

Closing Remarks – Archdiocesan Assembly

November 5, 2016

My dear sisters and brothers in the Lord Jesus, we are, indeed, United as Church! We came here to celebrate our diversity and our communion within the Archdiocese and with the universal Church. We have also sought to deepen our unity and overcome divisions among us.

Sharing God’s enduring love, mercy, and compassion with others --through the working of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within and among us -- leads us to reconciliation, a deeper sense of harmony, and peace –characteristics of the Kingdom of God already present. .

The joy that we derive from the Word of God drives us to share the good news of our salvation with everyone we encounter. We do this – not only through our words of faith, hope, and love – but also, and above all, in our reaching out in actions on behalf of the poor, the needy, the lost, the forgotten, the outcasts, the elderly, the very young, unborn children, prisoners on death row – wherever we see human suffering, despair, searching for something or someone – ultimately, for a loving, provident God. Let us commit ourselves to proclaim the Lord Jesus and his gospel with enthusiasm, joy, and

boldness. Not trying to dominate or proselytize but, rather, sharing the joy of the gospel through our daily lives.

The Encuentro is a process of evangelization. We are called to be missionary disciples of the Lord. The spirituality and accompaniment of the Encuentro recalls the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. They begin a journey from Jerusalem disillusioned and confused. Jesus begins to accompany them on their way. When they stop for dinner, they recognize the risen Lord in the “breaking of the bread” and joyfully run to Jerusalem to share the good news!

Two years ago we began to prepare for the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry. Last year consisted of the formation and training of episcopal regional teams and leaders. This year we have been forming and training diocesan and parish leaders. Next year we will have parish and diocesan encuentros followed in 2018 by episcopal regional encuentros and the V Encuentro National event. In 2019 we will prepare a final document and gather in post-Encuentro events.

The subcommittee to lead the Encuentro process consists of Bishops Arturo Cepeda, Gerald Barnes, Nelson Perez, and me. We

estimate that participants will include 1 million pastoral leaders representing 175 dioceses and 42 organizations, 13 lay ecclesial movements, and 5,000 thousand parishes.

The goal of V Encuentro is to discern ways in which the Church in the United States can better respond to the Hispanic/Latino presence, and to strengthen the ways in which Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church. Our first objective is to call all Catholics to become authentic and joyful missionary disciples that give witness to God's love with prophetic voice in a culturally diverse Church.

In all of this we are responding to the call of Pope Francis articulated in his Apostolic Exhortation (*Evangelii Gaudium*). "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." "Before all else the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others, and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others."

We are called to be joyful missionary disciple! The joy is Jesus! Live through Jesus! Serve Jesus. Continue Jesus' mission and ministry by joyfully proclaiming the Lord Jesus and his gospel!