

**V National Encuentro of Hispanic-Latino Ministry
Plenary: “Our Church: Bearing Fruit of New Life”
Saturday, September 22, 2018
Bishop Arturo Cepeda
Grapevine, Texas**

“Our Church: Bearing Fruit of New Life”

My sisters and brothers:

It is with great pleasure, tremendous faith and joy, that we are on this pilgrimage.

Today, as the Catholic Church of the United States, we continue on our journey with the Lord to proclaim that we are his missionary disciples and are witnesses of his love.

Today, after a long pilgrimage, the risen Lord continues to encounter us. It is He who walks with us.

The process of this V Encuentro has allowed us to unite our voices, our lives, our sorrows and uncertainties, as well as our dreams and desires, in a journey towards the new evangelization, which is deeply ecclesial. We have committed ourselves, as a Catholic community, to an intentional process of listening and consultation.

We continue our intention, with the help of God, to be a Church that "goes forth" to take the first step, to "*primerear*" as our Holy Father Francis says.

To take our faith and bring it to the peripheries of our family and society. Sisters and brothers, our Church must continue to bear fruits of new life. In the Gospel

of St. John (15:16) We hear:

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.”

With these words of our Lord, we now gather together as people of faith. As the Lord’s chosen people.

Called to bear abundant fruit!

Let me share two practical examples of how this process is bearing fruit in our Church.

1. With our young people:
During the process, in one of our parishes in Region VI, the *Pastoral Juvenil* (Hispanic Youth & Young Adult Ministry) group met to learn about the process and to participate in this pilgrimage.

As you know, they were given the Guide and they started the process together. They faithfully followed each of the five sessions. With its songs and prayers, as well as with the questions of the discernment process.

On one occasion, when they were at their meetings, another young man from the parish who was a member of the “Youth Ministry” realized what was happening and simply asked the question: What is this Encuentro process about?

As a community the Hispanic young people told him: "Come and see."

That was all it took.

Now in the parish, both the *Pastoral Juvenil* group and Youth Ministry group continue to hold their meetings together.

My sisters and brothers, this is what we need in order to bear fruit: Invite. Be a community. Share our faith.

2. The fruits of prayer:

On another occasion, one of our very active parishes in the V Encuentro process made the decision to take this pilgrimage of the Encuentro to all the prayer societies of the parish.

A woman, who is an older woman and very wise and widely-recognized in the parish, tells me:

"Bishop, I can't sit back and do nothing... we have to pray."

With these words I immediately realized how the process leads us on a journey that will bear fruit.

A journey, on which the risen Lord comes to encounter us.

A journey on which all of us, as a Church, commit ourselves to be missionary disciples and witnesses of his love.