

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON, KY



DIOCESAN HISPANIC MINISTRY  
PASTORAL PLAN  
2003 – 2006



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We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Mother Mary under all her titles. May she intercede for us and help us bring this plan for Hispanic Ministry to fruition in our Diocese.  
Through Jesus and Mary, we can do it.

Thank you to all who participated in the gatherings and those who worked for months to make this document a reality.



# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

Office of the Bishop

May 26, 2004

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Diocese of Lexington continues to experience the growth in the number of Latin Americans coming to live, work and worship with us. This has been a blessing to many of our parishes. In many cases they have brought new life and a sign of hope for the future.

The Hispanic Pastoral Plan, 2003-2006, is a living document that will provide a framework for ministry with the Hispanic community throughout the Diocese and within the parishes. I am grateful for the work begun under the leadership of Bishop J. Kendrick Williams and the many members of our Catholic family for their contributions to this document. I urge you study the plan and to move forward with its implementation which will require participation from our entire faith community.

You can depend on my continued support and the assistance of our Diocesan Office for Hispanic Ministry under the direction of Sr. Sandra Delgado, O.P. and Fr. Bill Spine, S.J. Let us pray that the Lord will enable our efforts to bear much fruit.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer  
Bishop of Lexington

RWG:ss

## Preface

This plan was developed in the atmosphere of 'pastoral de conjunto', communion in mission. Regional Encuentros, gatherings, were held in each of six regions of the diocese; parish leadership and Hispanics living in the area were involved. The gatherings had a two fold purpose: to give the leadership the opportunity to listen to the stories, needs and expectations of the Hispanic Catholics and to give both groups the opportunity to join together in a common purpose, building up the body of Christ, the church.

The results of the six regional gatherings were categorized into 15 areas and sent to each of the 100 regional participants. They were asked to select the 4 most important areas of concern. The diocese held its first Diocesan Hispanic Congress in October 2002 to make the final selection of the 4 most important categories and to work together to develop goals and strategies for the implementation of the selections. Regional participants were invited to attend the Congress, as were all parish leaders, pastors and pastoral directors.

## Diocesan Hispanic Pastoral Plan

### Mission Statement of the Diocese of Lexington

*We, the Roman Catholics of Eastern and Central Kentucky are a diverse pilgrim people, growing in number and filled with hope. We are energized by the Word, the Sacraments and the Spirit. God calls us to gather together as Eucharistic faith communities to worship and to celebrate, to teach, to reconcile and to liberate. As servants who recognize our own gifts as well as the gifts of others, we share Jesus, our Catholic faith and our resources. In response to our baptismal call and our identity as a mission diocese, we reach out to all, especially to those who are poor in the eyes of the world and to the unchurched. We strive to respect the land, to live in harmony with all people, and to bring about the reign of God.*

### History of Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Lexington

The Diocese of Lexington was formed March 2, 1988 with Bishop J. Kendrick Williams as the first bishop. The Hispanic presence in the diocese was limited to the few Hispanics living in the outlying counties and many others in the Lexington area who were associated with the University of Kentucky, major corporations or horse farms. In the early 1990s, Fr. Jose Antonio Asencio gathered the small Hispanic Lexington community for a monthly Spanish Mass at the UK Newman Center. Shortly thereafter a diocesan commission gathered to study the issue of Hispanic Ministry and indicated the need for a part-time coordinator of Hispanic Ministry. Fr. Terence Hoppenjans was instrumental in obtaining a grant of \$10,000 for the six month period of January to June 1995 to hire a person to provide outreach services to the community dealing with health, education, information about rights, and catechesis for adults and children.

In January 1996, Fr. Joseph Von Handorf (Fr. Jay) became the full time coordinator as a result of the needs that surfaced during the first six months of 1995. The social needs continued to be of concern. However, greater emphasis was placed on developing the faith community by establishing the weekly Spanish Mass at St. Paul in Lexington. This allowed for the strengthening of sacramental preparation, the formation of small faith communities, and the identification of leaders from among the Hispanic community. There was also greater involvement with civic organizations making an effort to assist Hispanics, which resulted in the establishment of the Migrant Network Coalition.

By 1997 Fr. Jay began to celebrate Spanish Masses in various locations: White Sulfur, Versailles, and Lexington, eventually adding Paris. This resulted in assisting with outreach services such as home meetings, summer migrant outreach, jail and hospital visits as well as ecumenical and community development in areas around Lexington. As the years passed, the Hispanic population continued to grow in Lexington and throughout the diocese. The Diocese received a grant to hire two persons to provide outreach in medical, educational, and social services within Lexington. The population continued to grow to the point that it became evident there was a need to establish an office. In August 2000, Bishop Williams established the Office of Hispanic Ministry and hired its first director, Sr. Sandra Delgado.

The function of the office was to serve as a resource to parishes as they began to serve Hispanics in their areas. By this time, Spanish Masses were being celebrated as far east as Morehead and south as Somerset. Parishes were calling for help with sacramental preparation, liturgies, special celebrations, etc. The Diocesan Hispanic Committee was reorganized to include representatives from throughout the diocese. The bishop gave approval for the purchase of a house and land for a future Hispanic pastoral center in Lexington. This center was purchased and blessed in June of 2001. The diocese became a member of the Southeast Pastoral Institute, which has provided the Office with assistance in leadership formation and resources. In October of 2001, the first class of the Escuela de Ministerios (School of Ministry) graduated. Four adults that had completed the ten courses received their certificate at the Spanish Mass at their parish.

In August 2001, the Hispanic Ministry staff welcomed Jesuit Fr. Bill Spine as part-time associate director. Through an arrangement with St. Paul Parish, Fr. Bill served part-time to assist the parish in bridging the gap between the Hispanic community that had worshipped there for years and the English speaking parishioners. Fr. Jay continued his ministry in White Sulfur but also began to serve Nicholasville, Grayson and Ashland. His work assisted the parishes in locating the Hispanics and providing information to parish leaders about serving this community.

A major event was the pastoral planning process that involved parish leadership, non-Hispanics and Hispanics at the regional level to join in listening and conversation sessions culminating at the Diocesan Hispanic Congress with the selection of the Hispanic ministry priorities for this diocese.

## Demographic Reality

It is impossible to say how many Hispanic people live in the Diocese of Lexington. However, US Census figures indicate that there are Hispanics in each of the 50 counties that encompass this Diocese. In 1990 there were 7,337 Hispanics in the Diocese. By 2000, the number grew to 19,716, an increase of 168%. The majority of people are from Mexico but there are Hispanics from many countries including Peru, Argentina, Columbia, Panama, and Guatemala. The city of Lexington has also had a significant Puerto Rican and Cuban population for years. The median age of the Hispanic population throughout the nation is 26 years. While there has not been a study in the Lexington diocese, it is evident at all events, church related and otherwise, that the Hispanic population in the Lexington Diocese is also young. The youth of this population is evident at St. Paul parish in Lexington, which enrolled 100 Hispanic youngsters in the religious education program in the 2002-03 school year. More than 125 Hispanic infants were baptized from September 2001 until December 2002 at St. Paul's.

It is estimated that 70% to 75% of Hispanics are Catholic. That would indicate there were 5,503 Hispanic Catholics in 1990 and by 2000 there were 14,787, an increase of 168%. The number of registered Catholics in the Diocese for 2000 was 48,408 (including very few Hispanics). The estimated number of Hispanic Catholics raises that figure to 63,195, an increase in the Catholic population of 30.5%.

Fifteen parishes throughout the diocese have a regular Spanish Mass, some weekly, biweekly, and others monthly, while others are providing Mass aides for the Spanish speakers. Three priests also visit and/or work in three prisons on a regular basis. Fifteen diocesan and religious order priests speak Spanish from very basic to very good. Seminarians are required to study Spanish in order to be able to serve this growing population.

## Economic Reality

The majority of the Hispanic people came to Kentucky in the mid 1990's to work in the horse industry and tobacco farms mostly in the Bluegrass area. As time passed, many of the workers brought their families and settled in or near Lexington. Many more people began to arrive as a result of the economic and building boom in Lexington. By 2000, Hispanic workers were employed in the construction, landscaping, hospitality, and cleaning industries. Many businesses

have become dependent on these workers because of their trustworthiness, reliability, and work ethic.

Many of the people have come to the USA in order to support families, be they parents, siblings or wife and children, in their home countries. They send a good portion of their earnings to their home but also spend a great deal in this area. A great amount of their earnings go into living expenses. They are therefore, contributing to the economy of this part of the state. In Lexington, the influx of a great number of Hispanics has resulted in the rebirth of a dying neighborhood; buildings that had been abandoned have reopened as Hispanic businesses.

### Social Reality

The needs of the Hispanic people are great and varied. It is important to note that the focus of the lives of the Hispanic community is family. Family does not just include parents and children but also includes grandparents, siblings, cousins, etc. Many of the people are struggling to make enough money to live in Lexington and at the same time send money to their families in their home country. This requires that both parents work which often means leaving their children under the care for others who are not certified to provide childcare. While this is not strictly legal, people struggle to understand this new world with its laws and practices that are not common knowledge to them.

The results of functioning in a new culture are frustration, depression and loneliness. Often time, these feelings are manifested in acts of domestic violence, crime, alcoholism or other dysfunctional activities. There are many agencies in Lexington that have Spanish-speaking personnel but many outlying counties have not yet been able to provide sufficient services to the Hispanic population.

The diocese has worked with many groups to ensure that Hispanics are receiving the services they need. A monthly newsletter is distributed to the Hispanic community to inform them not only of church related events but also where they may access social and legal services and also informs them of legal issues such as driver's license, immigration and identification cards.

The future of this population is dependent on the youth of today. It is of grave importance that the children complete high school and continue their educations in any of the post-secondary school possibilities including college. The U.S. Department of Education,

National Center for Education Statistics reports that only 64% of Hispanics graduate from high school. Many in this group are U.S. born Hispanics. When this information is disaggregated, it is clear that there are significant differences in the subgroups. U.S. born Hispanics have a graduation rate of 81%, foreign born and naturalized Hispanics have a rate of 70%; and non-citizen Hispanics have a graduation rate of only 40%. These figures indicate the great challenge faced by the Hispanic community and the Diocese.

### Religious Reality

It is estimated that 70-75% of Hispanics are Catholic. While the people are deeply religious, their faith is based on traditions rather than preparation. There is not only a need for formation but also a cry for formation classes and Bible studies. Many who have been raised Catholic know little of the faith. Other faiths that provide a warm and welcoming community and a fundamentalist biblical certitude often lead them away from the Church.

Several of the Hispanic communities in the diocese are vibrant and growing. Leaders are emerging and working with parishioners and church leadership to assist in reaching out to all Hispanics in the area. There are, however, parishes where pastors have not responded to the Hispanic community. There is a great need for more pastors and parish leaders to commit themselves to the evangelization of all people, including the Hispanics who may or may not be registered members. There are pastors who insist that the Hispanics register in the parish and assimilate into the English community.

There are parishes that are very open and willing to learn from the Hispanic people. Fifteen parishes currently celebrate Mass in Spanish, one has the Liturgy of the Word in Spanish every Sunday and others provide Spanish missals for the Spanish speakers to be able to follow the Mass and readings. Some parishes have taken steps to include Hispanics in planning major activities such as the parish picnic.

The mission statement of the diocese recognizes the diversity of the people in the diocese and the gifts that each brings. In the second year of the diocese' strategic plan, the parishes are planning steps to implement the second goal, evangelization. The third year the focus shall be leadership. The Diocese's newly implemented 'Welcoming the Stranger Among Us' committee has developed a process by

which all parishes can truly open their doors and hearts to every newcomer.

#### Other Issues and Concerns

The issue of greatest concern to the majority of Hispanics in the diocese is that of immigration. Many people are here without proper documentation. They are hard working, tax paying and law abiding people. They and their children are living hidden lives, which often means their gifts and talents cannot be and are not shared with the larger community.

Parents and children essentially live in two different worlds. The parents bring their traditions and childrearing beliefs and practices. Children are learning the practices of the typical American family. This causes a cultural gap between parents and children that is much more serious than children not speaking Spanish or participating in traditional celebrations. More importantly the children are losing traditional family values.

## Community

We must build a community of faith within the Catholic Church that directs our lives in the manner pleasing to God and thus be able to evangelize. The parish is the center of worship and community life that nourishes our spirit through the Sacraments and Christian witness.

Goal 1. Offer bilingual Masses and liturgies on special days of the year: Christmas, Easter, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, and significant feast days for persons from Latin American countries.

Action Step 1. Provide parishes with liturgical norms and guidelines for bilingual celebrations.

Target group: parish leaders, liturgy committees, and musicians

When: fall of each year

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry and Diocesan Office of Worship and Liturgy

Benchmark: Special celebrations throughout the diocese by Christmas of 2005 and ongoing.

Action Step 2: Purchase/budget for bilingual missalettes or Mass aids

Target group: all parishes, pastors/pastoral directors, and parish finance committees

When: fall of each year

Who: Diocesan Office of Worship and Liturgy, Office of Hispanic Ministry

Benchmark: Spanish/English missalettes/song books in parishes where there is Hispanic presence.

Goal 2. Offer weekly Spanish Mass at all parishes with significant Hispanic populations

Action Step 1: Provide opportunities/information for Spanish language classes

Target: clergy, pastoral directors, deacons, and parish staff

When: beginning summer 2004 and ongoing

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry

Benchmark: 2 – 3 persons sent to study each year or mobile team to visit parishes

Goal 3: Develop leaders that will share the responsibility of parish life

Action Step 1: Identify bilingual leaders from the Hispanic community

Target group: parishioners at all parishes with current Spanish Mass

When: summer of 2004 and ongoing

Who: parish contact and pastor/pastoral director

Benchmark: list of names of bilingual leaders and potential leaders in parishes with Spanish Mass

Action Step 2: Form bicultural and bilingual planning teams for various parish activities: liturgy, social activities, and special celebrations

Target group: the parishes with Spanish Mass

When: summer 2005 and ongoing

Who: pastor/pastoral director, parish contact

Benchmark: parish events organized by such teams

Goal 4: Reach out to the Hispanic community, those attending Mass and those who have not yet found the Catholic parish – Evangelize and Invite

Action Step 1: Form hospitality teams to visit areas where Hispanics live

Target group: parishioners

When: fall of 2005 and ongoing

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, parish contact, and parish leadership

Benchmark: 3 parishes form teams each year

Action Step 2: Invite Hispanics to the parish for special celebrations/Mass and membership through the use of flyers, radio announcements and home visits

Target group: Hispanics throughout the parish boundary

When: summer 2004 and ongoing

Who: parish teams of Spanish and English speakers

Benchmark: each year 3 parishes begin to make personal visits to homes; provide Mass schedule and information about parish services

Goal 5: Provide opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in religious and social events

Action Step 1: Form youth groups and sports teams

Target group: youth, especially those from the parish

When: spring 2005

Who: the youth and an adult couple  
Benchmark: regular gatherings for youth groups and sports events  
Action Step 2: Organize a monthly youth activity  
Target Group: the youth of the area  
When: beginning spring 2005  
Benchmark: regular gatherings for youth and young adults

## Formation

We must build a church that is pleasing to God by forming ourselves for evangelization. Our individual and communal spiritual growth will enrich the body of Christ, our parishes, diocese, and beyond.

Goal 1. To prepare adults and children for the reception of the Sacraments

Action Step 1: Prepare Hispanic leaders to provide baptism and marriage preparation classes

Target group: persons that stand out as leaders

When: fall 2005 and ongoing

Who: Office for Hispanic Ministry and local parishes

Benchmark: at least 4 bilingual people from each parish will form the baptism and marriage preparation team.

Action Step 2: Prepare the parish religious education program to provide religious instruction to bilingual children and able to work with their Spanish-speaking parents.

Target group: religious education directors/coordinators and catechists

When: as appropriate for each parish and the Hispanic community

Who: Diocesan Education Office, Office for Hispanic Ministry, pastor/pastoral director

Benchmark: one new parish each year providing instruction to all the children

Action Step 3: develop a Spanish RCIA program for implementation in each parish

Target group: pastoral and lay leaders, adults preparing to receive sacraments

When: Fall 2005

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, Diocesan Education Office

Benchmark: program implemented in parishes fall 2005

Goal 2. To provide programs that will lead to formation of scripture groups, study programs, and leadership formation.

Action Step 1: Avail ourselves of opportunities offered to the Diocese through SEPI

Target group: Hispanic ministry leaders and the laity in general

When: summer 2004

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry

Benchmark: SEPI courses are offered in each region

Action Step 2: Communicate to the parishes and in locations frequented by Hispanics the programs being offered

Target group: laity

When: immediately

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry and parishes

Benchmark: increased enrollment in courses

Action Step 3: Develop programs pertinent to the parishes throughout the diocese such as cultural diversity, Hispanic popular religiosity, practices and customs of the church in the U.S./ Latin American countries, etc.

Target group: Hispanics and non-Hispanics

When: Fall 2004

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry

Benchmark: Parishes request such presentations and parishioners attend

Action Step 4: Offer mini-courses throughout the diocese on Scripture, Prayer, forming bible groups, Ministries within the Mass, etc.

Target group: laity, those unable to participate in longer weekend courses

When: fall 2004

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, graduates of Escuela de Ministerios, appropriate diocesan offices

Benchmark: at least 2 classes offered in each of the regions during the year

Action Step 5: Form bible groups that meet all year long

Target group: laity

When: fall 2004 and ongoing

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, parish leadership

Benchmark: new group formed in at least 2 parishes each year

Goal 3: Inform the Hispanic community of diocesan education and spiritual formation opportunities

Action Step 1: develop/improve method of communication to the general population

Target group: laity

When: immediately

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, Crossroads, Parish bulletins

Benchmark: Hispanics are participating in diocesan/parish events

Action Step 2: develop regional Hispanic ministry groups to provide support and resources to those ministering to the people

Target group: parishes outside the Bluegrass area

When: Fall 2005

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, Diocesan Hispanic Committee members

Benchmark: groups formed and meet regularly

Action Step 3: promote vocations to the priesthood, permanent diaconate and religious life

Target group: laity, especially youth and young adults

When: fall 2004

Who: Office of Ministry Formation, Parishes, and Vocation Office

Benchmark: increase number of inquiries

Goal 4: Provide formation programs and retreats tailored to the specific needs of youth and young adults

Action Step 1: Organize a diocesan Encuentro, gathering.

Target group: youth and young adults

When: every two years beginning with the spring of 2005

Who: the Office for Hispanic Ministry and a team of youth

Benchmark: the Encuentro

Action Step 2: Organize regional retreats

Target group: youth and young adults

When: once or twice a year

Who: The Office for Hispanic Ministry and a team of youth

Benchmark: A retreat in at least three regions

Action Step 3: Offer Quinceañera retreats

Target group: girls turning 15 years old, their sponsors and parents

When: every six months

Who: a team of youth, adults and the local priest

Benchmark: all the girls that celebrate their Quinceañera will have participated in a retreat

## Advocate and Inform

We must be a church that advocates for the Hispanic issues and supports the Hispanic people by being well informed about immigration laws and issues

Goal 1. To inform church leadership about immigration laws and issues affecting adults and children

Action Step 1: Develop a resource guide listing general immigration information including a listing of lawyers, VISA types, rights of undocumented immigrants, etc.

Target group: parish leaders

When: January 2005 and updated quarterly

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry in collaboration with legal specialists

Benchmark: directory – a booklet available at each parish and on the Hispanic Ministry website

Action Step 2: Form a mobile team able to provide information sessions throughout the Diocese utilizing Maxwell Street Legal Clinic, 800 telephone number and media

Target group: leaders and immigrants

When: January 2005 and as needed

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry in collaboration with Maxwell Street Legal Clinic

Benchmark: 4 – 6 presentations per year

Goal 2: To advocate for the change in laws affecting Hispanics at the national and state level

Action Step 1. Form parish or regional groups willing to write and call federal or state legislators and the President or Governor.

Target group: parishioners

When: January 2005

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, Diocesan Hispanic Committee members, parish contacts in collaboration with existing effective lobbying groups

Benchmark: letters and calls made regarding specific laws

Action Step 2: Inform parishioners of proposed legislation asking for their support

Target group: all parishioners

When: as needed

Who: Hispanic Ministry Office, Diocesan Hispanic Committee and parish contacts in collaboration with existing effective lobbying groups  
Benchmark: Parishioners participate in letter writing campaign

## Mission

We must be a church that meets the physical and material needs of the most needy and most vulnerable in our society in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation with service providers throughout the parish, city and county.

Goal 1: To provide accurate service information to the Hispanic population within each particular parish

Action Step 1: Assess the availability of services around the parish and develop a resource guide/directory

Target group: parish leaders and service providers

When: Fall 2005

Who: local Hispanic ministry staff/volunteers, parish staff, and parish leaders

Benchmark: Use of resources in the area

Action Step 2: Assess the availability of Spanish speakers to serve as translators in the parish

Target group: parishioners

When: Fall 2005

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, pastor/pastoral director and Hispanic ministry contact

Benchmark: list of available translators in each parish

Action Step 3: Access Spanish/English speakers in the parish to communicate oral and written information to the Hispanics

Target group: parishioners

When: January 2005

Who: Hispanic ministry volunteers, parish staff

Benchmark: Hispanics able to access services

Action Step 4: Sponsor health fairs or information sessions at the church

Target group: Hispanic population

When: Annually

Who: local parish leaders in collaboration with service providers whose goals are consistent with Catholic beliefs

Benchmark: parish sponsored information sessions in parishes with a Hispanic presence

Goal 2. To provide counseling in areas of great need: domestic violence, substance and drug abuse

Action Step 1: Identify and support Spanish-speaking counselors

Target group: parishioners

When: immediately

Who: parish leadership

Benchmark: parish sponsored / co-sponsored counseling sessions

Action Step 2: Form Spanish AA groups and provide space at the parish for regular meetings

Target group: Hispanic alcoholics

When: immediately

Who: parish leadership and existing AA groups

Benchmark: groups meeting at several parishes

Action Step 3: Become informed of domestic violence issues as related to issues within the Hispanic community

Target group: parish leaders, counselors

When: immediately

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry and Domestic Violence Center.

Benchmark: parish staff attends domestic violence and culture training

Goal 3. To provide classes that will benefit the community and provide the skills needed to live in an unfamiliar society

Action Step 1: Offer English classes at opportune times with assistance of parish volunteers and pertinent curriculum (work place or family)

Target group: Hispanics and parish English speakers

When: immediately

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry, county adult education program, and parish leadership

Benchmark: classes offered at least weekly and attendance growing

Action Step 2: Offer workshops on health, the law, housing, etc

Target group: Hispanics

When: Spring 2005

Who: parish leaders, Hispanic ministry volunteers, in collaboration with local service providers.

Benchmark: people attend sessions and they have the opportunity to ask questions

Goal 4. To provide a means of identification for parish members

Action Step 1: Arrange with parishes for parish registration process and day for issuing identification cards

Target group: pastors/pastoral director and parish staff

When: summer of 2004 and ongoing

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry and local parish volunteers

Benchmark: dates set for parish registration and issuance of cards

Action Step 2: Communicate parish registration process, identification card issuance and dates to Hispanic community

Target group: Hispanic community

When: When parish dates are set

Who: Office of Hispanic Ministry and local parish leadership

Benchmark: parish registration and identification cards are issued at parishes with a Hispanic presence.