

Message of Pope Francis for the National V Encuentro



Dear brother bishops and delegates to the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry,

I am overjoyed to speak to you on this occasion. It is a historic moment for the Church in the United States. Through this Fifth Encuentro, you seek to create a culture of encounter that rekindles hope. By gathering with people from different cultures, different ways of living, of thinking, of feeling—you encounter one another and walk together in hope.

You have set out to achieve a different way of being and relating that encourages each person, and each group, to share the richness of their traditions, the richness of their experiences, to tear down walls and build bridges.

I see that the Fifth Encuentro is a concrete way for the Church in the United States to respond to the challenge of going beyond what is comfortable, business as usual, to become a leaven of communion for all those who seek a future of hope, especially young people and families that live in the peripheries of society.

I am also pleased to see that the Fifth Encuentro, in continuity with the previous Encuentros, recognizes and values the specific gifts that Hispanic Catholics offer today, and will continue to offer in the future, to the Church in their country. This experience of Encuentro goes much further, it is part of a much larger process of renewal, of missionary impulse to which all the local Churches, the particular Churches, are called with their rich human and cultural diversity. And this was the case in several dioceses in your country where the process of the Encuentro included all the faithful.

I know that the process of this V Encuentro comforted many immigrants who live in situations of fear and uncertainty. The V Encuentro has given them a greater sense of community, friendship, support. It has also been an instrument of grace that led to a conversion of heart for many people and, above all, to pastoral conversion in different situations, pastoral conversion in the particular churches, in parishes, in schools, in any type of ecclesial gathering. It is a pastoral conversion through the encounter [with one another], of course in the adoration of Jesus Christ.

I hope that, after the V National Encuentro takes place, it continues to bear fruit and that the Church in all its settings, continues to accompany this process with its own reflection and pastoral discernment. In other words, that the Church, the local churches continue to accompany this whole process. In particular, I ask you to consider how your local churches can better respond to the growing presence, gifts, and potential of Hispanic young people and families, and of other cultures.

I am aware of the contribution that the Hispanic community offers to the life of the nation and I pray that the V Encuentro continues to contribute to the renewal of society and the ministry of the Church in the United States of America.

I am very grateful to all those who participated in the preparations for the V Encuentro, in the V [National] Encuentro, and those who will participate in the subsequent process. I assure you of my personal closeness and my prayers for this important initiative of the Bishops' Conference.

I entrust all of you to our Mother of Guadalupe. I ask her to look over you. Allow her to fix her gaze upon you. And I implore the Lord's blessing upon each, and every one of you. And I ask you not to forget to pray for me. Go forward!