

# Archdiocese of Milwaukee

## Synod 2014

### Background Paper:

### *Cultural Diversity*

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Introduction by

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**SYNOD 2014**  
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This section was written Bishop Donald J. Hying, the Auxiliary Bishop of Milwaukee, and it serves as the introduction for all eight Synod background papers. Bishop Hying presents “intentional discipleship” as our fundamental Catholic identity and the singular focus for all of our Synod considerations and challenges us to view all aspects of the Church in light of “formation for discipleship.”

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## I. Introduction: Discipleship: Our Fundamental Catholic Identity

*Introduction written by Bishop Donald J. Hying*

In the Gospels, Jesus confronts us with a fundamental question: Who do you say that I am? As Christians and members of the Church, we answer with Simon, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” In faith, we can add Savior, Light of the world, the Word made flesh, the Resurrection, the Prince of Peace. Through the saving activity of Jesus’ Incarnation, life, death and resurrection, we become adopted children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit, all in the mystery, communion and sacrament of the Church. The relationship that Jesus enjoys with the Father by nature of who he is, we receive as a pure offer of grace.

Baptized into the identity and mission of Jesus Christ, we proclaim Christ’s saving Gospel through a faith lived out in the words, actions, work, relationships and values of our lives. Our fundamental identity as disciples of Jesus Christ gives focus and method to the important activity of the new evangelization. As we painfully know, too many Catholics have not really been evangelized to know and experience the personal love of Jesus Christ, have been poorly catechized in the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, and do not participate in the sacramental life of the Church in any meaningful way. If we seek to change this disturbing trend, parishes must continue to grow in their fundamental identity as dynamic communities of faith which form intentional disciples. If we are not focused on formation for discipleship, we are failing the mission of Christ.

What do intentional Catholic disciples look like? How do they act? What is qualitatively different about their lives and personalities? The answer is clear yet challenging. Disciples are ordinary people who have experienced the love, forgiveness, presence, consolation and challenge of God poured out through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. They have fallen in love with the Lord and find their deepest identity in their relationship with him. They find God and the mission of his Kingdom to be the fundamental purpose of their lives and, having a strong **Catholic identity**, find the whole Catholic experience of the Scriptures, sacraments, moral life and prayer to be the transformative means of their ongoing conversion. As Paul discovered on the road to Damascus, they are people loved and forgiven by Jesus Christ.

Disciples instinctively **evangelize**, that is they naturally share their experience of God and their faith in him with others. The power of moral example itself evangelizes, as others intuitively sense that such a person lives from a very different center of meaning and purpose than secular society. In addition to witnessing by example, disciples are both courageous and articulate in their proclamation of Jesus and the difference he has made in their lives. They will freely pray with others, do volunteer work, witness to how the Lord has worked in their daily experience, offer moral advice when asked, share spiritual books, CDs and DVDs with family, friends and co-workers, all the while actively cultivating a discipleship response in those around them. The power of one Catholic who knows, practices and proclaims the faith is truly remarkable.

An intentional disciple is a good **steward**, knowing that everything in life is a superabundant gift freely bestowed upon us by the Lord, both to enrich us but also to bless and benefit others. This deep conviction of existence as a gift leads to a profound gratitude that pours itself out in deeds of mercy, love and healing. Like Mary who anoints the feet of Jesus with an extravagant costly perfume that cost 300 days' wages, we are compelled to break open and pour out the gifts of our lives in loving service of others and so fill the world with the sacred fragrance of Christ.

An intentional disciple is a Catholic maximalist, not asking what the minimum is that **must** be done in order to be saved, but rather asking what **can** be done for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Like St. Paul, a disciple has moved from the obligation of the law into the astonishing freedom of Christ, who liberates us to do every good work. In this context, the Blessed Virgin Mary is clearly the first and premier disciple who responds in total faith to the seemingly impossible proposal of the angel, places her entire being at the service of God and gives flesh to the Incarnate Word.

St. Augustine insists that when a Christian disciple places the whole mystery and gift of life at the service of God, the Lord Jesus takes flesh within that person and is offered to the world once again. For us as Catholics, in this critical moment in history, we cannot afford to proceed with business as usual. All over the world, millions of Catholics are asking the same questions:

- How can I have a deeper and more authentic relationship with Jesus Christ?
- How can I more effectively live out my faith in such a way that it actually makes a difference in the lives of others, especially my family and friends?
- How can we continue to insert Gospel values into the public square of politics, economy, health care and education?
- How can we bring back all of those Catholics who have fallen away from the practice of the faith?

In millions of different ways, intentional disciples are living out the exciting answers to these important questions. If the Gospel is the script of our lives, the new evangelization is the urgent challenge to act out with fresh enthusiasm and generosity the great drama of Christ's salvation.

Synod 2014 invites us to consider anew how to be intentional disciples, especially in the areas of Catholic Social Teaching, Cultural Diversity, Evangelization, Formation, Leadership, Liturgy, Marriage and Family, and Stewardship.

## II. A House of Prayer for All Peoples: Introduction and Overview

In his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis proclaims that “In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the beauty of her varied face” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 116).

The Catholic Church has the distinction of being the most ethnically diverse of all the denominations in the United States. A retrieval of the history of Catholicism in this land – however brief – might be helpful in providing a shared understanding as to the unceasing work of the Holy Spirit in giving birth to the diversity which is our hallmark today.

The first Catholic missionaries to arrive in the New World were the Spaniards who accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage and subsequently established missions in Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Southwest. French missionaries followed. Speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), we must acknowledge that the mission of evangelization in the context of the turbulent encounter between Western civilization and the indigenous peoples was, to say the least, a complex endeavor fraught with challenges. Yet there were also successes as the Church sought effective ways to communicate the Christian message incorporating, as best it could, the “seeds of the word” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 53) present in the many cultures of the New World. It was truly through the grace and providence of God that Christianity became rooted in the hearts of the people.

According to some accounts, the Church’s missionary activity with Native Americans in what is now the United States dates back to 1529.<sup>1</sup> Black Catholics arrived in Florida with the Spanish explorers in the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> Hispanic Catholics emerged from the *mestizaje* or blending of indigenous Mesoamerican cultures first with the Spanish, and then with Africans. Asian Pacific Catholics have been present in the United States mainland since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup>

From these early beginnings, evangelization entered yet another new and demanding phase during the period of colonization by the English. Catholics were small in number and not well received among the largely Protestant settlers in the thirteen colonies that banded together to form a new nation. That all changed with the unprecedented influx of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Poland, Italy and other European countries that took place in the 1800s and early 1900s, making Catholicism the largest religion in the country. Fleeing from hunger, war, religious persecution and oppression, they sought better lives for themselves and their families. The great majority were poor and uneducated. Though the United States proved to be a land of opportunity, the new arrivals encountered severe prejudice and hostility from nativists who viewed them with suspicion. It was during this pivotal moment in the history of the Church that national parishes came into being.

As a pastoral response to the unique circumstances of the time, the Church established an impressive system of national or “personal” parishes where immigrants could celebrate their faith and distinctive cultural traditions while adapting to a new way of life. Catholic schools assisted in the education of the children in the language of the home. Likewise, the Church established charitable institutions that provided needed services to assist immigrant families. The patterns of close interaction between the national parishes and schools, and the neighborhoods that grew around them, gave birth to a distinct Catholic culture with proud ethnic roots that can still be discerned today.

On any given Sunday in our diocese, Mass is celebrated in Polish, Malayalam, Spanish, English, Vietnamese, Korean, Hmong, Karen, sign language, and a host of other languages. In some parishes, the sound of drums welcome worshippers as they gather; in others it is guitars, organ music or the piano that accompany the faithful as they unite their voices in song. This wonderful symphony of praise is indicative of the profound demographic transformation that is still taking place in the United States. Growing numbers of Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, Africans and many other cultural families are bringing the diversity of the world to our doorstep – a diversity of experiences, of socio-economic levels, race, ethnicity, cultural expressions, and worship styles.<sup>4</sup>

As “a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isaiah 56:7), the Church continues its evangelizing mission in the world of today with all of its marvelous and bewildering complexity. The New Evangelization invites Catholics to renew their relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church, taking into account the *signs of the times* in which we live.

This is a decisive moment in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. More than simply celebrating diversity, we are called to give witness to communion across cultures, not only in worship, but in our pastoral care, in preparation for ministry, in our work on behalf of social justice, and in fulfilling the mission of the Church as disciples of Christ.

This paper will examine Cultural Diversity through the following perspectives:

- Current Cultural Realities
- Theological Foundations
- Other Related Information
- Key Issues to be Addressed
- Key Questions for Consideration

### III. Discipleship in a Society and Church of Many Cultures

For the Church, to evangelize means to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ into every human situation, transforming both individuals and society by the power of the Gospel. Evangelization is not directed only to the salvation of individual souls, but to entire societies and cultures. The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 15).

The evangelizing mission of Christ, which is entrusted to the Church, is only just beginning. John Paul II described the New Evangelization as *re-proposing* the saving message of Jesus Christ with “new ardor, methods and expression”, especially in places where the Gospel has already been embraced, but where signs of decline are evident (cf *Redemptoris Missio* 1, 2).

We need to consider what it means to live as disciples and to incarnate the New Evangelization in a Church and society of many cultures such as the United States. In so doing, we will discover fresh opportunities for presenting the message of Jesus Christ with prophetic urgency, profound clarity, and contemporary relevance. As so boldly stated by Pope Francis, “Let us have the audacity to make out new paths for proclaiming the Gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

#### **The social context**

We live in an increasingly secularized world where faith is not relevant. A fierce individualism has long been a characteristic of the prevailing culture in the United States; this is as much a source of pride as it is a cause for concern. Ours is a materialistic society that places excessive importance on wealth and possessions, while desensitizing us to the plight of the poor. We find also that we live in hyper-segregated communities which greatly limit our opportunities for significant interaction with others who are different from us. This malaise is so insidious and pervasive that it can trickle down even into our experience of parish life, causing the complaint that “11:00 on a Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of Christian America” to ring true.<sup>6</sup>

Though we lament these developments, we’ve come to accept them as too complex to solve. We are, after all, ordinary people and these are extraordinary problems. We have grown comfortable in our discomfort. Our lives are filled with distractions, empty noise that renders us incapable of hearing the voice of God. We need help in discerning what lies at the root of these challenges.

#### **Separation of faith and life**

As Paul VI reminds us in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church has always had the responsibility of scrutinizing the *signs of the times* and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In “language intelligible to each generation”, the Church seeks to guide the faithful in their search for answers to “perennial questions about this life and the life to come”.<sup>7</sup> The document goes on to say that one of the more serious errors of our age is the separation between people’s faith and their daily lives.<sup>8</sup> There lies the source of much that is not right in our personal lives

and in our lives in community. For how can we profess one set of beliefs when we gather as a community of faith, and then live according to other standards?

### **The Good News**

The vision that Jesus holds forth for humanity is radically different. Jesus came to set the world on fire with the love of God (Luke 12:49). The love of God compels us to set the right priorities for our lives and gives meaning to our earthly existence. Having experienced the love of Christ, we are compelled to share it with others. We become evangelizers as we give witness to others of this love and how it has changed us.

Jesus calls us into an encounter with the living God, to the awareness that for believers, the love of God leads to love of neighbor, regardless of race, social condition or any other construct that would divide us. The fruits of evangelization – that inimitable personal encounter with Christ – are changed lives and a changed world.<sup>9</sup> Formed into a community of disciples, we are able to experience the joy of the gospel, a joy born of the certainty that we are infinitely loved (*Evangelii Gaudium* 21).

### **The Gift and Challenge of Diversity**

The growing diversity in the Church and society – a gift fashioned into the heart of humanity by the hand of God - calls all Catholics to truly understand different perspectives of relating to other people, of praying, of being Church. In other words, we cannot take each other for granted.

Diversity is integral to the Church's identity and mission. The presence of diverse cultural communities has far-reaching implications for the organization of parishes and also for the preparation of pastoral leaders to enable them to provide the pastoral care that meets the needs of our diverse church, to call forth the gifts in each of these communities, and to seek ways to bring the various cultural families in our parishes and the diocese into greater interaction with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

In their resource document, "Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers", the bishops of the United States declare:

The Catholic Church is the most ethnically diverse of all the U.S. denominations. If we, as Catholics, can find ways of creating genuine communion among the various groups within the Church, *we can serve as a model for the rest of society.*

As daunting as it may seem to tend to the multiplicity of cultures and languages, there is also great cause for rejoicing. Catholics from different cultural families have much to offer to our parishes and to the Church in the United States.



**Asian Pacific Catholics** are 5 percent of the Catholic population of the country, yet thirteen percent of all men ordained in diocesan seminaries in 2008 were of Asian Pacific descent. Fourteen percent of newer entrants to religious life are Asian or Pacific Islander.<sup>10</sup> Nearly 18 million people identify themselves with an Asian or Pacific Islander background. There are many Asian and Pacific Islander communities and identities with a vast array of languages, cultures and religious traditions.<sup>11</sup> Asian Catholics also include members of Eastern Catholic Churches of the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and Middle-Eastern Catholic rites. Values that are central in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities include family and education, respect for the elderly, and harmony among all people. Also distinctive of Asian spirituality is the prominence given to popular devotions as well as the multitude of Marian devotions (e.g. Our Lady of La Vang for the Vietnamese, Our Lady of Vailankanni for the Indian). Asian Pacific Catholics bring an understanding of mission and a long tradition of lay leadership as key contributions to enrich the Church in the United States. (Source: *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith*)

The first national lay Catholic Congress to take place in the United States was a historic gathering of **Black Catholics** convened in 1889. Five congresses took place between 1889 and 1894 and became forums for Black Catholics to speak on the issues of **evangelization**, spirituality, education, and other concerns impacting the community. The most recent Black Catholic Congress took place in July of 2012 and also focused on evangelization. Along with this long-standing tradition of evangelization, Black Catholics bring to the Church a spirituality that is contemplative, holistic, joyful, and communitarian.<sup>12</sup> There is a wide variety in a community which includes all people of Black heritage: i.e., African American, African, and Afro-Caribbean. Black Catholics have coined the phrase, “truly black and authentically Catholic” which represents a serious search for meaning and validation in the face of evils such as racism, but also unwavering and steadfast faith in the midst of struggle.<sup>13</sup> Spirituals, a musical testimony to the faith, beauty, and resilience of the Black community, are a gift to the Church and to society. There are 3 million African American Catholics in the United States. The Black population is estimated to be just over 36 million people or 13 percent of the total U.S. population. According to a recent vocation study, 6 percent of newer entrants to religious life are African, Black, or African American.

(Sources: [www.uspapalvisit.org/backgrounders/african\\_american.htm](http://www.uspapalvisit.org/backgrounders/african_american.htm); Vocations to Religious Life Fact Sheet, NCRV/CARA, February 2013.)

**Deaf Catholics** share a distinct culture or way of life. The core of the deaf community consists of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth or became such at an early age. About 4 percent of the general population is deaf or experiences some degree of hearing loss from mild to severe. Deaf and hard of hearing persons use a variety of communication modes, including American Sign Language, contact signing, and the oral method which depends primarily on lip-reading. Deaf Catholics desire to grow in their Catholic faith.

However, many Deaf Catholics who wish to practice the faith do not have access to services to enable them to participate fully and to feel as valued members of the parish family. In the last several years, Deaf Catholics have increasingly assumed leadership roles and worked to bring awareness regarding the needs and gifts of the Deaf Catholic community. The presence of Deaf adults and children invites us to be more inclusive in every aspect of parish life, especially in liturgical celebrations, sacraments, catechetical programs and lay ministries of the parish, so that as members of the Church they may enjoy rich, full and rewarding spiritual lives. (Source: *Principles for Understanding Deaf Ministry, National Catholic Office for the Deaf*)

**Hispanic/Latino Catholics** exemplify values central to the service of Church and society. Among these are: profound respect for the dignity of each person; deep and reverential love for family life; a sense of community that celebrates life through “fiesta”; loving appreciation for God’s gift of life and an understanding of time which allows one to savor that gift; and an authentic and consistent devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. Popular devotions and religious movements such as *Cursillo* and Charismatic Renewal are very important vehicles for evangelization in the Hispanic community. Hispanic/Latino Catholics accounted for 40 percent of all growth in parishes in the United States from 2005 to 2010. Hispanics currently make up 39 percent of all Catholics. More than 50 percent of all Catholics in the United States under age 25 – the “Millennial” generation - are of Hispanic/Latino descent. Over the past few years, 15 percent of all new priests ordained in the United States have been of Hispanic/Latino descent. Twenty-one percent of newer entrants to religious life are Hispanic/Latino(a). (Source: [www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs](http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs))

**Native American Catholics** embody values that connect them with the sacred: values such as hospitality and welcoming, a strong sense of family and community, generosity, honor, respect, humility and inclusion. Native American spirituality is rich in symbolism, rituals, ceremonies, dance and song. Life is seen as a circle with the Creator at the center; everyone in it is a relative. The Native American presence invites us to acknowledge the necessity of healing painful memories; i.e. *mending the circle* of the people and of then celebrating the new awareness and relationships that come with healing.<sup>14</sup> Approximately 2.5 million people in the U.S. identify themselves as Native American or Alaska Native, with an additional 1.6 million people claiming some degree of Native ancestry. Of this number, an estimated 680,000 are Catholic. According to a study of dioceses conducted by the Bishops’ *Ad Hoc* Committee on Native American Catholics published in 2002, *Native American Catholics at the Millennium*, 23 percent of dioceses have an office or regularly provided ministerial services to Native American Catholics as a specific group.

(Source: [http://old.usccb.org/comm/backgrounders/native\\_american.shtml](http://old.usccb.org/comm/backgrounders/native_american.shtml))

There are, of course, many more cultural families present in our archdiocese in addition to the ones mentioned above. Whatever their histories or numbers in relation to the entire Catholic population, each cultural family is a vital part of the tapestry that is our local church, and each has a story to tell. It is essential for parishes and dioceses that seek to build greater community among diverse cultural families to create opportunities for the meaningful sharing of stories – their history, values and spirituality and how they view the church. Storytelling and faith sharing can be the beginning of the delicate process of intercultural encounter and community building.

#### **IV. Cultural Diversity: Theological Foundations**

A theology of cultural diversity finds many rich sources in Scripture, beginning with the creation of humankind “in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:27), but it is first and foremost in the person of Jesus and in the early Christian community that we find models of discipleship and community to inspire and guide us as modern-day disciples.

Jesus was the first and greatest evangelizer. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and sent to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:18). Before beginning his public ministry, Jesus prepared himself with forty days of fasting and prayer in the desert, and consistently continued to turn to prayer throughout the unfolding of his mission. Jesus shared the Gospel with others in a personal way. He told stories and used examples that resonated with the lives of the people. He preached with words, but even more so by example. He broke through barriers to show that God loves all people, and has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. Jesus first proclaimed the Gospel in his hometown of Nazareth, but then went much further to Jerusalem. Though many were receptive to his message and became his followers, others rejected him and his words of life.

Jesus was crucified at Calvary, outside the walls of Jerusalem. He suffered a death of unspeakable cruelty and shame. Above his head hung the title “Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews” (John 19:19). The title was both a mockery and an accusation, for Jesus, a lowly Galilean, was charged with rebellion against Rome. Pontus Pilate had the sign written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew for all to see. Why is this significant? Latin was the official language of the Roman Empire. Greek was the international language of culture, art, and commerce. Hebrew was the religious language of the Jews. Though seemingly powerless, Jesus challenged each of these cultures and their established norms to the core by breaking through the social, economic, religious and political divides of the time, as Pilate himself unwittingly acknowledged.

What comes next is a rapid succession of one stunning event after another: Christ’s resurrection, his appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and to those gathered on the Upper Room, his promise of the Holy Spirit, and his command for his followers to continue his mission “to make disciples of all nations “ (Matthew 28:19).

As promised by Jesus, the Holy Spirit descends upon his followers at Pentecost, filling them with boldness and the ability to speak in other languages. Peter preaches so powerfully that many believe and are baptized that day. It is in this way that the Holy Spirit gives birth to the first Christian community, one that is vibrant, joyous, generous, richly diverse, and most importantly, united by their faith.

They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold their property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Much like the people who lived in the time of Jesus, we encounter the Paschal Mystery (the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus) from the horizons of our own cultures. Who is Christ to us? What are the barriers that divide us today? How can we live the spirit of unity in the midst of diversity as manifested by the early Church? These are questions we need to answer both as individual disciples and as a community of believers. However we choose to answer, there is a picture that remains before our eyes. In extending his arms on the cross, Jesus embraced all of humanity. As disciples of Christ, we are called to do the same.

## V. Other Related Information – Definition of Terms

Cultures do not exist in isolation, but in relationship with one another. Culture "...has to do with the lifestyle of a given society, the specific way in which its members related to one another, to other creatures and to God. Understood in this way, culture embraces the totality of a people's life."<sup>15</sup> Culture creates a shared identity; it is both learned and in a constant process of being created as it is passed from generation to generation.

*Gaudium et Spes* notes that the Church is not tied to any culture. Rather, the Church can incarnate in many different cultures and become enriched by them, since every culture has positive values to offer which can enhance the way the Gospel is preached, understood and lived. At the same time, every culture has elements which need the critique and transformative action of the gospel.<sup>16</sup> To put it another way, "... one reason the gospel transcends all cultures and can be identified fully with none is that it will trouble any culture we have known."<sup>17</sup>

We often speak of the **inculturation** of faith. Through inculturation the Church "makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures into her own community." (*Redemptoris Missio* 52). The test of true inculturation is whether people become more committed to their Christian faith because they perceive it more clearly with the eyes of their own culture. Inculturation, like conversion, is an ongoing process, rather than a once-for-all encounter (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 22).

**Cultural competence** refers to the ability to interact comfortably and confidently with others in a particular cultural framework by appropriately utilizing or referencing the assumptions, customs, values, and symbols of the culture. Basic communication between cultures becomes a challenge not only because of language, but also because of differing cultural modes of expression. This raises the need to learn about **intercultural communication**. Resources are available to assist parishes in this area, however, the best of techniques and resources are effective only if there is first a firm desire and commitment to grow together. The early Church depicted in the Acts of the Apostles can be a model for this process.

## **VI. Cultural Diversity: Key Issues to Be Addressed**

We know that the church has been diverse from its inception and that many different cultural families form our local church today. The parish is where the average Catholic concretely experiences the Church at its most personal level. The parish needs to be constantly renewed while remaining, above all, a Eucharistic community. As such, parishes are called to be welcoming places of education and celebration of the faith, organized in a communal and responsible way, attentive to the cultural diversity of the people, and open to pastoral projects which go beyond the individual parish (*Ecclesia in America* 45).

One pressing issue before us is how to equip parishes to more fully welcome and embody diversity and actively prepare and support parishioners as they grow in their ability to bond with others cross-culturally. Without significant interaction with people of other cultures at the parish level, we are not able to live up to our Creed or to challenge the *status quo* of isolation and segregation we find in society. We need to move forward, realizing that developing an intercultural ministry at the parish level will demand new approaches, as well as time, energy and resources. At the same time, as we build stronger relationships we will also reap unexpected blessings and benefits.

A second issue for our local church is related to worship. Worship is not a peripheral matter for believers. It is the foundation of Catholic identity. The Latin maxim "*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*" speaks of the centrality of worship in the life, identity and mission of the Church. Simply stated, how we worship reflects what we believe. What we believe in turn guides us in how we live our Christian faith in relationship to God, one another and the world around us. Worship has the power to transform us. We must be attentive to the diversity that is present (or absent) in the congregation who gathers for worship, and how well our liturgies and prayer experiences incarnate and teach us about the diversity that is our legacy as the Body of Christ. This implies taking concrete actions in the area of worship, such as learning about the liturgical style, devotional life and musical traditions proper to the various cultural families of our parishes and the diocese and experiencing the beauty of multicultural worship and liturgies.

A third and crucial issue is related to training for ministry and the development of leaders. The cultural diversity of the Church demands that all ministry training be done with an awareness and appreciation of the many cultural contexts within our faith communities. We need to be more aware of how different cultures call forth and nurture leaders for insights on how our traditional formational programs can be more inclusive of this diversity in leadership styles. It is necessary to prepare ministers who are not only affirming of all cultures but who actually possess the skills to minister cross-culturally. It all begins with a true openness to others, with the firm desire to learn from and engage with people of diverse cultural backgrounds and finally, with the understanding of diversity as a way of life, not a problem to be solved.<sup>18</sup>

A final issue which merits our attention is how to respond to the special needs of families, especially as it relates to cultural diversity and evangelization. Family is the most intimate experience of Church, the place where love, forgiveness and trust should be first encountered (*Lumen Gentium* 11). Strong families are able to pass on the faith, values and cultural traditions to the next generation. Within the family unit, young people are treasured as our hope for the future. While that is true, this description may downplay the urgency of the need to invite, nourish and engage youth and young adults in the life and mission of the Church today. When it comes to the evangelization of the family, one size does not fit all. Promoting the appreciation of other cultures and providing opportunities for families and youth to share in prayer, social action, and building community will enable our parishes and the families themselves to address inclusion issues in a multicultural church and society while also live their traditions with joy.

## **VII. Cultural Diversity: Key Questions for Consideration**

1. Parish Life: What pastoral initiatives can the diocese employ to enhance our parishes' ability to more fully welcome and embody diversity and actively prepare and support parishioners as they grow in their ability to bond with others across cultures at the parish level and beyond the parish?
2. Worship: How can the diocese assist parishes to learn about the liturgical style, devotional life and musical traditions proper to the various cultural families of our parishes? How might we as a diocese more frequently experience the beauty of multicultural worship and liturgies?
3. Leadership: How do we raise up and train new leaders in the different cultural communities? How do we further enable all who currently serve in some leadership capacity to minister to our diverse church?

4. Families and Youth: How can the diocese partner with families, youth and young adults as they seek to preserve the treasures of faith and culture from earlier generations to enrich not only their own communities but the church as a whole? What strategies or initiatives might the diocese utilize to equip youth and young adults to take on leadership roles for the church in the future, being true to the riches of their cultural background?

### **VIII. People of a New Creation: Conclusion**

In *Ecclesia in America* we read, “The Church of the twenty-first century will be, as it has always been, a Church of many cultures, languages and traditions, yet also one, as the triune God is one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—unity in diversity.”

Because the church is diverse, as intentional disciples we need to do our best to call, form, send, and make disciples among all peoples. Because the parish is where Catholics experience the Church at the personal level, it is also the place with the most potential for bringing people of different cultural backgrounds together to become people of a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).

May the Holy Spirit open our minds and hearts to the evangelizing potential of the Church’s rich and growing diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl F. Starkloff, “Native Americans and the Catholic Church” in the Encyclopedia of American Catholic History, 1009-20.

<sup>2</sup>Fr. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> As early as 1763, a Filipino settlement had been established at Saint Malo in Louisiana. *Many Faces, One Church: Cultural Diversity and the American Catholic Experience* edited by Peter C. Phan, Diana L. Hayes.

<sup>4</sup> Six major “cultural families” are reflected on the structure of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops: (1) European American, (2) Hispanic/Latino, (3) African American, (4) Asian and Pacific Islanders, (5) Native Americans, and (6) Migrants, Refugees and Travelers.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis Address at the Year of Faith International Congress for Catechists, September 17, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. made this observation on December 18, 1963 at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

<sup>7</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>9</sup> *Go and Make Disciples*, 18.

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<sup>10</sup> Vocations to Religious Life Fact Sheet, National Religions Vocation Conference, February 2013.

<sup>11</sup> There are fifty-three Asian countries and territories, as well as twenty-six Pacific Island states. *Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith*, USCCB, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> *What We Have Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States*, 8 (1984).

<sup>13</sup> *Black Catholic Worship: Some Reflections* by Bishop Joseph Perry, American Catholic Press.

<sup>14</sup> Richard M. Grinnell, Jr., *The People: Reflections of Native Peoples on the Catholic Experience in North America*, 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Go and Make Disciples, 115.

<sup>16</sup> cf. Gaudium et Spes 53-63

<sup>17</sup> Inculturation and Evangelization in the North American Context, CTSA Proceedings 45/1990, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*, Cultural Diversity in the Church Committee, United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, 2012.