

FALL/WINTER 2020

# One Church Many Cultures

The Good News of Cultural Diversity

## We Journey Together

*By: Makhá Akáŋ Nažíŋ Black Elk, Executive Director for Truth and Healing, Red Cloud Indian School*



Members of Indigenous communities across the country gathered in a Zoom meeting together to share with each other our stories and experiences as Catholic and Native Americans. I was struck by the novelty of the occasion. I have never intentionally engaged with other Native Catholic people before this moment to reflect on our experiences. Of course, I engage in my Catholic faith with other Native people often in my own parish and have been a part of workshops and discussions with other Catholic schools that serve Native people. But that was always prayer in practice. Rare is it that we've taken the time to ask each other, "What does it mean for us to be Catholic? What draws us to this faith journey? What challenges us and others in this journey?"

It is not entirely uncommon to be asked the question, "How can you be Native American and Catholic?" It's an understandable question. We know the truth of the history that many Native peoples experienced in the brutal colonization of this nation in which the Catholic church played no small part. So, it's easy to see why someone might question the very nature of this paradox. One of my fellow participants in the conversation spoke to this, "I see

my Catholic faith as a more important part of my identity than my Native heritage." While we always have various components of ourselves rise and fall as we relate to others I found this idea part of a long-standing tradition in talking about Native peoples. That we walk in two worlds, one Native, and one the Other.

But the truth is that we do not have to choose. I am proud of my Lakota identity and it forms a core part of who I am. But I am also proud of my Catholic faith and find comfort, community, and most importantly, a relationship to God. Too often indigenous peoples are asked to choose between their traditions, culture, and heritage and the Other. As though they are fundamentally at odds. Forever in competition and bound for one to lose the fight. We should not have to be at war. The beauty of this time together highlighted the beauty of just how incredibly resilient, resourceful, and part of the future we are.

Our indigenous identity has often been portrayed as a barrier to others, but it can equally become how we stand strong among our fellows. This is the continued invitation also to our non-Indigenous relatives. To build relationships, you must begin to know us. This journey we take in knowing ourselves and building bridges to others is one of the most important steps to true healing.

# Journeying Together as Brothers and Sisters

By: Mar Muñoz-Visoso, MTS



At a recent international conference, Cardinal Michael Czerny of the Vatican's Section on Migrants and Refugees was asked about his take on Pope Francis' new-est encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti* (on human fraternity and social friendship). The Cardinal highlighted several aspects particularly

relevant to him and to his work in responding to the plight of migrants. But it was his overall evaluation of the encyclical that caught my attention the most.

"If you think of the significance of *Rerum Novarum* (1891) from Pope Leo XIII on the rights and duties of capital and labor, or *Pacem in Terris* from Pope John XXIII (1963) advising a post-war world that peace between all peoples must be based on truth, justice, love and freedom, at the time when they were issued, then, *Fratelli Tutti* would be the equivalent for our time." Cardinal Czerny's weighty comparison set high expectations in me and made me want to dive into it as soon as it was out.

In my humble opinion, he was not wrong or remotely exaggerating. It will take a while to dissect it completely—there is a lot to digest there. But even at this early stage, it is easy to recognize that in *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis is offering a weary world, and not just Catholics, the Church's teaching and the medicine that it desperately needs at this junction.

The pope reminds us of the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching on human dignity, our vocation to love one another and our call to universal friendship, the nature and root of social conflict, and our duty to seek and work towards the common good of all. He encourages us, in imitation of St. Francis of Assisi, the saint that inspired both *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli*, to sow "seeds of peace" wherever we go and "spread the love of God" which knows no boundaries.

By now we have grown accustomed to Pope Francis' "synodal way", which he applies not only to meetings but also to his writings. He quotes extensively from magisterial teachings, including his own and that of prior pontiffs, Fathers of the Church, bishops and conferences from around the world, and also from ground-breaking joint efforts with brothers and sisters of other faiths, such as the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and

Living Together (Abu Dhabi 2019), letting them speak for themselves. He offers a great summary of his own thoughts on the topic gathered from various messages, speeches, and writings during his pontificate.

*Fratelli Tutti* encourages us to continue along this synodal pathway of listening and accompanying one another. Judging by the way Catholic young adults and ministry leaders in the United States are responding to it through the *Journeying Together* process of encounter, inspired by the Holy Father's exhortation *Christus Vivit*, this "walking alongside" one another is healing a lot of wounds, bringing different people together in the midst of an ongoing pandemic in previously unimagined ways, and creating many new friendships that will bear much fruit for the future of the Church and for society.

Since July 25, 2020 Catholic young adults, youth ministers, campus ministers, bishops and staff from various departments of the USCCB, representing many and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, have been "journeying together". This issue is dedicated to gather the initial experiences of this process in the words of several of their protagonists. I hope you will enjoy and be inspired by them.

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# We are *Journeying Together!*

By: Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church



Hope. Peace and healing. A desire to connect with each other, a need for community and a sense of belonging, a thirst to hear more about the things of God, which sometimes they don't know where to find. These are some of the things I am hearing and experiencing by walking together with hundreds of young adults of the most

diverse cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, from across the country in this wonderful synodal experience called *Journeying Together*.

Thanks to all the young people, the youth ministers, campus ministers, bishops and others who have said yes to the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church's invitation! Your voice is important in the Church.

The pandemic, political and social strife and persistent expressions of hate, racism and discrimination have affected us in many and often tragic ways over the past year. But all of it has not been able to stop this intercultural process of encounter for young people and those who accompany them. Our virtual gatherings and the mutual accompaniment we are experiencing through them, come at an incredibly important time in our nation's history. It is my hope that we will continue to have honest conversations with young people on issues impacting them and their peers, their experiences of faith and life, and also on how we can move ahead on these important questions of race, culture, and community.

Pope Francis encouraged us to do just this in his apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*. In this letter addressed to young people and those who walk with them, he told us to boldly set out and take risks, to engage in real dialogue and deep listening, and to propose new ways and new methods for entering the future, in our Church and in our society.

Pope Francis wanted us – the bishops, the young people, the laity, and the ordained ministers – to walk side by side in this process. In so doing, we would “nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies,

and enable hope to blossom. Together,” he said, “we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.” (CV 199) It's a beautiful description of what we are doing in *Journeying Together*.

The Church calls this process “synodality.” It is based in a Greek word that conveys the notion of a caravan or pilgrimage. Pope Francis told us: “ministry has to be synodal; it should involve a ‘journeying together’... toward a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety... no one should be excluded or exclude themselves.” (CV 206)

We have been very intentional about making sure every cultural family has their voice represented and a seat at the table as we journey together. In this caravan, we have so much to offer one another – and to the whole world. Hopefully, this experience will allow us to discover where the Lord is calling us to go next.

As we continue this journey, let us challenge one another. But also, let us be patient and kind to each other. We are all coming from different cultural perspectives and different generations. We have distinct outlooks on faith and society. A synodal pilgrimage like this is often long and winding. But the important thing is to continue to walk together.

The response of the young adults and the ministers to the *Journeying Together* process thus far fills me with great hope for the Church. Despite some gloomy statistics saying we are losing the young people in the Church, I can confidently say: ‘We have not lost them all!’. Young people's desire to contribute, if given the opportunity, and their thirst for belonging, community and inclusion, has been evident thus far throughout the process of encounter. It also challenges us to discover who else is not at the table and what are the peripheries we still have to reach.

It is my hope that the process itself of walking together will be a fruitful and worthwhile experience for us all. I look forward to seeing many of you at the *Journeying Together* in-person gathering next year. In the meantime, please keep me in your prayers and be assured of my prayers for all of you.

Christ is alive and he wants us to be fully alive!

# Tough Conversations about Having a Tough Faith

## *African American Young Adult Listening Sessions for the Journeying Together Process*

By: Dr. Ansel Augustine, Executive Director of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, Archdiocese of Washington, DC



“All of us are in need of personal and ongoing conversion. Our churches and our civic and social institutions are in need of ongoing reform. If racism is confronted by addressing its causes and the injustices it produces, then healing can occur.” This quote from *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, the USCCB’s latest

Pastoral Letter discussing racism, discusses the struggle that many communities of color face inside the Church. As someone who has ministered for over 20 years in Black Catholic, specifically African American Catholic, youth and young adult ministry, the effects of institutional racism, along with other factors, have been one of the many factors that have led to the exodus of Black Catholic young adults from the faith.

The Journeying Together Process has helped more of our church leaders understand this issue from the mouths of some of the African American Catholic young adults themselves. The listening sessions that have taken place, one of which is described in this article, share a glimpse of the unique struggles of being an African American young adult in the American Catholic Church and the struggle that those of us face that minister to, and with, this demographic.

On the evening of August 6, 2020, almost 100 African American Young Adults (ages 18-39 years old) from around the country gathered on an online listening session to discuss how they felt hurt by, and hopeful for, the Church. They were joined by Bishop Fernand Cheri III (Archdiocese of New Orleans) and Bishop Roy Campbell (Archdiocese of Washington), along with several other ministry leaders, as they discussed the raw and “true truths,” as Sr. Thea Bowman used to say, about

the struggles of being an African American Young Adult in today’s Catholic Church.

James Conway (Archdiocese of Baltimore) and Stacy Allen (Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston) shared their testimonies of how their personal struggles have strengthened their faith, but also how they have personally witnessed the Church fail to meet the needs of their fellow African American Young Adults.

The small group sessions, facilitated by several other African American Young Adults, continued the tough conversations about what has been done to cause pain and what needs to be done to begin healing among this demographic. The results were not surprising for those of us who have worked in Black Catholic, specifically African American, youth/young adult ministry over the past couple of decades.

Some of the young adults voiced that this was the first time they actually felt heard and were part of majority rather than a minority, either by culture or age, in a Church setting. The overall understanding is that we have work to do. This Journeying Together process is creating opportunities to continue to engage in these tough conversations to gain hope from folks who have a tough faith.

**[#blackfaithmatters](#)**



Screen Shot from African American Young Adult Listening Session 8.6.20



# I Have Such a Strong Sense of Faith

By: Teresa Rojo Tsosie, Director of Religious Education, St. Jude Parish, Tuba City, AZ

*Ya'a'teeh! Shi ei Teresa Rojo Tsosie yinishye. Naakai nishli. Dibelizhini bashischiin. Naakai dashicheii. Todi-chi'ii'nii dashinali.* Hello! It is traditional in my culture to introduce myself with my clans. The clan system was created so we have family wherever we go. For a little over a year now I have been a part of *Journeying Together* process. As a young Native American, I am extremely honored to be a part of it.

I have spoken since the first meeting on how there is a lack of representation of Native Americans in our Catholic Church. As both an active Catholic and Native American, I do feel as if you shouldn't have to "choose" to be one or the other. I have always been asked this question growing up. I have been asked this again during the planning process and I still feel confident in my answer since I was a teenager.

I have such a strong sense of faith in both my Navajo culture and my Catholic faith. Being a part of the *Journeying Together* process has deepened and strengthened my faith. It has reassured me in what I am meant to do and how to evangelize my faith to others. During our kickoff event in July, I received so many messages during my speech. That moved me so much!

Sometimes being from a small parish or diocese, you do forget that your voice matters as well. I have been extremely blessed and fortunate that I was asked to be a part of this process. I will never stop advocating that Native American voices need to be heard



and part of the conversation in the Catholic Church. I can never say 'Thank you' enough to Father Michael Carson & my own Parish Priest Father Jay Jung in choosing me to be a part of this. I have made lifelong friends, who share my passion in having not only my voice but Native American voices being heard as well. *Ahehee!* Thank you! *Dine God nikeh hojidlíj doo!* God Bless!

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**“We all are truly blessed! We come from different cultures and speak different languages but are one big family. However, our paths and experiences may be different though, we have the same common goal to be loved, accepted. A desire always to live a strong Catholic faith.”**

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— Lisa Franqui

# God Continues to Urge Us to Give the Best of Ourselves

By: Antonio Guzman, Hispanic Ministry Coordinator, Office of Cultural Ministries Archdiocese of Detroit



The experience of being able to participate in the *Journeying Together* process from the beginning has been truly rewarding, exciting, and a blessing for me. Seeing the diversity of my church at the kickoff of *Journeying Together* has filled me with hope as I see young adults gathered from all over the country sharing their own

experiences and realities that they live in daily life. When we come together as a church to celebrate this faith that has been given to all of us, the experience is simply enriching.

I remember in the second step of *Journeying Together* at the time of the group session when some of the young adults shared their experiences on the question “What are the things that are hurting you and your loved ones the most today?” My heart began to beat a little faster than normal as I heard the realities they faced. It was a brief moment full of graces in which I could relate to them. Unfortunately, I had to return to the general session because I was being Master of Ceremonies, but in that minute or two

that I was sharing with them it was enough for me to break down and my eyes were filled with tears. It was a moment of mixed emotions to see how despite their sufferings that they were facing at that time, they had that joy, energy and desire to continue working, doing pastoral work in the places where they were.

I feel that God continues to urge us to give the best of ourselves, he continues to call us to be more aware of the realities that our neighbor lives. To interact with them and learn about their stories that are part of their life, let us learn from each other and in this way, we can all walk together sharing our sadness and joys. All of us in our lives have gone through difficult moments that have made us the people we are today, sometimes we have been able to overcome them, in others we may need to work. But when we are able to share this with others we can be of help to them if they are experiencing the same thing we have gone through or vice versa.

Today more than ever, we must be united and walk together as that family that we are and not as individuals. A church that knows how to walk together can transform a society that is in despair and uncertainty. Let us walk together so that our hearts burn when finding the risen Jesus in the person next to me, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

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**“It follows that ‘we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... For the deeper, stronger and richer our own identity is, the more we will be capable of enriching others with our own proper contribution.’”**

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— Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 282

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# Dios Sigue Urgiéndonos a Dar lo Mejor de Nosotros

By: Antonio Guzman, Hispanic Ministry Coordinator, Office of Cultural Ministries Archdiocese of Detroit

La experiencia de haber podido participar en el proceso de *Journeying Together* desde el principio ha sido verdaderamente gratificante, emocionante, y una bendición para mí. Ver la diversidad de mi iglesia en el lanzamiento de *Journeying Together* me ha llenado de esperanza, al ver a jóvenes adultos reunidos de todas partes del país compartiendo sus propias experiencias y realidades que viven en el diario vivir. Cuando nos unimos como iglesia para celebrar juntos esta fe que se nos ha dado, la experiencia simplemente es enriquecedora.

Recuerdo que en el segundo paso de *Journeying Together* en el momento de la sesión en grupos cuando algunos de los jóvenes adultos compartían sus experiencias en la pregunta “¿Cuáles son las cosas que más te están haciendo daño a ti y a tus seres queridos hoy en día?,” mi corazón empezó a palpitar un poco más rápido de lo normal al escuchar las realidades que ellos enfrentaban. Fue un momento breve lleno de gracia en el que me pude relacionar con ellos, lamentablemente tuve que regresar a la sesión general porque era Maestro de Ceremonia, pero en ese minuto o dos que estuve compartiendo con ellos fue suficiente para que me quebrantara y los ojos se me llenaran de lágrimas. Fue un momento de emociones encontradas al ver como a pesar de los sufrimientos

que ellos estaban enfrentando en ese momento, ellos tenían esa alegría, energía y ganas para continuar, haciendo pastoral en los lugares en los que se encontraban.

Siento que Dios nos sigue impulsando para dar lo mejor de nosotros mismos, nos sigue llamando a ser más conscientes de las realidades que vive nuestro prójimo. Al relacionarnos con ellos y conocer sus historias que forman parte de su vida, aprendamos los unos de los otros y de esta forma podamos caminar todos juntos compartiendo nuestras tristeza y alegrías. Todos en nuestras vidas hemos pasado por momentos difíciles que nos han hecho ser las personas que somos hoy en día. En algunas ocasiones hemos sabido superarlas en otras tal vez necesitamos trabajar. Sin embargo, cuando somos capaces de compartir esto con los demás, ayudamos a alguien más que está pasando por lo mismo o viceversa.

Hoy más que nunca, debemos estar unidos y caminar juntos como familia que somos y no como individuos. Una iglesia que sabe caminar junta puede transformar una sociedad que está en desesperación e incertidumbre. Caminemos juntos para que nuestros corazones ardan al encontrar a Jesús resucitado en la persona que tengo al lado, así como los discípulos en el camino hacia Emaús.

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**“También «los creyentes necesitamos encontrar espacios para conversar y para actuar juntos por el bien común y la promoción de los más pobres. No se trata de que todos seamos más light o de que escondamos las convicciones propias que nos apasionan para poder encontrarnos con otros que piensan distinto. [...] Porque mientras más profunda, sólida y rica es una identidad, más tendrá para enriquecer a los otros con su aporte específico»”**

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— *Papa Francisco, Fratelli Tutti, 282*

# I Am Just American!

By: Tara Segal



One of the delights of Zoom – who knew there could be such a thing – was scrolling through grids of faces at the kick-off of *Journeying Together*. Hundreds of people tuned-in and, I imagine, were grateful for the effort of the conveners to honor the diverse voices of

the U.S. Catholic Church.

Nearly an hour into the program, Stacy Allen, an Afro-Latina who lives in Houston, shared what *Journeying Together* meant to her. Ms. Allen spoke to the providential timing of the dialogue. It was beginning in the midst of two pandemics: COVID-19 and a national awakening to systemic racism. She addressed the need to carry the energy from the streets into our Church so we might begin to dismantle its racism. She affirmed Glenn E. Martin’s assertion that, “Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution,” (<https://www.theapeal.org>) and suggested that *Journeying Together* offers us an opportunity to “center, empower and elevate” those voices in our Church. The chat sprang to life. Young adults “shouted” their enthusiasm and desire for justice.

The next step of the journey was to separate into our cultural families for a series of conversations. If

our call was to center the voices of people of color, why was this group of homogenous white people coming together? Non-white cultural groups have been gathering in church basements, dorm lounges, and living rooms for decades. “Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution.” It is not our role as European-Americans to sit back while others do the work of introspection. We cannot begin to affect change if we do not first know ourselves. In denying our own culture(s), European-Americans normalize “white” as the experience of the Church. Unless we claim our own perspective as particular, we use language that renders our culture universal. The way I read Scripture, experience liturgy, and hear God’s voice is unique because I am a proud Irish, German, Russian, Ashkenazi Jewish, white, Catholic, American woman. If I flatten these by insisting, “I am just American!”, I also deny the experiences of my Church family who has different traditions, languages, ways of praying, and experiences of oppression based on their cultures and races. When I fail to recognize my own complicated history, I cannot offer the students I accompany the opportunity to do the same. I box their faith in with my own.

*Journeying Together* is offering me the opportunity to examine my identities and how they contribute to my privilege that has fostered racism in our Church and pacified me into staying silent. This process will make me a better minister, ally and believer able to celebrate belonging to a Church that lives the Gospel message.

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**A living and dynamic people, a people with a future, is one constantly open to a new synthesis through its ability to welcome differences. In this way, it does not deny its proper identity, but is open to being mobilized, challenged, broadened and enriched by others, and thus to further growth and development.**

— Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 160

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# JOURNEYING TOGETHER

A NATIONAL CATHOLIC INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTER FOR MINISTRIES WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

“If we *journey together*, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies, and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.”

— Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 199

## What is Journeying Together?

Journeying Together is a process of dialogue and encounter focused on the Church’s ministry with youth and young adults that fosters understanding and trust within and across cultural families toward a more welcoming and just community of faith.

- Journeying Together is the USCCB’s contribution to the recent global Synod process and *Christus Vivit*, which both focused on the engagement and protagonism of youth and young adults. The vision of Journeying Together is to “translate” and implement *Christus Vivit* for the Catholic Church in the United States, as the process engages young people and ministry leaders from each and every cultural family in this country: African Americans; Asian and Pacific Islanders; European Americans; Hispanic/Latinos; Native Americans and Alaska Natives; and migrants (inclusive of ethnic communities), refugees, and people on the move.
- The goal of this process is to listen attentively to the voices of all the young and all who accompany them, and as a Church, work together towards a more responsive, diverse, and just society. It is also an opportunity for the transformation of the

way the Church engages in pastoral ministry with youth and young adults of all cultures.

- Journeying Together uses the synodal model: listening and discernment, co-responsibility and participation, all moving toward proactive mobilization (*Christus Vivit* 206) – and applies it to the Catholic Church in the United States, driven by and with young people. Within the context of the current moment in our nation, we are already being led by youth and young adults “going into the streets” to demand justice (*Christus Vivit* 174). Amid this crucial and historic moment, young adults and ministry leaders are coming together in this process to have amazing, respectful, and honest conversations on faith, culture, and community.
- Journeying Together creates a safe space for all those who are involved to reflect on the problems and concerns that affect each cultural community in their own unique way, while also acknowledging the gifts and talents that each community brings to the table.
- Journeying Together will be a great contribution to our society and to the Catholic Church. Its

very process models how dialogue and action can be done well – with respect, honesty, and love. It also gives voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless, which is what the Church has a mission to do for every culture and community it encounters (Christus Vivit nos. 230-235). At a time of upheaval and division in our country, the U.S. bishops, young Catholics, and those who minister among them, are coming together to model dialogue, inclusion, listening to one another, and charting a path forward together.

To get to this vision, the Journeying Together planning team, with the support of the bishops of the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, decided that it would be helpful to carry this process out in five distinct stages that build upon one another:

#### STEP ONE

## Beginning the Journey

An introductory kick-off wherein the bishops could engage directly with young adults and ministry leaders on this important effort and envision the process ahead. **This took place in July 2020.**

#### STEP TWO

## Intra-Cultural Conversations

**Intra-cultural conversations**, where each cultural community meets to begin the discussion of some common questions and raise issues that they would like to bring to the intercultural table. These conversations are also a chance for each cultural community to gain the self-awareness, confidence (and in some cases, the humility) to share their cultural stories with others. **These are taking place from August to December 2020.**

#### STEP THREE

## Inter-Cultural Conversations

**Inter-cultural conversations**, where all cultural families will meet together once a month for a brief presentation (from one of the cultural families),

and small group discussions about each community's contributions, unique issues and areas of concern, and discernment of adequate pastoral responses. The previous step will prepare each cultural family to share their story and dialogue with others. **These conversations will take place from January to June 2021.**

#### STEP FOUR

## Gathering Together

**In-person event** where bishops and representatives from each cultural family will gather together to formulate action steps, strategic collaborations, and charting a path forward together in the Church's ministry with and engagement of young people in this country. It will also be a celebration of each cultural community gifts and contributions and of our "*Journey Together*." Event details are forthcoming due to pandemic restrictions.

#### STEP FIVE

## Proceedings and Implementation

The **proceedings and conclusions** of the Journeying Together process will be collated and published and offered to dioceses, schools, Catholic organizations, apostolic movements and others for follow-up and implementation.

Journeying Together is being convened by the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church with the active support of the USCCB Secretariats of Catholic Education; Evangelization and Catechesis; and Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; and Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, along with the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and the National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults. We look forward to this Journey and more importantly journeying together.

# The Journeying Together Experience

By: John Grosso



Growing up, I was taught that engaging in active dialogue and listening attentively were the best ways to understand another's story. Through my years studying at Boston College, I was taught that we must confront the realities of our own

shortcomings in good faith, or no real change will occur. It is through those lenses that I approach my vantage point as an Irish/Italian American participating in the USCCB's intercultural experience, *Journeying Together*.

I have found this innovative process to be both personally enlightening and powerfully emotional. I have been blessed to hear the perspectives and realities of my brothers and sisters from many diverse cultural backgrounds and challenged to confront my own complicity in the societal structures that cause injustice or inequality. The conversations happening - both in the larger body and in breakout groups - have been tough, but necessary, and the speakers have shown extraordinary generosity in their analysis. Personally, I have appreciated the authentic and vulnerable comments offered by many as we seek to confront and end racism and bigotry in our country, and in our Church.

Listening has been a critical component of this process for me. As a white male who grew up in a progressive, suburban area of the country, I was fortunate to have had friends of all different races and ethnicities. We learned about the civil rights movement and the struggle for justice that is still ongoing in our nation, but I always thought that racism and bigotry were problems that happened somewhere else.

When considering my life and experiences through the lens of my faith, and through the conversations that have started in *Journeying Together*, I have come to name the naïve belief from my childhood that racism had ended. I have also become more aware that white privilege, something that was always there but which I failed to see or understand until this recent crisis, was a part of my own experience. Though it has been a difficult realization, I have learned that I lived in ignorance of an issue that so profoundly affects the day-to-day life of my brothers and sisters of color.

*Journeying Together* has helped me confront that reality. I suspect others have confronted their own shortcomings as well, whatever they may be. The genius of it all is that we don't have to do it alone - guided by our mutual Catholic faith, we get to literally "journey together" - accompanying each other, challenging each other, listening to one another, and walking with our brothers and sisters towards a brighter future. I am profoundly grateful to be a part of this important endeavor.

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**"[I]t is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters."**

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— Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 86

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# Blessing in Disguise

By: Msgr. Pierre André Pierre, Emeritus President of University Notre-Dame of Haiti (UNDH)  
Assistant to Bishop Guy Sansaricq at the National Center of the Haitian Apostolate



The *Journeying Together* was outstanding for the 60 plus young Haitian Catholics who rallied for a two-hour zoom meeting, from cities across the US on September 19, 2020.

They eagerly shared in their faith and hope, as well as their concerns about their commitment within

the Catholic Church. Archbishop Nelson J. Perez of Philadelphia, Chairman of the Committee on Culture Diversity, opened the gathering with inspiring prayer and attended great part of it. Sr. Joanna Okereke, HHCJ, Assistant Director, Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees & Travelers and Rev. Jean Yvon Pierre, PhD, Pastor of St Jerome Church in Brooklyn, organizer and facilitator of the event, were grateful to God for the youth enthusiastic participation.

The theme of the call was centered on Jesus and hope. I was invited to say a few initial words in connection with the youth, prayer, education, commitment and leadership. Three fundamental points were identified:

- A look at the Universal Church and Pope Francis' are calling the youth to come to Jesus, to experience his love and to always keep hope;
- Empowerment by the teaching of the local church and parish communities;
- Awareness of their original roots and background, in order to assume the responsibility of growing up together as members of a diverse family which is the church in America.

The zoom meeting offered an opportunity for the young adult Haitian American community to come

The National Center of the Haitian Apostolate (NCHA) was founded in late 1970's by Haitian Priests ministering in the US. It was officially affiliated to the Office of the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of the US Catholic Bishops' Conference in October 1988. It became incorporated in Albany, NY, as a not-for-profit organization. From the very beginning, the commitment of now retired Brooklyn Auxiliary Bishop Guy Sansaricq to the Haitian Apostolate, as a founding member, has been steadfast till present day.

An estimated over 1,500,000 Haitians live in the US. They can be found in every State. Among them, most are Catholics or have catholic connection. Haitians are one of the largest group of black Catholic immigrants. A greater concentration of Haitians is located on the East Coast between Florida and Massachusetts. Many of them live in main cities.

together at a national level and discuss things in an open and honest forum. This has not been done before. Many shared about the lack of efforts that have been made in the dioceses to welcome Haitians and offer some pastoral ministry to serve them as parishes are frequently ill equipped to provide for their spiritual care in their own Creole language and their original cultural background.

The meeting ended with discussion about the need for organizations such as the NCHA and USCCB's Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees & Travelers to provide spiritual and pastoral care to immigrants. We hope to continue to journey together and becoming one family.

# Creating a Culture of Encounter between Youth and the Church

By: Darius A. Villalobos, National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)



When the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) was invited to collaborate with the USCCB to engage young people and ministry leaders in a dialogue on faith and cultural diversity, I was brand new to my role as Director of Multicultural Ministry. Being the first person in this position for the almost 40-year-old organization is an amazing privilege and it seemed like God's timing was working to have this opportunity come together so early in my time with NFCYM.

The seeds of this process that would eventually become *Journeying Together* were sowed in the beginning of another process. Pope Francis called for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment to begin with consultation of young people through an online survey and a call to host local conversations with young people in dioceses and communities across the world. This allowed for greater engagement of the faithful in a synodal process than ever before.

To make sure that the response to the 2018 Synod, and Pope Francis's post-synodal exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, would include the diversity of cultures and experiences of young people in the United States, the USCCB staff from Cultural Diversity in the Church hoped to have an in-person gathering of young adults and ministry leaders this past summer (2020). However, to make sure voices of youth (ages 13-17) could be included in this dialogue, the opportunity to host a Cultural Diversity Youth Forum at the National Catholic Youth Conference 2019 (NCYC) was developed.

Over fifty youth attended the NCYA 2019 on scholarship and participated in a day long program to witness to their faith, share the realities of their

communities, and celebrate their diverse cultures. These youth and their chaperones would normally not have attended NCYC 2019 if not for the opportunity to be a part of this forum. We were blessed with bishops who took time to listen and accompany these youth throughout the day and encouraged them to live their faith boldly and continue to celebrate their Catholic faith and their cultures.

Young people have a unique way of connecting cultures, seeing our similarities, and celebrating our differences. Who better to help lead the Church in doing the work of intercultural ministry than our youth and young adults? The experience that started at NCYC 2019 was one that has grown into a process of encounter and sharing our cultures through *Journeying Together*. What was meant to be a one-time event has turned into a year-long process of dialogue and discernment that will help our ministry with young people by allowing the Spirit to work in the gift of our diverse communities.

In many ways, the U.S. Church needs this moment, as we grapple with a polarized society that desperately needs to heed the call to unity found in the Gospels.

NFCYM is grateful to be a collaborator in this journey and we hope that you will join us. As we travel this journey, let us remember the words of Pope Francis as he calls us to be a synodal Church – one listening and walking together:

“In this way, by learning from one another, we can better reflect that wonderful multifaceted reality that Christ's Church is meant to be. She will be able to attract young people, for her unity is not monolithic, but rather a network of varied gifts that the Spirit ceaselessly pours out upon her, renewing her and lifting her up from her poverty.”

- *Christus Vivit*, 207

# Do We Want to Talk About It?

By: Mike Hayes, Director of Young Adult Ministry, Diocese of Cleveland, OH



After George Floyd's tragic death. I listened to an amazing homily by my friend, Fr. Steven Bell, CSP, who is African American. He noted, "I walk out my door every day to get in my car and drive to do whatever I need to do. And each day I leave with the thought,

very present in my mind, that I might not return back home that day."

For my friend, this is what being a black priest in a predominately white church is like. And in that listening, I am ashamed by my white privilege. I am ashamed not just of what I have never had to carry, but ashamed that I have never even considered that my friend carries it each day.

I am reminded of Fr. Bryan Massingale, author of *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, who points out three obstacles in confronting racism:

1. "We don't know what we are talking about. We lack clarity and agreement as to what constitutes racism."
2. "We don't know how to talk about it—Especially in mixed race settings."

And perhaps most importantly:

3. "We really don't want to talk about it."<sup>1</sup>

In *Journeying Together*, my European American ministry colleagues and I have reflected on and discussed our experiences of culture and racism. During this process, I have been reminded by a colleague to keep in mind Jesus' prayer:

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:20-21)<sup>2</sup>

But are we all one? We are longing to get into these conversations, but we assume we are the minority. As White European-American ministers, our discussions have been uncomfortable, but we still feel safe in our enclave. Yet, we agree that we need to address this... but we fear the truth.

We seem to be a divided church. There are many Catholics that do not share our thoughts and they really "don't want to talk about it." However, our real work has to begin now. We must "disturb this peace" and to be brave enough to WANT to talk about it. This is our "difficult consolation."<sup>3</sup>

We need to sit at the foot of this cross and listen as if on a retreat, when we listen and stand in awe of what others have had to carry, to notice their resilience and to simply admire their tenacity. In doing so, we will meet Christ in the listening. May that move us to see the suffering Christ in our midst and most importantly.... to want to talk about it.

1 Massingale, Bryan, *Racial justice and the Catholic Church*, Orbis Books, 2010, preface XI-XII

2 New American Bible, [USCCB.org](http://USCCB.org) (John 17:20-21)

3 Thibodeaux, Mark, E: "There's Such a State as Difficult Consolation: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/theres-such-a-state-as-difficult-consolation/>

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**"Jesus trusts in the best of the human spirit... he encourages us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name."**

— Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 71

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# Journeying Together in the Mystery of the Trinity

By: Jessica Peek



It can be difficult to be a college campus minister in today's complex society. I have so many competing demands on my time and attention. How do I accompany each student when they are all in such different places? How do I balance my responsibilities to comfort as well as to challenge? How do I find com-

mon ground and create a safe place for my students to share the very different experiences of and attitudes towards faith? How do I find spaces for healing for those who have been hurt by their faith communities and encourage those who have conviction in the Church to make space without feeling pushed out?

Seeing the Church strengthen its commitment to synodality in recent years has given me a new lens through which to understand my role as campus minister—to gather, listen, and give justice to the voices from different perspectives and backgrounds, especially those who have not historically been heard. I will be the first to admit that often it is easier to attune myself to the voices of those who share my experiences, opinions, and practices of faith and ministry; but then the ministry becomes centered around me rather than on Christ. The fullness of Christ is only known through the celebration of the many becoming one without sacrificing the gifts that make each of us who we are.

Participating in this synodal model through Journeying Together thus far has helped me reflect on the discernment I must undergo to understand how I have been shaped by my culture, so that I can move forward in bringing together, lifting

up, and walking side by side with those with whom I do not share as many experiences and worldviews. Even within my Cultural Family, we have quite different perspectives.

Through our Intra-cultural Conversations, we learn to intentionally dialogue with and challenge one another, so that we can have mutually engaging and empowering dialogue in our Inter-cultural Conversations. I must learn to balance between uniting in shared experiences (of culture, faith, or beliefs) and appreciating the distinctions of each person's life and experience. Holding the shared and the unique in tension is like living with the mystery of the Trinity: to know and love the one God and to seek relationship with each Person. In the paradox of the Trinity, the more I come to understand the uniqueness of each Person, the more I feel the unity that exists within. I pray that through our Church's experience of Journeying Together we may find the same mystery of unity in our great diversity as the Body of Christ.



Journey Together Kick-off Event, 7.25.20

# The Church Must Enter into Dialogue with the World in Which it Lives

By: Marilyn Santos, Associate Director, Secretariat of Evangelization & Catechesis



One of my many favorite sections in the new Directory for Catechesis expresses:

*At the school of the wonderful dialogue of salvation that is Revelation, the Church understands ever better how she is called to dialogue with the people of her time. “The Church must enter into dialogue with the world in*

*which it lives. It has something to say, a message to give, a communication to make.”*

— Directory for Catechesis 53

My participation in the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity’s *Journeying Together* initiative has been a wonderful experience of exactly what the Directory tells us, that we, the Church, must enter dialogue with our world. It does not say some members or part of the Church but quite clearly the entire Church. The Four-Step process of *Journeying Together* is connecting young adults and ministry leaders within their individual ethnic communities as an opportunity to explore key issues from their unique cultural experiences and realities. Participants will develop recommendations and concrete steps for the Church’s engagement with young people which respect, value and honor their gifts and struggles in a renewed spirit of solidarity and synodality.

The same section goes on to say:

*This vocation, which has its root in the mystery of God who in Jesus enters into intimate dialogue with humanity, takes shape from precisely this dialogue, assuming its*

*characteristics. Dialogue is a free and gratuitous initiative, takes its cues from love, is not commensurate with the merits of its participants, is not binding, is for all without distinctions and grows in a gradual way. At the present time, this dialogue—with society, with cultures and sciences, with every other believer—is particularly required as a valuable contribution to peace.*

— Directory for Catechesis 53

Inspired by Pope Francis’ *Christus Vivit*, the *Journeying Together* process is providing the space and opportunity for bishops, young people, and ministry leaders to enter into these intimate dialogues as they meet, listen to, engage, collaborate with, and celebrate young people of all cultures.

We have been blessed with our young Church’s willingness and honesty as they have demonstrated a desire toward the search for meaning, solidarity, social engagement. While some may not be able to fully articulate all the tenets of the faith, their enthusiasm, desire to learn more, to participate actively and not as spectators in the life of Church as missionary disciples, and witness of authentic prayer lives have proved to be evangelizing moments not only for their peers but for ministry leaders as well.

While in my role with *Journeying Together* is as a Core Team and Planning Team member I have been witnessed to and reminded of the special, co-responsible contribution young people make to evangelization and catechesis. Or as the Holy Father prefers us to refocus, to an evangelizing catechesis.

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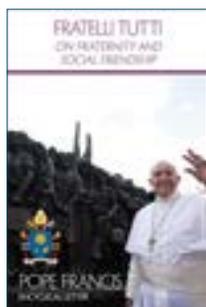
**“The journey of evangelization has as its center the proclamation of Jesus Christ and an invitation to deeper missionary discipleship. This missionary vision cannot be accomplished without shared effort by the whole church community.”**

— *Living as Missionary Disciples. A Resource for Evangelization, page 2.*

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# Recommended Resources

Visit <https://store.usccb.org/> to browse and order your resources or call 1-800-235-8722 or send an email to [css@usccb.org](mailto:css@usccb.org). Remember to have the product code number ready when placing your order.



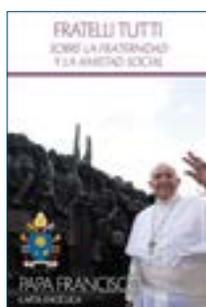
**Fratelli Tutti**  
**On Fraternity and Social Friendship**  
Product Code 7-678

Pope Francis's prophetic new encyclical speaks directly into the lives of men and women today! This greatly welcomed encyclical is a beautiful reflection on humanity's path forward to a deeply desired and sought-after peace. Pope Francis addresses his renewed call to universal fraternity "to all people of good will, regardless of their religious convictions."



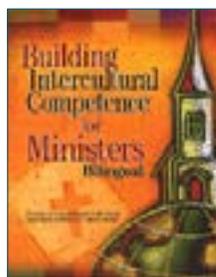
**Abramos Nuestros Corazones:**  
**El Incesante Llamado Al Amor**  
Product 7-915

En *Abramos Nuestros Corazones: El Incesante Llamado Al Amor* los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos invitan al lector a reconocer las formas en que el mal del racismo impacta profundamente las vidas de muchas personas en los Estados Unidos. La carta pastoral reflexiona sobre la dignidad de toda persona humana y establece el imperativo moral de la Iglesia de combatir el racismo como cuestión de vida.



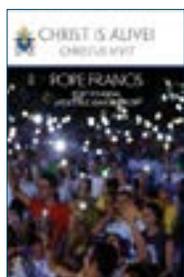
**Fratelli Tutti**  
**Sobre la Fraternidad y la Amistad Social**  
Product Code 7-926

¡La nueva encíclica profética del papa Francisco le habla directamente a la vida de los hombres y las mujeres hoy! Esta encíclica, que ha sido muy bien recibida, es una hermosa reflexión sobre el camino de la humanidad hacia una paz que se busca y se desea profundamente. El papa Francisco enfocó este renovado llamado a "la fraternidad universal," "a todas las personas de buena voluntad, más allá de sus convicciones religiosas."



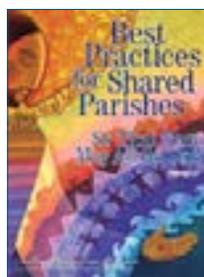
**Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers, Bilingual**  
Product code 7-887

This manual is designed to help ministry leaders achieve a basic level of awareness and proficiency in the area of intercultural competency through the five guidelines recommended by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.



**Christ is Alive - Christus Vivit**  
Product Code 7-628

"Christ is Alive" proclaims the pope. Pope Francis's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* calls to "all Christian young people" and the People of God, including pastors and the faithful, and urges them to seek the youthful newness of life in Christ!



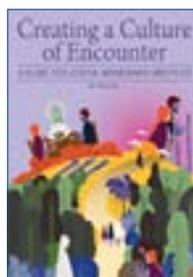
**Best Practices for Shared Parishes:**  
**So That They All May Be One**  
Product code 7-389

Is a guide to assist pastors of culturally diverse parishes in the challenging yet rewarding task of building unity in diversity. This bilingual English and Spanish guide identifies pastoral responses and proven best practices in relation to intercultural competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. It helps parishes discern pastoral planning strategies and opportunities that will lead to a higher level of stewardship.



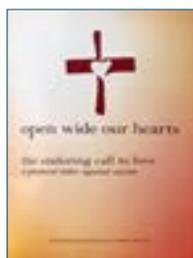
**Vive Cristo - Christus Vivit**  
Product Code 7-913

"Vive Cristo" proclama el papa. La exhortación apostólica postsinodal del papa Francisco, *Christus Vivit*, llama a "todos los jóvenes cristianos" y al Pueblo de Dios, incluidos pastores y fieles, y los insta a la novedad juvenil de la vida en Cristo.



**Creating a Culture of Encounter:**  
**A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples**  
Product code 7-629

This resource offers an organized five-week parish encounter process to help small groups to dig deeper into the Church's evangelizing mission. In each session, participants take up a new aspect of Jesus' encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and focus on a different element of the evangelical call to spread the Gospel, inspired by Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*. The five-week guide invites participants to See, Judge, Act, Celebrate, and take Missionary Action each week.



**Open Wide Our Hearts:**  
**The Enduring Call to Love**  
Product Code 7-606

In *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, the Catholic bishops of the United States invite the reader to recognize the ways in which the evil of racism profoundly impacts the lives of many people in the United States. The pastoral letter reflects on the dignity of every human person and establishes the Church's moral imperative to combat racism as a life issue.

# Prayer for *Journeying Together*



Image created by Nicole Brown

God of Our Journey,  
as we gather together  
we lift up our voices  
to give praise and thanksgiving to your name,  
the God, of encounter  
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
makes us one in Christ, our Savior.

God of Our Journey, *Dios de nuestra jornada* [Spanish],  
as we journey together with Christ, your Son,  
who walks alongside of us day by day,  
may we embrace your presence within us  
and discover your presence in the people  
whom we encounter along the way.

God of Our Journey, *Diyos ng ating paglalakbay* [Filipino],  
as we journey together in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
enlighten our minds and our hearts in our intercultural encounters,  
with one another and with all cultural families,  
so that we may become better listeners  
and the bearers of your faithful Word.

God of Our Journey, *Wakǵantǵanǵka oomani awaŋuŋkičiyankapi kiŋ* [Lakota: Native American],  
as we journey together with all members of the Body of Christ,  
instill in us the presence of your love and compassion,  
so that we may persevere in faith,  
trust in your goodness,  
and place all our hope in you.

God of Our Journey, *Dieu de notre voyage* [French],  
as we journey together as disciples of Christ,  
set our missionary hearts ablaze  
and transform our lives by your grace,  
so that we may go forth into the world  
to proclaim the Good News  
and to build up the reign of your love  
through our acts of justice, compassion, and mercy.

We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
brings forth a world of harmony and peace,  
One God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.



# COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

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**Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez**

Term: November 2018 – November 2021

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*Chairman of the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs*



Committee Chairman with Executive Director and Assistant Directors of the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church. From left to right: Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Mar Muñoz-Visoso, Archbishop Nelson Pérez of Philadelphia, Sr. Joanna Okereke, Fr. Mike Carson, Donna Grimes and Sr. Myrna Tordillo. Photo Credit: Tyler Orsburn, CNS

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