

V Encuentro
Friday, September 21
Plenary Session Opening Remarks (5:30PM)
Most Rev. Mario E. Bishop Dorsonville

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

As the lead bishop for the coordination of the V Encuentro process in Region IV, a region that counts with 7 dioceses and ministers to almost one million Hispanic Catholics, it is a real joy—*un gozo profundo*—to share with all of you some of our conclusions.

There is much expectation to go out from our traditional ways of evangelization, to a church reaching out to the peripheries and the streets to find the people who really need to hear the message of Jesus Christ. In order to proclaim the good news, there is an enormous need for training. One of the most important recommendations from our leaders is the one that will affect the quality of the work developed in our parishes: FORMATION... *la formación*. No one can give what unfortunately they have not received.

Raising up Hispanic Leadership must be a joint action and initiative coming from dioceses and parishes in collaboration with institutions of higher education, to promote ongoing training and catechetical formation for those who play an important role in the lives of our communities of believers. In explaining this action of faith formation, we need to look for opportunities to include professional development, special needs, cultural diversity, youth, young adults and families.

Encuentro has already impacted our catholic school system by demonstrating the need to increase enrollment of children from our immigrant communities. The immigrant presence instead of being a threat is a gift and opportunity—*los inmigrantes somos un don*. But growing and expanding enrollment is an opportunity beyond meeting enrollment targets. There is a need to see our interaction with the immigrant families as a mission in development rather than a merely a need to fund our school operations.

Hermanos, pasamos por un momento difícil. Our families are being separated and divided. Our children are taken away from their parents, and the human tragedy hits our communities every day, in our cities and in our streets. This drama has gone on for months and years and still we don't see a clear solution to our broken immigration system. The Church is called to accompany and to enter into solidarity with those who feel rejected and isolated. We need to recall the teachings of the One who came two thousand years ago and gave us His gospel where He teaches us "Blessed are those who welcome the stranger".

Our families are immersed in a culture of materialism; making it more imperative that we work with the present and future of our Church—*nuestra juventud*—our Youth and our Children. It is time for all of us to measure the current and future impact of catechesis on their lives. Key to the formation of children and youth is promoting the commitment of parents to commit to and transmit a series of moral values not only by word but through a real testimony of life. Our church has to move from formulas of profession of faith into real

life and actions that define the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily work. *Lo cotidiano debe estar bañado del Espíritu Santo.*

CONCLUSION

The V Encuentro on Hispanic Leadership will set us in a mission! A mission which needs to be developed—*entre nuestra gente*—amongst our people, in our parishes and ecclesial movements; a mission that extends to our schools and universities, a mission that needs to be fulfilled primarily in the midst of our families—*dentro de la iglesia domestica*.

As disciples, we are sent to proclaim THE LOVE OF OUR LORD. Now, is the time for each of us to make the commitment: **“I am going to do it! Not the one who is at my side.”**—*No puedes esperar a que tu vecino lo haga.*

God is calling us by name as he did it more than 2000 years ago when he called Mary. Y como sus hijos, we are invited to follow her generous example and answer to God's will. We are to make her words our own: **“I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”**