

Dear Rev. Monsignor/Father,

Peace be with you in this Advent Season.

Hopefully by now you have had a chance to read both of Archbishop Rodi's November 22 letters. One promulgated the Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry and included the corresponding "Pastor's Guide." The second letter spoke of Archdiocese's participation in The Fifth National Encuentro, V Encuentro. Both are enclosed for your convenience.

The Guide is to help you understand the Plan's vision at the parish level and focus your efforts in achieving its implementation. The creation of a Hispanic Ministry Leadership Group (HMLG) and the selection of a Hispanic Ministry Leader (HML) is the lynchpin for the success of our Plan at the parish level. This group will help you to better organize the efforts of your Hispanic community, facilitate better dialogue and interaction between your Hispanic community and the rest of your parish, and help select and form leaders who can help you to better understand, reach and evangelize the Hispanic members of your parish.

It just so happens, that as we are just beginning to implement our new Pastoral Plan, the Bishops of the United States are preparing for the 5th National Encuentro (Encounter). "Encuentro" is a pastoral tool used to draw members of the Hispanic community together to encounter one another more deeply, assess the needs of a particular community, and formulate a pastoral plan to address those needs and lead everyone involved into deeper discipleship with Christ. We have already used this pastoral tool at both the parish and diocesan level in our Archdiocese in developing our Pastoral Plan. And now, we are blessed with an opportunity to participate in the upcoming Regional and National Encuentros.

Having your newly selected HML and members of your newly formed HMLGs participate in the upcoming Encuentro process, will be an ideal way to bring together and build cohesion in this new important group in your parish community. Also, their participation will serve as great formation for these new leaders to grow as missionary disciples. They will be able to interact with leaders from around the country, share past experiences and build new hopes and dreams moving forward.

Providing formation for Hispanic leaders is a recurrent theme in our Pastoral Plan (see No. 2, 5, & 9). The training our Archdiocese will offer for the parish teams in preparation for the upcoming Encuentros will be the inaugural effort to implement our Pastoral Plan's aim to regularly offer formation opportunities for parish leaders across our Archdiocese. Participation, however, is not limited to the membership of your HMLG. Getting others involved beyond this key group is encouraged and welcomed. Other tasks in the Pastoral Plan can be accomplished with the V Encuentro process. In his recent letter regarding the Encuentro Archbishop Rodi expressed his excitement about our participation and especially urged the youth and young adults of our Hispanic communities to be involved in this effort.

With all of this in mind, we would like to invite you and your parishioners to participate in the upcoming Encuentros so as to help jump start the implementation of our new Pastoral Plan in your parish. Sign up information follows.

Contact: Ms. Olga Villar, Director for Hispanic Ministry (251) 690-6907 ovillar@mobarch.org

Sign up: Provide Name and contact and other information for all team members (see Excel Attachment) to Director for Hispanic Ministry.

Please identify the following people by name: Parish Chairman, Co-Chair, Facilitator, and Witness.* Parishes need to send at least four members of the parish team to the training. Parishes are invited to send more than four. Parish head counts are due 10 days before the training [January 18, for the training date January 28, 2017; and January 25, for the training on February 4, 2017]. Because space is limited parishes wishing to send more than four are asked to coordinate in advance.

Dates and Location:

January 28, 2017 at St. Joseph Parish, Ft. Mitchell, AL
February 4, 2017 at St. Patrick Parish, Robertsedale, AL

Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm

Cost: \$10.00 donation per person is requested.

* Besides being members of the HMLG these four Parish Team Members should have the skills to train the remainder of the parish team and to pass on the content and process to other members of the parish. They will need to work closely with the pastor and well together.

The Parish Chair and co-chair need organizational, logistical and relational skills; they will assist the pastor in planning and conducting the five sessions and the parish Encuentro. They will help determine the dates, times, places, and assemble the materials.

The Facilitator needs strong communication and relational skills with a welcoming personality; The Facilitators will conduct the five small group sessions and the parish Encuentro; they will keep the meetings focused in a harmonious manner.

The Witness needs strong verbal and writing skills as well as organizational skills and a good attention span. The witnesses will take notes on each session, prepare them for the parish Encuentro and then record and prepare notes of the parish Encuentro and forward them to the Director for Hispanic Ministry in preparation for the Diocesan Encuentro October 14, 2017 at St. Columba, Dothan.

Three attachments:

Letter November 22, V Encuentro

Letter November 22, Pastoral Plan and Pastor's Guide

Excel sign-up sheet

Deacon Walter Crimmins
Chancellor and Director for Pastoral Services