

## **Commissioning Mass for V Encuentro**

**August 18, 2018**

**“The Church in America as elsewhere is called to go out from its comfort zone and be a leaven of communion; communion among ourselves, with our fellow Christians, and with all who seek a future of hope. We need to become ever more fully a community of missionary disciples, filled with love of the Lord Jesus and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel. The Christian community is meant to be a sign of prophesy, of God’s plan for the entirety of humanity. We are called to be bearers of good news for a society rent by disconcerting social, cultural and spiritual shifts and increasing polarization.”** These are the words of Pope Francis to all participating in this process of the V Encuentro. They are passionate words and challenging words. This is the core of what the Encuentro is commissioned to embody. For all of you delegates to the National Encuentro, this is the core of what you will be commissioned to embody as our voice in the gathering of the Church in our beloved nation.

**“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them.”** These words of Jesus were a challenge of his time. Do not despise any class of person. The children in his day were seen as lesser than adults. They were disregarded, and their voice was not heeded. Jesus rebuked the hardness of the hearts of the believers around him. He has commissioned us to do it in our day in our part of the world. It is the call of our baptism, to reach out to all children of God, all ages, all races, all ethnicities, speakers of all languages, people in

**all circumstances. There is no one for whom the Gospel is not meant. There is no one we can ignore or keep at arm's length. We are baptized Christians, charged with bringing the light of God to all.**

**In this Encuentro process, we have heard many stories. We have heard stories of those who have always felt a home in the Church, with them we rejoice. But we have heard stories of those who have not found welcome. The Lord reminds us that “the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” My dear delegates, carry these stories with you to the national gathering.**

**In this very pained time in our Church, we hear well the first reading today. We are promised that the sins of others are not laid upon us, but the Church – the Body of Christ – suffers together the effects of these sins. We must remember who we are. We are people of hope and people of promise. The human shortcomings of our fellow believers, as terrible as they can sometimes be, do not negate our hope. We must also acknowledge the sufferings of our brothers and sisters who have not been respected and loved as is their right and dignity. This suffering cries out to heaven, but does not negate the promise we have received. We stand with our sisters and brothers in pain, those separated, those discarded and forgotten. We stand and let them come to the Lord, and follow with them.**

**I ask the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe in your lives and in your next step of Encuentro. May she who bore Christ to all people teach us to do the same. May your witness shine and bring light to the Church in our nation. Through your witness, draw more of God's children, and let them come to him.**