it is an unrecognized verdant field.

At the handful of diocesan supported CCMs at HBCUs such as The Archbishop James P. Lyke House at the Atlanta University Center, the Newman Centers at Texas Southern University in Houston and Howard University in Washington DC and The Sister Thea Bowman House at North Carolina A&T University in Charlotte, one will find young Catholics of African descent from surrounding campuses that are actively engaging in Bible study, prayer groups, vibrant liturgies, RCIA programs, faith inspired community service, spiritual retreats, formation for ministry, lay leadership and emerging vocations including marriage and religious life. More than 100 HBCUs exist in Catholic dioceses. It's just a matter of seeing them and extending the hands of fraternal love.



**CERTIFICATE
in Asian Pacific Islander
MINISTRY**

Aug 2023 - Jun 2024

This 10-month online program includes:
Scripture, Immigration History, Liturgy, Catechesis, Sacraments, Practical Theology, Current Topics and Pastoral Responses

Program Directors:
Fr. Linh Hoang, OFM, PhD
and Eunice Park, MTS, MAMC

Scholarships are available for tuition assistance!

@APICertificate

Franciscan School of Theology
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
For more info email: APICertificate@fst.edu

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

The online program aims to assist pastoral leaders who serve the increasing number of Asian and Pacific Island (API) communities across the United States. The program includes Scripture, Catechesis, Immigration, Practical Theology, Pastoral Responses, etc. Attention will be given to the 2018 pastoral response of the US bishops, *Encountering Christ in Harmony: A Pastoral Response to Our Asian and Pacific Island Brothers and Sisters*, to unpack the pastoral and practical guidance offered.

The topics will be taught by ministry professionals, theologians, and religious scholars who desire to enhance pastoral ministry among API communities.”

“Certificate in Asian Pacific Islander Ministry, Franciscan School of Theology, University of San Diego, August 2023 - June 2024. Enroll now! For more information, contact: APICertificate@fst.edu

HISPANIC AFFAIRS

After extensive consultation over the past several months, the final draft of the National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry was presented to the USCCB Administrative Committee for review at its March 2023 meeting. The text was approved to go to in front of the USCCB June General Assembly for a vote. The Plan provides a pastoral vision and guidelines to strengthen Hispanic/Latino ministry at the national, local and parish levels. It also includes objectives, activities, and pastoral approaches to be implemented over the next ten years. Stay tuned and pray for its approval!

Production of the V Encuentro Ministerial Area Series (VEMS) has been completed and is now available On-demand for registered dioceses, organizations, and pastoral leaders. The series consists of 56 virtual sessions, 28 in English and 28 in Spanish. The VEMS provides leadership development opportunities that inspire, connect, and highlights best practices, resources and pastoral responses related to the V Encuentro's priorities and recommendations. The sessions are led by experts in each of the ministerial areas and feature an opening prayer and remarks by bishops. The series is available via an affordable annual membership paid by dioceses and organizations, and it includes On-demand Videos and Workbook with questions and activities.



An agreement has been signed with the Mexican American Catholic College (MACC) to produce four Fifteen-hour courses designed to form Hispanic/Latino young adult leaders under V Encuentro Young Adult Hispanic Leadership Initiative (VEYAHLI). The USCCB secretariats involved in producing the courses are Cultural Diversity in the Church, Evangelization and Catechesis, and Justice, Peace & Human Development. The courses will be produced and piloted in 2023. In addition to MACC and USCCB, the VEYAHLI initiative includes the participation of Instituto Fe y Vida and Oregon Catholic Press. The goal is to offer a program specifically designed to form and accompany Hispanic/Latino emerging leaders.

NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Native Human Trafficking

A Joint Project between the Subcommittee of Native American Affairs and Migrant and Refugee Services

Human trafficking and missing and exploited women are some of the most serious issues faced by this country's Native communities, especially on reservations. The USCCB Subcommittee on Native American Affairs has been deeply involved in this issue for the last seven years. It is from this concern that we have reached out to Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) to unite efforts in the prevention of human trafficking in Native communities.

There are five major reasons why human trafficking affects so many Native lives:

The large area of many reservations

Some reservations are the size of small states. In addition, they are sparsely populated with limited communications. Both the size and isolation contribute to a breakdown of communication, especially because traffickers need secrecy and disconnected communities in order to maintain their illicit activities. Information is one of the most important keys in challenging traffickers. Any impediment to information does a great deal to help those who prey on the most vulnerable.



Overlapping jurisdictions

Another breakdown in information and communication often happens when there are overlapping jurisdictions and law enforcement. Especially in large reservations, but also in small communities, information tends to get lost the more hands that information goes through. At one time, databases were not even kept that specifically counted individuals in the Native communities. However, this is gradually changing after many have advocated the need to share information and have a common census and databases.

Misperception of traffickers

Many traffickers have the mistaken opinion that tribal police can only arrest tribal members. That they are “safe” from arrest if they violate tribal laws and regulations. This mistaken idea helps persuade many traffickers to operate in reservations, especially if they feel they are less likely to get caught or prosecuted.

Closeness to the Canadian or Mexican border

Many reservations are located on both the Mexican and Canadian border. This allows human traffickers to avoid detection by locating themselves in a different country. Further the closeness to the border facilitates illegal migration that leads to human trafficking.

Poverty on reservations

Poverty leads to desperation. Desperate people are easy targets for human traffickers. Further, poverty leads to communities that are isolated from each other. This isolation may lead to not knowing about this issue or know how to recognize the warning signs of human trafficking in their midst. Further, poverty limits the number of programs that can help educate people and combat human trafficking.

The USCCB's Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in partnership with MRS is in the process of creating awareness and developing programs to eliminate human trafficking wherever it may happen. To develop effective programs; we must listen and learn from Native elders and those who are already involved in this issue on reservations. It is hoped that the structure that we develop will be both culturally specific and have elements that can be broadened to other cultural and ethnic communities in the United States.

PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND TRAVELERS (PCMRT)

National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the People of the Sea

To mark the National Maritime Day, Bishop Brendan Cahill of Victoria, TX, Stella Maris Bishop-Promoter, will celebrate Mass on Saturday, May 20, 2023, at 12:10 p.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Crypt Church) in Washington DC. The annual National Maritime Day celebration is an opportunity to remember and applaud the important work of seafarers, and it helps to create awareness for their work, that often goes unrecognized. Dioceses are encouraged to mark the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea on May 22. The text for the Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea, is also encouraged.

Fourth African National Eucharistic Congress (ANEC)

African Catholics invite you to the Fourth African National Eucharistic Congress (ANEC), that will take place July 21-23, 2023, at the Catholic University of America, in Washington DC. The keynote and main celebrant for the Unity Mass on Saturday, July 22 will be Cardinal Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Washington. Bishop Andrew Cozzens, chair of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, will lead the “United in the Eucharist” procession. The ANEC is an opportunity to encounter African Catholics in the diaspora; to uplift and renew their faith; to reflect on issues relevant to their presence, role, and contribution to the local churches; and to encourage their youth and young adults to stand firm in the faith in which they were raised, to become more involved in different ministries, and to consider vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The activities include workshops on various topics, African cultural celebration, and other activities.

Pastoral Visit to Migrant Farmworkers - Diocese of Yakima (August 28-30, 2023)

PCMRT is excited to resume the annual episcopal pastoral visit to migrant farmworker communities. The Covid-19 pandemic and its ramifications have been especially difficult for migrant farmworkers and their families. PCMRT staff and other leaders look forward to spending time with the community and with the leaders who have accompanied them through the trying times and look forward to finding new ways to support and strengthen their work.



Upcoming Events

84th Annual Tekakwitha Conference

July 19-23, 2023 | Minneapolis, MN



GATHERING FOR HEALING THROUGH LIVING WATERS

84TH ANNUAL TEKAKWITHA CONFERENCE
JULY 19-23, 2023 + BLOOMINGTON, MN

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT TEKCONF.ORG



SAVE THE DATE!



African National Eucharistic Congress (ANEC)

July 21-23, 2023 | Washington, DC



You are Invited to the Fourth African National Eucharistic Congress (ANEC)



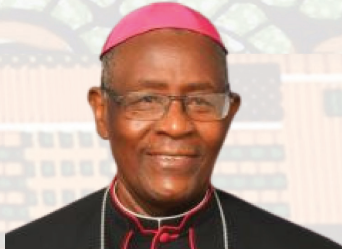
A Response To The Lord's Prayer: "That They May All Be One"

July 21 - 23, 2023

**Catholic University of America
Washington, DC**

Unity Mass

**Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
Saturday, July 22, 2023 at 4:30PM**



Most Rev. Jerome Feudjio
Bishop of St. Thomas
in the Virgin Island
Main Celebrant Opening Mass
Friday, July 21, 2023, at 8:30PM



Wilton Cardinal Gregory
Archbishop of Washington
Keynote Speaker
Saturday, July 22, at 9:00AM
and Main Celebrant
Unity Mass



Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens
Bishop of Crookston, Minnesota
Speaker/Leader
"United in the Eucharist" Procession
Saturday, July 22, 2023, at 3:00PM

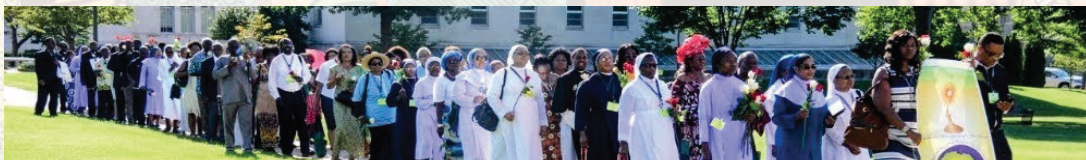


Most Rev. Eusebio Elizondo,
M.Sp.S., Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle
Chairman, PCMRT
Leader: Episcopal Encounter with
Young Adults
Saturday, July 22, 2023, 12:00-1:30PM



Right Rev. Wolfgang Pisa,
OFMCap
Bishop of Lindi Diocese, Tanzania
Celebrant Closing Mass
Sunday, July 23, 2023, 10:00AM

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception - 400 Michigan Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20017



Hosted by the USCCB / Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church; the National Association of African Catholics in the United States (NAACUS) and the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States (ACCCRUS). Register: <https://cvent.me/ED3v1v>

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.ANEC-US.ORG OR CALL 202-541-3359

The National Black Catholic Congress July 20-23, 2023 | National Harbor Maryland



The National
BLACK CATHOLIC
Congress

CONGRESS XIII JULY 20-23, 2023

Founded in 1987, the National Black Catholic Congress organizes a national gathering every five years, renewing our mission with a Pastoral Plan.

FEATURING:



WILTON CARDINAL GREGORY

Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC will give the opening Keynote Speech and celebrate the Opening Eucharistic Liturgy



LYNNE' GRAY

Director of Music for Congress XIII. Ms. Gray is Music Ministry Director at St. Anthony of Padua Church, Washington, D.C.; Chair, NPM African-American Musicians Interest Section.



RAWN HARBOR

Director of Liturgy for Congress XIII, Rawn is one of the preeminent African American Catholic liturgists and musicians in the U.S. today.

Early Registration ends February 28, 2023.
Regular registration ends July 15, 2023.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING
A PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF EVENTS,
AND TO REGISTER:

nbccgathering2023.org



Write the Vision
A PROPHETIC CALL TO THRIVE
THE NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS

Join with other Black Catholics and those who minister to Black Catholics in the United States for a celebration of our faith and culture.



Scan Me for
More Information!

VENUE:
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NATIONAL HARBOR, MARYLAND

201 WATERFRONT ST., NATIONAL HARBOR, MD 20745



World Youth Day 2023

August 1 to 6, 2023 International and Stateside Pilgrimages
Lisbon, Portugal | The United States | Everywhere

JOURNEY WITH US TO WORLD YOUTH DAY

August 1 to 6, 2023

International and Stateside Pilgrimages

Lisbon, Portugal | The United States | Everywhere



"Mary arose and went with haste"
(Lk 1:39)

An experience of the universal
Church for youth and young adults.

www.wydusa.org

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) encourages participation of young people ages 16 to 35 in World Youth Day (WYD), a major international pilgrimage and festival of faith for the Catholic Church in the company of the Holy Father and millions of youth, young adults, and ministry leaders from around the globe.



Photos: CNS/Paul Haring and Joclyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard



NATIONAL Eucharistic Congress

Eucharistic Revival Musical Competition

Catholic composers, poets, and songwriters are invited to join the effort to renew our zeal for the Eucharist in ways that words cannot express through the Eucharistic Revival Musical Competition.

Sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis, Catholic artists may submit creative entries spanning a hymn-writing category and a theme song category to give a fresh voice to the truths of our faith.

Award-winning submissions will be featured at the 2024 National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, used in liturgies and events marking the Eucharistic Revival in dioceses across the country, and will receive a \$2,500 cash prize.

Submissions are being accepted now through April 21, 2023.

For full criteria and details go to: <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/musical-competition>

National Eucharistic Congress 2024

The First National Eucharistic Congress in 83 Years. This is a pivotal moment in both American history and the legacy of the Catholic Church. We are expecting tens of thousands of pilgrims—but space is limited. Jesus Christ will be there. Will you? A milestone moment in the Bishop's multiyear Eucharistic Revival at the Congress, the Church will draw into a deeper intimacy with our Eucharistic Lord, allowing our eyes to be opened and our hearts to be set on fire with his love.

<https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/>

End Human Trafficking

“The Catholic Church intends to intervene in every phase of the trafficking of human beings; she wants to protect them from deception and solicitation; she wants to find them and free them when they are transported and reduced to slavery; she wants to assist them once they are freed.”

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/february/documents/papa-francesco_20180212_contro-tratta.html

Summary

Human Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some labor or commercial sex act. Inducing a minor into commercial sex is always considered human trafficking, regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion. It is a crime under U.S. federal and international law and is also illegal in all 50 states in the United States. Human trafficking can take a variety of forms. Some people are trafficked for prostitution, pornography, and other sexual exploitation. Some are trafficked for forced labor in agriculture, sweatshops, and domestic servitude. Some are trafficked for both. Through sexual slavery, the body becomes little more than an object to be exploited. For victims of forced labor, the body is made into a disposable machine, made to work long hours for little or no pay and the profit of others. In both cases, the enslaved person is treated as an object for another's benefit. The person's God-given human dignity is either ignored or forgotten.

Mission of USCCB/MRS

The mission of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP) is to educate on the scourge of human trafficking as an offense against the fundamental dignity of the human person, to advocate for an end to modern-day slavery, to provide training and technical assistance on this issue, and to support survivors through community-based services. For over a decade, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has been a national leader in advocacy and education to eradicate sex and labor trafficking. Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) leads efforts to combat trafficking in human persons, carrying out the commitment of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Migration to protect the life and dignity of the most vulnerable. Our initiatives include advocacy, awareness raising, training, technical assistance, and integration services.

USCCB Programs

1. Become a Shepherd: Stop Human Trafficking and Exploitation. Protect, Help, Empower, and Restore Dignity (SHEPHERD) educates lay and religious leaders about human trafficking from a Catholic perspective, equipping them with needed knowledge and skills to combat forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation at the local level.
2. Amistad Movement: Like the captives aboard the Amistad slave ship who revolted and won their freedom, the Amistad Movement seeks to empower immigrants in at risk communities with the educational tools to protect their own community members from falling victim to human trafficking.
3. Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea (COMPASS): Maritime trafficking is modern slavery at sea, a violation of the human dignity of laborers at all stages of the seafood supply chain and aquaculture industries. The virtually unregulated fishing industry in many countries, coupled with the global demand for cheap seafood, create the lawless conditions under which trafficking at sea flourishes.
4. Bridging Refugee Youth and Children Services (BRYCS): Recognizing that survivors of trafficking have unique vulnerabilities and require specialized treatment and care, BRYCS works closely with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' department of Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) to support its mission of providing outreach, education, services, and advocacy on behalf of victims of trafficking- including the most vulnerable- child victims of trafficking.

Contact Information:

Felicitas Brugo Onetti, Anti-Trafficking Education and Outreach Coordinator,
Department of Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB.

Email: fonetti@usccb.org

Phone: 202-541-3064

Hotline Information:

1 (888) 373-7888

National Human Trafficking Hotline

SMS: 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")

Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week

Languages: English, Spanish and 200 more languages

Website: <http://humantraffickinghotline.org>



END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

People are not for sale. Help us stop this terrible happening today.

Prayer for Canonization of Sister Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A.



Sister Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A.

Ever loving God, who by your infinite goodness inflamed the heart of your servant and religious, Sister Thea Bowman with an ardent love for you and the People of God; a love expressed through her indomitable spirit, deep and abiding faith, dedicated teaching, exuberant singing, and unwavering witnessing of the joy of the Gospel.

Her prophetic witness continues to inspire us to share the Good News with those whom we encounter; most especially the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. May Sister Thea's life and legacy compel us to walk together, to pray together, and to remain together as missionary disciples ushering in the new evangelization for the Church we love.

Gracious God imbue us with the grace and perseverance that you gave your servant, Sister Thea. For in turbulent times of racial injustice, she sought equity, peace, and reconciliation. In times of intolerance and ignorance, she brought wisdom, awareness, unity, and charity. In times of pain, sickness, and suffering, she taught us how to live fully until called home to the land of promise. If it be your Will, O God, glorify our beloved Sister Thea, by granting the favor I now request through her intercession (mention your request), so that all may know of her goodness and holiness and may imitate her love for You and Your Church. We ask this through Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Imprimatur: Most Rev. Joseph R. Kopacz, Bishop of Jackson

To report any spiritual or physical favors granted through prayer in Sister Thea's name, please write: Sr. Thea Canonization, 237 E. Amite St. Jackson, MS 39201.

<https://www.sistertheabowman.com>