



*Office of the Archbishop*

# Archdiocese of Mobile

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Dear Reverend Monsignor/Father,

This summary of the Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry allows me the opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to you for your dedicated ministry for and with our Hispanic brothers and sisters in your parishes. Since 1981, our Archdiocese has been growing in its direct outreach to the Hispanic community. Now twenty-six of our parishes regularly celebrate Mass in Spanish and Hispanics are more than ever integrating into the life of our parishes. However, as we are aware, this outreach and integration comes with a unique set of challenges.

In September of 2009, I wrote a letter to the people of our archdiocese addressing these challenges and urging our parishes to find new and inspired ways of better reaching out to our Hispanic brothers and sisters:

It is not sufficient only to have a Mass for those who wish to pray in Spanish and nothing further. Hispanic Catholics need to be part of parish life in as many ways as possible. Parishes need to examine and discover ways in which this can be done. This will not necessarily be easy. There are differences in language and culture and activities which appeal to one group may not appeal to another. Nonetheless, efforts must be made to build unity in the midst of diversity. [...] In short, Hispanic Catholics need to be viewed as part of the parish and not as a separate group which has “their” Mass and is somehow separate from everything else that happens in the parish.

To fully accomplish this will take time, mutual understanding, and Christian concern for one another. But it must begin. It cannot be postponed. We owe it to the future of the Catholic Church in Alabama to make certain that we heed the teachings of the Lord and welcome all into the community of faith which is our Catholic parish.

I sincerely thank you for taking these words to heart and making efforts to better serve your Spanish speaking parishioners. Seeing the fruit of your efforts and consequently a growing momentum in Hispanic ministry in our archdiocese, on October 13, 2014, I announced that it was time for us to renew our Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry. Since then, the Office of Hispanic Ministry in collaboration with the South Eastern Pastoral Institute (SEPI), working with pastors and leaders from parishes like yours, has been hard at work to develop a

plan which can serve as a guide to better serve not only the needs of our Hispanic community but the entire Body of Christ. Throughout this process, several pastors, parish leaders and literally hundreds of Hispanic parishioners from around the Archdiocese were consulted. On April 25, 2015, the process culminated in Enterprise at St. John the Evangelist Parish with the Archdiocesan Encuentro (Encounter) in which over five hundred Hispanic Catholics from around the Archdiocese participated.

Since then, a committee has been prayerfully reviewing and digesting the fruits of the Encuentro and formulating a Pastoral Plan in consultation with myself and the leadership of our Archdiocesan Offices. Finally, on September 10, 2016, after several drafts and revisions, I approved this plan and commissioned it for use throughout the Archdiocese. The Plan calls for action at many different levels throughout the Archdiocese at both the archdiocesan and parish levels. It is a rich document which begins with the history of Hispanic Ministry in our Archdiocese and concludes with an appendix of various supplemental documents.

The Plan is divided into five main sections: Formation, Missionary Option, La Pastoral de Conjunto (The Pastoral Approach of Working Together), Liturgy & Prayer, and the Family. In bold type, each section contains the top five concerns that emerged from polling the Hispanic community spread throughout our Archdiocese. For each concern listed, the Plan proposes a way in which your parish and, where appropriate, we as an entire archdiocese may best respond to these pressing concerns.

In an effort to help you as a pastor navigate this document and understand more clearly how this plan is aimed to help you and your parish specifically, we have developed a “Pastor’s Guide” to the Pastoral Plan. Please know that a consistent effort was made throughout the Plan to better help, equip and empower our pastors to deal with the challenges of Hispanic ministry at the parish level. All recommendations and suggested structures, aim to help you have a better sense of the needs of your parish, a better means to communicate with the various parts of your parish, and better resources provided to you by the Archdiocese to form the faith of your Hispanic flock.

Overall, this plan seeks to eliminate the reality of “parallel” parishes as well as “parallel” structures at the archdiocesan level. Five years from now this plan will be reviewed and the process for renewing our archdiocesan plan will be initiated once again so that our Plan may better correspond to the ever changing demographics and needs of our archdiocese. Thank you in advance for taking the time to study this guide and implement the plan in your parish.

Entrusting all of our efforts to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas and Star of the New Evangelization, I am,

Sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Thomas J. Rodi". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Most Reverend Thomas J. Rodi  
Archbishop of Mobile

## **Pastor's Guide**

### **Archdiocese of Mobile's Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry**

#### **Step 1: Create a Hispanic Ministry Leadership Group (HMLG) [See Point 7 & Appendix E]**

- \*Guidelines similar to those for establishing a Parish Council are provided in Appendix E of the Plan
- \*This group will exist solely to assist you as the pastor in determining and meeting the needs of the Hispanic community
- \*Ideally it will meet monthly. Your presence is encouraged but not necessary
- \*The group will consist of 5-15 people who should represent the various ethnicities that make up the hispanic population of your parish
- \*Also at least one English speaking man and woman should serve on the committee who can help facilitate better communication, understanding and interaction between both communities
- \*This should be done as soon as possible

#### **Step 2: Create a spot on your Parish Council for your soon to be established Hispanic Ministry Leader (HML) [See Point 7.b]**

- \*The by-laws of your Parish Council may need to be amended
- \*Amending such by-laws could be a good way to broach the subject and show the importance of this effort in the parish
- \*This should be done as soon as possible

#### **Step 3: Choose a HML for your parish [See Point 7.a.ii]**

- \*This is a Hispanic parishioner that is faithful and active in your parish whom you trust and respect. This is a person who you feel has a pulse on the needs of the Hispanic community in your parish and is able to communicate with the various ethnic backgrounds of the Hispanic community as well as engage the English-speaking community. This person will lead your HMLG, sit on the Parish Council, and attend formational opportunities organized by you and your parish as well as the Archdiocese [See Points 5.b & 9.b]. This person is intended to ultimately give you a better understanding of the Hispanic community, help you to better organize that community and finally act as a bridge with the rest of the parish community.
- \*This person should be nominated by your HMLG and approved by you as the pastor.
- \*The nominations should take place during the first HMLG meeting and your pastoral approval given within a week of that meeting
- \*The HML does not necessarily need to be fluent in English. Provisions could be made for somebody to work as their translator at Parish Council meetings and other such engagements

#### **Step 4: With the help of the HMLG, develop a periodic, parish-wide time of prayer for the intention of greater communion among the various members of your parish and archdiocesan community [See Points 14, 18, 19, 20]**

- \*It is encouraged that this prayer be centered around the Eucharist as well as devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas and Star of the New Evangelization

- \*It is encouraged to incorporate Spanish, English and other languages widely spoken in your parish
- \*It could be helpful for the HML to consult with the Parish Council in formulating this prayer plan and then follow up with them once the plan has been finalized
- \*Prayer will be essential for a successful implementation of the Pastoral Plan leading to deeper communion within your parish

**Step 5: Study the Pastoral Plan with your HMLG and develop a Parish Pastoral Plan [See Points 10, 11]**

- \*The HMLG will present a Parish Plan that is based on the five main themes of the Archdiocesan Plan (Formation, Missionary Option, La Pastoral de Conjunto, Liturgy & Prayer, and Family), meets the needs of the parish and can be implemented by the parish
- \*Make special effort to include topics that were specifically addressed in the Archdiocesan Plan (see below)
- \*Within 6 months of your first meeting, have the HMLG present to you a “Parish Plan” for Hispanic Ministry. Have your HML consult the Parish Council, Office of Hispanic Ministry and Office of Catholic of Education as needed
- \*After approving the plan, consider presenting the Plan to your Pastoral Council and discussing how it can effectively be implemented in the parish

**Step 6: Establish an inculturated Youth Ministry in the parish that seeks the integration of the Hispanic youth within the ministry of the Church [See Point 15]**

- \*Pastor will meet with the HLMG, PCL and YML to study the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Youth Ministry
- \*This will help create a vision the whole parish can embrace of how to best reach out to the Hispanic Youth in your parish

**Step 7: Address topics specifically mentioned by the Archdiocesan Plan to be dealt with at the parish level**

*[Perhaps each sub-point below could serve as a topic for one or more HMLG meetings]*

- a) Discuss the liturgies of the Hispanic community [See Point 16.a]
  - \*Develop a list of topics that need to be addressed in homilies and missions
  - \*What musical styles would resonate best with the community?
  - \*What devotions and traditions are important to the various groups?
  - \*How can greater hospitality be extended before and after liturgies?
  - \*How can people be drawn into fellowship following liturgies?
  - \*If not done already, how can liturgical training for Eucharistic ministers, lectors, sacristans, etc. be offered in Spanish? This should be accomplished within six months of the release of the plan [See Point 5.a]
  
- b) Discuss how the Hispanic community can share the richness of their tradition with the parish community at large [See Point 16.b]
  - \*With reference to the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe
  - \*Are their ways to teach and share with others about traditional foods, dances, prayers, celebrations, etc.?
  - \*Consultation with the Parish Council via the HML is encouraged

c) Discuss how better Faith Formation be offered in your parish

\*How to best take advantage of formation programs offered by the Archdiocese --i.e. "Parish Package" and Be Prepared Series in Spanish [*See Point 2*]; Escuela de Ministerios [*See Point 5.b*]; bimonthly newsletter [*See Point 9.a & 9.c*]; quarterly formation programs [*See Point 9.b*]

\*How to offer better adult catechesis in the parish

\*How to offer better catechesis for preparation for reception of the sacraments in the parish [*See Point 17*]

d) Discuss the social needs of the community

\*Better publicize the ways in which your local Catholic Social Services branch can help your parishioners. If and when bilingual counselors are hired, make sure everyone knows about it [*See Point 21.a*]

\*Recruit 12 step programs in Spanish to meet at your parish if particular addictions are prevalent in your community [*See Point 21.b*]

\*Communicate the particular needs of your parish community to Catholic Services and discuss how you can collaborate to better serve your parishioners' needs [*See Point 21.c*]