

Spiritual Discussion - November

“Review” from Ongoing Formation Gathering

Using the Contemplative Process, allow the suggestions below to form your Spiritual Discussion in November.

Goal Year #1: “Cultivate a spirit of racial inclusion, cultural sensitivity, and respect for persons with disabilities, generate an awareness of the dynamics of racism and understand the effects.”

Presenter: Dr Bethany Welch, Ph.D., Aquinas House, Philadelphia

Suggested Reading: *NEW STUDY ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY DISPLAYS CATHOLIC CHURCH’S GROWING MULTICULTURAL PARISH POPULATION* - Data on diversity in church: USCCB Article <http://www.usccb.org/news/2016/16-154.cfm> (Please see article at the end of this attachment.)

Related Passages from Sacred Scripture:

Psalm 67 The nations called to praise God

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—^(b)
so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.
May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.
May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you. The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Romans 12:4-5 One in the body of Christ

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

Related Passages from Faithful Witness: FW#42.1, 42.2 FS #44. 47

Related Passages from Alphonsus:

“I love Jesus Christ and that is why I am on fire with the desire to give Him souls, first of all my own and then an incalculable number of others.”

From the Redemptorist rule submitted by St. Alphonsus for the approval of the Pope in 1748.

“The Work of the Congregation is defined as “Men who announce the Gospel to the faithful to whom the church is not able to provide sufficient means for salvation” (Chapter 1, Article 1).

For example:

The farmers of certain regions

Immigrants, refugees and fugitives

Those who live or work in large cities

Those who because of race or color feel unfairly excluded from the rights of all citizens.

Communal Contemplative Prayer (followed by silent reflection)

Deep within your soul there is a knowing place
a sanctuary where gifts are nurtured.
Enter the sacred space.
Spend time there
tending your gifts as you would tend the land.
There in the chapel of your heart
you will become a gift to be given.

Reflective Sharing

Having reflected upon the selected resources listed above, and the talk by Dr. Bethany Welch in October, let us allow the Spirit to move us into conversation.

How can we – here and now – be *sisters, servants* to *all* of God’s people . . .

- In your presence I ask...
- How have I given and received redemptive love today?
- How have I responded with hope to someone in need today?
- How can I be more faithful to my call to live the charism tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

God of boundless love, we pray for a passionate spirit to live the virtues of love, creative hope, and fidelity. Give us the grace to proclaim the Gospel message in the spirit of Jesus, the Redeemer. Inspire us to radiate joyful service with compassion for God’s people. Lord, heal me and help me to share your redemptive love with your people joyfully. Amen.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

NEW STUDY ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY DISPLAYS CATHOLIC CHURCH'S GROWING MULTICULTURAL PARISH POPULATION

November 15, 2016

**Over 6,300 US parishes now serve distinct ethnic and cultural groups
Multicultural and multiethnic communities trend likely to continue
Culturally diverse parishes are the fastest growing in the U.S.**

WASHINGTON—Culturally diverse parishes are the fastest growing type of parish in the United States, according to a report on Cultural Diversity in Catholic parishes, presented by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church. The report was presented during the annual fall General Assembly in Baltimore, November 15.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) conducted the two-phase study, commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat on Cultural Diversity. "The Catholic Church in the United States has always been a very diverse entity, but it is the first time that all available data was brought together to map this diversity nationwide in remarkable detail," said Archbishop García-Siller. "It is also the first time that parish life was looked at from the point of view of the experience of diversity. Multicultural parishes are a growing phenomenon in the United States. This is what makes this study so fascinating and ground-breaking."

The first phase identified the populations and parishes in the United States that are known to serve specific racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic groups communities using a variety of sources. In all, 6,332 (36 percent) of parishes were identified as multicultural or as serving particular groups of Catholics.

The recently concluded second phase consisted of in-pew surveys in multicultural parishes across the U.S. Over 11,100 adults completed the survey with topics ranging from race, primary language spoken at home, marital status, sacramental life, parishioner attitudes about cultural diversity, parish understanding of different cultures, welcoming of new parishioners, interacting with priests of different cultural backgrounds, staff reflection of cultural diversity of parishioners, tension between different cultural groups, among other topics. To facilitate and encourage participation, the study was translated into 20 languages at the request of the local pastors.

Some of the key findings, as they relate to religious practices include:

- The largest segment of parishioners in multicultural parishes (37 percent) are of the Post-Vatican II Generation (born 1961 to 1981) and are between the ages of 34 and 54.
- Those with school-age children in multicultural and ethnic communities are much more likely to enroll children in a Catholic school than the general Catholic population. Enrollment is most common among multi-racial and Vietnamese respondents and is least common among foreign-born Hispanic or Latino parents.
- Regarding religious participation, 83 percent of respondents have received their First Communion and 77 percent have been confirmed.
- 76 percent consider themselves "active Catholics." Nine percent are "returned Catholics" who may have left the faith for a period of time and have now returned. Eight percent indicate they are "converts" to Catholicism. Two percent are "non-Catholics," most often attending Mass with a Catholic relative. Five percent are "inactive Catholics."
- 67 percent of respondents are registered with their parish and 83 percent say this is their primary place of worship.
- U.S. born black or African American respondents are most likely to be personally involved in multiple ministries or activities (other than Mass attendance).

As they relate to the parish experience of diversity for each group, the findings are:

- Widespread majority agreement among all sub-groups that "having people of different cultural backgrounds enriches the parish."
- Few feel like an outsider in their parish. The group most likely to do so are foreign-born Hispanic or Latino parishioners (36% agree).
- Many agree that they have a role in the "decision-making" of their parish. Those most likely to "strongly" disagree with this are Koreans (51%) and Hispanics or Latinos (28%).
- Foreign-born parishioners are more interested than U.S.-born parishioners to believe their parish should be providing pastoral care for refugees and immigrants.

CARA affirms that the study reveals some important trends, and provides the following conclusions:

- The Catholic Church in the United States is one of the most culturally diverse institutions in the country and it will become even more diverse in the future.
- Parishes, schools and colleges, hospitals, charities, and other ministries need to adapt and prepare for this growing diversity.
- In the pews, many of those who are most comfortable with growing diversity are those who immigrated to the United States, though African American Catholics are one of the most likely to say they welcome diversity in the parish and that diversity enriches parish life.
- Those who are descendants of previous waves of immigration from Europe appear to be the least comfortable with diversity and less willing to engage in parish life beyond attending Mass.

Archbishop Garcia-Siller, asked the bishops to consider how the data speaks to their local realities and how these findings may affect the way local dioceses plan, set priorities and allocate resources for the continuation of the mission of the Church. He reminded them of Pope Francis' call to a pastoral conversion and to put the entire church in a "permanent state of mission."

The report is available at: www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/Cultural-Diversity-Summary-Report-October-2016.pdf.