

Happy Hispanic Heritage Month!

Let us remember one of God's powerful promises for our lives:

For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

In this month that we celebrate Hispanic heritage, we remember that our contribution to art, music, food, literature, and definitely to spirituality and Christianity is very important and great. We have so much talent and creativity and these articles represent only a tiny bit of what is happening in Latino/Hispanic ministries of the Episcopal Church.

COVID-19 provided music, like many other art forms, with an opportunity to rethink, reimagine and refocus. In Decolonizing Church Music, Yuri Rodriguez highlights different ways to think about diverse music traditions and to refocus music and worship as less an aesthetic priority and more a missional one.

In Enjoying Music Again, Ellis Montes describes the concept of HIP, or historically informed performance, and how it is much more interpretative and freeing than one might imagine. In his piece, Ellis shares HIP techniques that allow classically trained musicians to explore new ways of bringing music to life.

Latino/Hispanic ministries in the Episcopal church continue to grow rapidly. We are known for our love of great food made with wonderful spices and fresh ingredients, our colorful textiles, our happy music and our culture centered around familia. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15 because several Latin-American countries celebrate fiestas patrias – national holidays celebrating their independence) we want to introduce some of the work being done by líderes around the church.

There is beauty in making art that shares what your spirit is feeling. In My Spiritual Art Journey, Arnoldo L. Romero shares how he began to use art to express his spirituality and himself. He shares what he has found to make art spiritual and explains how you can start making spiritual art. Arnold also tells us how he used his art as he discerned his calling into the priesthood.

Art can help us figure out what our future holds and can also help us express ourselves. In Pacts with God, Christina Encinosa remembers her pacts with God that had to be revisited as she grew and matured and eventually discerned a call into the priesthood. She also shares how her art helped her

cope with stress and is a bridge to God and others. This article is available in English and Spanish.

Sometimes all we need is a sign to show us if we are on the right path. In Faith in a Sand Dollar, Mildred J. Briones Reyes tells the story of how her love for the beach inspired her to ask God for a sign while she was discerning whether she should work for the church or not. This sign was to find a sand dollar that was intact, and this symbol became most important to her and her discernment. This article is available in English and Spanish.

There are times when only family is able to help us keep moving forward. In My Family, My Motivation, Angela Gutierrez Castillo talks about the importance of family – not only the family you're born into but the family you make along the way – to motivate her and to help her to overcome struggles and reach important life goals. Her family has inspired her to work hard and be dedicated.

Mental illness in comunidades latinas is not something that is openly discussed. In Shared Anxieties, Santi Rodriguez talks to us about mental illness – often seen as taboo or a stigma in comunidades Latinas– and how important it is for us to talk about it openly and truthfully. He also gives us ideas on how to care for our mental health. This article is available In English and Spanish.

The Spanish Finance Resource Guide (SFRG) is designed for lay and clergy leaders with a wide variety of financial backgrounds and expertise—for newly ordained priests as well as veteran parish treasurers, for those faithful parishioners who have ongoing fiduciary responsibilities as well as newcomers who are helping to manage the financial resources of their local faith community for the very first time. It will serve as a companion piece to the Vestry Resource Guide, which is also available in Spanish. Please pre-order copies from Forward Movement.

Looking Ahead:

October 13

Planning for the Unknowns in Life, a webinar from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM ET with Anna Molin, Financial Education Client Specialist Church Pension Group (CPG), and James Murphy, Managing Program Director, ECF.

October 18

Un Cafecito con Sandra y con el Rev. Santi Rodriguez on mental health at 10 am ET. This webinar will be in Spanish.

I hope these articles and our other resources inspire you so that you too can share your stories of faith. If you have any questions, ideas, suggestions and if you would like to write or share your story, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We continue in la lucha with great courage, unity and love,

Sandra