

Good morning brothers and sisters. Have you been enjoying this V National Encuentro? Yes! Should we have the VI Encuentro next year? Like Bart Simpson would say, “¡Ay carrumba!”

Dear friends, this is the day that Lord has made. Let me try that again. This is the day that the Lord has made – let us rejoice and be glad. In Psalm 63 we have prayed, “Oh God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.” What has brought us here to Grapevine, most fundamentally was our longing to encounter, together, the God of Jesus Christ. Because our soul is thirsting for you, because our body, our mind and our spirit cry out for you the living God. Because of our longing for God we have come together and we have lifted our hearts and hands in thanksgiving and in adoration. In particular it has made us worship with a spirit of thankfulness.

In the Canticle of Daniel, we sing the praise of creation. Indeed, every Sunday we celebrate the gift of creation – the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, and the earth and all of its wonder. With all God’s holy people, we have been called to give God thanks and praise for the beautiful gift of our common home. We have been called during this morning prayer to bless our Lord, our creator, our redeemer. We are going to celebrate the creation. This morning we are going to celebrate also the re-creation of the Church in the United States because of the growing presence of Hispanics. This re-creation of the Church is what we celebrate in the V Encuentro. How is this happening? Through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the divine word. We are being re-created by the young people, in the fast-growing Hispanic presence. Through the devotion of the Hispanic people - your warmth, your love of family and all the gifts that God has given you. For your intense desire to really be in the leadership of the Church at all times. For this and much more.

The Canticle of Daniel, however, speaks not only of the warmth of the sun and the energy of nature, but the canticle also speaks of night and of darkness. Even in the dark night of this present moment of scandal and shame, you are helping to bring the Church to a rebirth of goodness and holiness and integrity. For this, we your shepherds, humbly thank you. As we go forth, we bear in our hearts the new song of redemption. The new song that we sang this morning in psalm 149. “Sing a new song to the Lord, his presence in the assembly of the faithful.” Brothers and sisters, we are called to be that assembly. That assembly who sings the new song of those redeemed by Christ, of those who are gathered before God the Father and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, in the kingdom of heaven. We are called to sing again and again that new song, first placed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit on the day of our Baptism.

Dear friends, we will sing this new song of redemption with the Church universal, but increasingly in the United States it is being sung en español, in Spanish, and indeed a Spanish with many accents. With accents from Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Cuba, Guatemala, and many other accents. Am I missing any country? The only accent that we shouldn’t sing this new song in is with my accent in Spanish.

Brothers and sisters, even as this new song of redemption echoes in our minds and hearts, our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, calls you and me again and again and again to be missionary disciples, who in

the grace of the Holy Spirit help shape an evangelizing Church. A Church that goes forth. A Church that shows initiative. An evangelizing Church which is both involved and engaged. A Church in which missionary disciples accompany others, especially the poor and vulnerable, along the way of salvation. A Church that journeys together, together in living and proclaiming the faith. No doubt about it – these are the days the Lord has made. The days of the V Encuentro. Let us rejoice and be glad in them. Alleluia. Alleluia.