

Multicultural Ministries

*“The presence of brothers and sisters from different cultures
should be celebrated as a gift to the Church.”*

U.S. Catholic Bishops

As Coordinators of Youth Ministry, you are called to build and nurture a welcoming youth community through the programs that you offer, where young people from every nation, race, culture, and language can grow and share in the Gospel of Jesus.

*“Let us pay attention to this in order to be able to adapt our pastoral strategies
to the actual lives that our families and youth are leading.”*

Archbishop Flores, Detroit, MI

The Diocese of Arlington’s population encompasses many different cultures. The majority of the parishioners are Caucasian. Hispanics are the Dioceses’ largest minority followed by African-Americans and Asian communities (Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Asian Pacific). The Diocese established a central office in 2004, the Office of Multicultural Ministries, to attend to the pastoral needs of its ethnically and culturally diverse groups. The Office of Multicultural Ministries seeks to serve all ethnic communities located in the diocese and to serve as a resource to newcomers.

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An overview of the Multicultural Ministries in the Arlington Diocese

The **Spanish Apostolate** provides a multi-faceted outreach to the many Hispanics living within the Diocese. They supplement Hispanic ministries at the parish level, particularly in religious education and sacramental preparation. “*Retiros de Quinceañeras*,” which are retreats for 15 year old girls ready to celebrate the special tradition of the *Quinceañera*, are offered once a month. Two popular annual events for youth are vocal contests similar to the reality show “American Idol.” *Buscando una Estrella* (Looking for a Star for Jesus) which takes place in the fall is for teens ages 14-17 years old. *Buscando una estrellita para Jesus* (Looking for a Little Star for Jesus) takes place in the spring for children ages 8-13. The Spanish Apostolate also offers Spanish classes for seminarians, clergy, and lay leaders so they can more effectively minister to the Hispanic communities in the diocese.

The **African-American** Catholic community is the oldest, ethnic ministry in the Diocese of Arlington. St. Joseph’s Church, located in Alexandria, was founded in 1915 to serve the African-Americans in northern Virginia. Saint Catharine Drexel – beatified by Pope John Paul II – was a contributor to the parish, which has always been staffed by the Josephite Community of priests. In 1945, Our Lady Queen of Peace, located in Arlington, was founded in response to the growing African-American Catholic population. This ministry promotes diocesan-wide awareness of the African-American Catholics and is a strong advocate for social issues relating to the Black Catholics. They also provide all Catholics the opportunity to participate in year-round celebrations of Black Catholic heritage and those leaders who played an important role.

Two national parishes have been established in the Diocese of Arlington to serve the needs of two of our Asian Catholic communities. *Holy Martyrs of Vietnam*, founded in 1979, serves the **Vietnamese** Catholic community and is currently staffed by Dominican priests from Vietnam who serve the 6,500-parishioner church. *St. Paul Chung*, founded in 1996, serves the **Korean** Catholic community, with approximately 5,200 parishioners, and is staffed by Korean priests. Both have well formed parish programs that support their respective ethnic communities and are strongly supported by the Diocese. In addition to these national parishes, you will find strong, vibrant Vietnamese and Korean Catholic ministries in many of the diocesan parishes.

The **Filipino** Catholic community is another large and fruitful multicultural ministry within our diocese. The Filipino Catholic community is additionally supported by the Fil-Am NOVA ministry, which arranges monthly Masses (in Tagalog, and with Tagalog choirs), provides outreach programs, supports the many parish Filipino ministries, and runs Paaralang Pinoy (a Filipino catechetical cultural Sunday school). In collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Ministries, the Fil-Am NOVA ministry sponsors the annual *Simbang Gabi*, nine day novena of Masses celebrated before the birth of Christ, which encompasses more than 19 parishes. In addition to Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog, masses are also celebrated in the diocese in Portuguese (for Brazilian & Portuguese Catholic communities), Ghanaian, and French. Our diocese is home to other growing African Catholic communities such as Eritrean and Cameroon, which celebrate Mass and have prayer groups in English, French and Tigrinya.

Ministering alongside the clergy of the Diocese of Arlington are priests from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Columbia, Cuba, El Salvador, Germany, Republic of Ghana, Haiti, India, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Spain and Vietnam.

The Diocese also supports two offices which provide social services and advocacy to immigrants, refugees, and migrants who come through the Diocese: **Hogar Immigrant Services (Hogar Hispano)** and the **Office of Migration and Resettlement**.

Each of these offices would be happy to work with you to find ways to incorporate various cultures into your programs.

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Four Acculturation Orientations of Youth

Based on Model from J. W. Berry

Definitions

- Integrated** Retains practices from the culture of origin and adopts practices of the receiving culture (Maintains Hispanic practices and adopts American practices too)
- Assimilated** Adopt only the practices of the new culture and do not practice any practices from their heritage
- Separated** Retains only the original cultural practices (Hispanic practices) and do not learn new (American) culture practices
- Marginalized** Very confused, do not practice their original culture nor have they adapted to the new culture
- Americanism** Tendencies toward American culture
- Hispanicism** Tendencies toward Hispanic culture
- Bi-dimensional Process** Both the receiving of new culture ideals and the retention of original culture ideals.
- Acculturation** A process that occurs in first and second generation immigrants that determines whether they accept new practices, retain original practices or both

This information comes from “The Journal of Early Adolescents,” A Bidimensional Model of Acculturation for Examining Differences in Family Functioning and Behavior Problems in Hispanic Immigrant Adolescents. <http://jea.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/27/4/405>

	Youth who <u>retain</u> original culture	Youth who do <u>not</u> retain original culture
Youth who <u>adopt</u> U.S. culture	<p><i>Integrated</i></p> <p>+ positive adaption + school adjustment + high self-worth + high well-being + high parental involvement + positive parenting + family support + favorable family functioning + high parent-teen communication (US or foreign born have equal chance of being integrated.)</p>	<p><i>Assimilated</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Delinquency ✗ Depression ✗ Substance abuse ✗ Aggressive behaviors ✗ Highest level of behavior conduct problems <p>(US born are more likely to be assimilated.)</p>
Youth who do <u>not</u> adopt U.S. culture	<p><i>Separated</i></p> <p>+ decreased likelihood of participation in delinquent activity (Youth who are foreign born are more likely to be separated)</p>	<p><i>Marginalized</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Anxiety ✗ Depression ✗ Delinquency ✗ Substance abuse

Korean American Youth

by Autumn Koo

More than a million Koreans live in the United States, representing the fourth largest Asian American ethnic group in America. Since the liberalization of the immigration law in 1965, more than 600,000 Koreans have immigrated to the U.S. Like many other immigrants, Koreans immigrate to the United States for economic opportunity and to seek a higher standard of living.

Korean culture is strongly influenced by Confucianism and its five cardinal virtues of moral-ethical human relationships between: father and son, husband and wife, the older and younger, between friends, and between lord and subject. The first three virtues apply to the Korean family unit. Traditional Korean family structure is characterized mainly by a hierarchical relationship between parents and children that mandates respect of children toward the authority of their parents. These strict family rules often create conflict between Korean immigrant parents and their children.

Approximately 70 percent of Korean immigrants regularly attend Christian churches, mostly Korean ethnic churches. The Korean ethnic churches provide social outlets to new Korean immigrants, such as fellowship, social services for church members, and opportunities to share their religious values as well as their experiences of living in America. Unlike other immigrants, Korean immigrants are distinct in that they tend to stay with their ethnically specific church even after adjusting to the new culture.

Korean American Youth

Most Korean American youth, particularly those born in this country, cannot speak Korean fluently, whereas most adult Korean immigrants cannot speak English fluently. As a result there exists a lack of communication and understanding between parents and children. Korean American youth face hardships in adjusting to American society as a part of an ethnic minority, being subjected to alienation, prejudice, and discrimination.

Korean American youth are exposed to American culture and values at school, which often conflicts with the values taught at home by their parents. In an Anglo-American culture, the rights of the “individual” are stressed more than the strength of the “unit”. Korean American youth face difficulties juggling between the individualistic values of the American culture and the collectivistic values of their Korean culture. Like other Asian American groups, Korean Americans are often described as part of the “model minority,” having few personal or professional problems. Korean American youth face challenges living up to the expectation of this stereotype along with the high expectations from their Korean immigrant parents to perform well academically. Despite these challenges, Korean American youth actively engage in activities at school and in their communities. They strive to balance the two different cultures successfully by integrating the positive aspects of both cultures equally into their daily lives.

Non-Catholic Festivals

One of the most important celebrations among Korean Americans is the Chu-suk, or Harvest Festival, that occurs in August. This is also known as Korean Thanksgiving, and Koreans take time to commemorate their ancestors and be with their families. Family members

from across the globe often travel back to their ancestral homes, and prepare special rituals and meals with their families. Special food is prepared, such as “Song-pyun,” which are rice cakes made of rice, beans, sesame seeds, and chestnuts. Chu-suk is a time to be with family and to be thankful. Entire families will visit the graves of their ancestors and pay respects by offering them food.

Korean New Year is another important holiday for Korean Americans, and Koreans celebrate the Lunar New Year. This usually falls in the month of February, and is celebrated by feasting with family members and making offerings to ancestors, in the hopes of ensuring good fortune. It is also a time to reconnect with family members.

Korean Saints



Saint Andrew Kim Taegon: This first native Korean priest was the son of Korean converts. His father, Ignatius Kim, was martyred during the persecution of 1839 and was beatified in 1925. After Baptism at the age of 15, Andrew traveled 1,300 miles to the seminary in Macao, China. After six years he managed to return to his country through Manchuria. That same year, he crossed the Yellow Sea to Shanghai and was ordained a priest. Back home again, he was assigned to arrange for more missionaries to enter by a water route that would elude the border patrol. He was arrested, tortured and finally beheaded at the Han River near Seoul, the capital.

Saint Paul Chung Hasang: Saint Paul Chung, a lay leader, is considered a leading figure in the revitalization and growth of the Church in Korea. He was born in 1795 to a faithful Catholic family. After the 1801 invasions and the death of much of his family, Paul entered China clandestinely nine times and traveled the Korean peninsula gathering up scattered Korean Catholics. Despite severe hardship and persecution, he kept his faith and served as a sterling example of piety for others. St. Paul was martyred on September 22, 1839 at the age of 45 while still in seminary studying to be a priest.



When Pope John Paul II visited Korea in 1984 he canonized Saint Andrew Kim and his 102 companions along with Saint Paul Chung, 98 other Koreans and three French missionaries who had been martyred between 1839 and 1867. Their feast day is September 20.

St. Paul Chung in the Diocese of Arlington

St. Paul Chung Catholic Church was founded in 1996 in the Diocese of Arlington as an ethnic parish designed to serve the needs of the influx of Korean immigrants. It serves the Korean Catholic community, with approximately 5,200 parishioners, and is staffed by Korean priests.

Autumn Koo is a parishioner of St. Paul Chung. She has been involved with youth ministry at St. Paul Chung for three years.

Ministering to Vietnamese Youth

A Glimpse into the Vietnamese Culture

by Sr. Cecilia Nguyen

How can a Catholic live out his/her faith authentically? The answer to this question depends on to “whom” the question is posed. Who are the Vietnamese in general? The phrase “be proud of yourself” captures the Vietnamese history and culture. Vietnamese parents often remind their children of their roots and remind them of how much they have struggled and achieved in this new land.

Vietnam is a land of 80 million people, which claims its existence for 4000 years, a mythical founding rather than a precise number. Mythical stories are an important characteristic in forming the people, both individually and communally. The legend of the people born of a union between *Lạc Long Quân*, a powerful dragon from the water of the North, and *Âu Cơ*, a mystical phoenix from the mountain of the South, is known to every Vietnamese.

Since the fall of Saigon, more than 1.5 million have settled in the US, making it the sixth largest immigrant group. Most Vietnamese came as refugees, not as immigrants. An immigrant migrates from one location to another on a voluntary basis, who, prior to the migration, has a destination in mind; a refugee is a person who has fled his/her country and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a “well-founded” fear of persecution.

Vietnamese Migration

Most Vietnamese in the U.S. have experienced the effects of war directly. It is not possible to understand them without comprehending their experience of war and escape. Vietnam fought a thousand-year war with China, and one hundred-year rebellion against France, its own civil war, and the war against the US with 3 million casualties, including the lives of 58,000 Americans. After 1975 the Communist victory triggered a massive escape effort by the people from Vietnam costing another million lives.

The escape from Vietnam after the final occupation of the Communist in 1975 began in April of 1975 and lasted until the early 1990s. More than 1 million Vietnamese escaped, mostly by boat. The ones left behind were punished by the new regime to be jailed in brutal, torturous “re-education camps.” Today, the exodus has ended but the Vietnamese people continue to immigrate to the US to be united with their families. In 2000, the USCCB estimated there were about 320,000 Vietnamese Catholics living in the United States. The Vietnamese Catholic Federation reports having 650 priests (diocesan and religious), 1,100 Sisters, 41 Vietnamese parishes, 3 diocesan pastoral centers, and more than 200 communities functioning within the local parishes.

Vietnamese Culture

The Vietnamese culture is strongly influenced by Chinese ideologies and religious beliefs due to the thousand year war against Chinese rule and assimilation. Under the Chinese rule, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were introduced. Though inevitably affected to some degree by the Chinese culture, Vietnam managed to preserve its own national identity through acculturation, and not through assimilation or trans-culturation. The Three Religions or Triple Religions (*Tam Giáo*) were harmoniously blended together as a way of life for the Vietnamese people. Each contributed some significant aspects to the Vietnamese culture.

French colonialism and the American involvement in the South added some Western elements to the traditional Vietnamese culture, as reflected in art, architecture, music, attire, the education system, literature, gender equality and social mores. The Vietnamese cultural value system is strongly guided by four main factors: (1) strong attachment and loyalty to one's family, (2) high respect for education, (3) humanism or a "heart oriented" approach toward life, and (4) harmony-oriented concept in all personal interrelations. Among these, family bond is the most important, the center of one's individual life and the backbone of society. It is common to see several generations living in one household, but this is beginning to change. Vietnamese are strongly attached to family and deeply concerned for family welfare, prestige, reputation and pride. Elderly parents are respected, loved, and cared for by their children. Family loyalty puts strong pressure on each family member. The misconduct of a person is blamed, not only on that member, but also on that member's family.

Vietnamese have a strong sense of religion. Some religions are based on popular beliefs (Ancestor Veneration, animism), others were either brought to Vietnam from the outside (Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity) or are indigenous to it (Caodaism and Hoà Hảo Buddhism). Culturally Vietnamese believe that honoring one's parents is the highest moral value. Reverence for parents strengthens the bond between the living and the dead. In most homes, especially those who practice this form of religion, an altar is erected to remind them of the presence of the dead and to ask for their protection. The most reverent act is to celebrate the anniversary of the death of a deceased member of the family. On important occasions, such as relocating a house, marriage, starting a new business, the birth of a child, or whenever a person needs guidance or a favor, the ancestors are consulted.

Roman Catholicism was introduced in Vietnam in the early the 16th century by missionaries from Spain, France, and Portugal. Catholicism is in debt to Alexandre de Rhodes, a Frenchman who came in 1624 with a group of MEP, Mission Étrangères de Paris, who romanized the Vietnamese language (Quốc Ngữ National Language). In the early 19th century, the French people used reason to protect French missionaries and Christians. They occupied Đà Nẵng in 1858 and then Saigon and Hanoi several years later. Vietnam became a colony of France. In 1954 the Geneva Peace Accords were signed and divided Vietnam into two zones. About 900,000 Vietnamese left North Vietnam and migrated southward, nearly two-thirds were Catholic. After the Fall of Saigon in 1975, a large number of Catholics fled to other countries. Today, Catholics comprise of about 8% of the population of 80 million people. In 2004, VN Bishops report 5,572,525 Catholics, 25 dioceses, 42 bishops, 2,269 diocesan priests, 432 religious priests, 10,377 religious sisters, 1,920 religious brothers, 1,085 seminarians, and 1,712 candidates waiting to be approved by the government and accepted by the dioceses. Protestants in Vietnam comprise around 1% (less than 1 million). In the US, 5% of the Vietnamese people are members of protestant churches due to many converting to Protestantism.

Vietnamese Saints and Holy Days

The proudest moment for Vietnamese Catholics living in Vietnam and throughout the world was the canonization of 117 Vietnamese Martyrs in Rome on June 21, 1988 by Pope John Paul II. The martyrs' feast day is solemnly celebrated each year on November 24. The Vietnamese have a special devotion to our Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of La Vang--the Madonna of Vietnam. This devotion dates from the persecutions in 1798, when a group of Catholics saw a beautiful lady who consoled those who had been persecuted, calmed their fears, and strengthened their faith. Some 50,000 Vietnamese Catholics gather every year at

the Congregation of the Co-Mother Redemptrix in Carthage, MO for a week of Mass, prayers, and spiritual workshops. They also have special liturgical rites for the major feasts of the Church, such as Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, the month of Mary, and the month of the Rosary.

Vietnamese celebrate ancestral commemorations, a time of remembrance of the deceased parents and grandparents by their children. Each year the family organizes a memorial or anniversary of the death of the loved one and invites close relatives and friends to attend a memorial Mass for the deceased and to share a meal with the family. It is a popular practice among the Vietnamese to have Masses said for the deceased on the anniversary of their death or on November 2.

The Vietnamese have several national holidays; the most important of these is Tet (Lunar New Year) in late January or early February, which may last for three days, a week or a month. On New Year's Day, Catholics go to Church to ask God and the Blessed Virgin Mary for blessings in the New Year, and then go from house to house offering good wishes to clergy, family and friends. They may give children new lucky money in red envelopes. The newlyweds are also given money to help them begin a new life together.

Practical Tips to be Welcoming to a Vietnamese Teen or Family

- Be informed of their ethnic identity (strong family unity, celebrations of weddings & funerals, etc.)
- Reaffirm their faith
- Be patient with those who have not mastered the English language
- Be attentive to their social needs
- Keep in touch with the parents and affirm the relationship between parents and teens

Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Parish, Arlington, VA

The Vietnamese community who gathers daily for Mass or once a week on Sunday proudly claims their Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Catholic Church to be the first Vietnamese Catholic Church in the US. In the beginning there were only 25 families. Since its inception in 1976, there are now 2,000 families and 8,000 members. They are currently working on a multimillion dollar expansion due to an increase in the number of church members. The community first met at a church in Annandale for the first six years, and soon the church was unable to hold all the attendees; plans had to be made to move its members to their current location on Wakefield Street. The size of the church grew rapidly, as did the Vietnamese population in the Washington metro area, due to a refugee camp at Fort Indiantown Gap near Harrisburg, Pa. that provided initial housing for more than 22,000 immigrants. Because of its historic nature, the Holy Martyrs of Vietnam Church serves Catholics from throughout the Washington, D.C. area. Parishioners come from as far as Woodbridge, Manassas, Leesburg, and Ashburn to take part in the Sunday Mass in their native tongue in Arlington. A few families even commute from Maryland and D.C. The parish has several programs and activities that are offered for all age groups, including Religious Education, Eucharistic Youth Movement, Dominican Third Order, Senior Citizen Association, Altar Servers, Blue Army, Marriage Family Enrichment, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Youth Association, Sacred Heart Association, Parish Mothers Group, Lion Dance Group, and nine different choirs.

Conclusion

The identity crisis” (living “betwixt and between” in a new land) affects both the first and the second generations. The first generation Vietnamese in America are mostly refugees whose identity was hung between two worlds. For the people in Vietnam, they are the “Viet Kieu” (Vietnamese living abroad). The second generation grows up with ambiguity, uncertainty, and tension about who they are. They claim their primary ethnic identity according to their parents’ identity. At home, living with their parents, they speak Vietnamese, eat rice, and observe the Vietnamese customs. At school, they try to “act” or “be” white in order to be accepted. Two problems arise from these tendencies: (1) some youth take up the Euro-centrist values and criticize the customs and traditions of their parents as inferior to American practices; (2) others feel obliged to defend customs/traditions about which they know little. Today, the identity of “hyphenated” Americans, such as Vietnamese-Americans or Indian-Americans, seem to be more acceptable. To be “betwixt and between” is not totally negative. There are opportunities to fuse both worlds together and to create a new and better world, so that they stand not only between, but also beyond their differences. The encounter of the Vietnamese culture and the American culture brings both cultures into a reciprocal engagement in such a way that both are transformed from within, by mutual criticism and enrichment. It is no longer an encounter of just “East meeting West,” but “East and West” transforming one another!
A Catholic can live out his or her faith authentically by encountering, discovering, and appreciating the past, culture, and values of others.

Sr. Cecilia Nguyen is a member of the Community of Charity and Social Services whose mission is to serve the poor in charity. Sr. Cecilia currently works at St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Annandale, VA as the Director of Religious Education and Coordinator of Youth Ministry. She is a doctoral candidate at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

Filipino American Youth and Culture

by Ed Tiong

General Information

The Republic of the Philippines, located off the southeast coast of Asia, is one of the largest island groups in the world, numbering 7,107 islands. The 1995 population was approximately 60.5 million, with fifty-five percent of the people living on the largest island of Luzon. Approximately eighty-five percent of Filipinos are Catholic, with large numbers of Protestants and Muslims.

Filipinos comprise approximately 111 cultural and linguistic groups, mainly of Malayo-Polynesian origin. The ethnic make-up of the population has been greatly influenced by Chinese, Spanish, and Caucasian American intermarriages. Among the eleven language groups of the country, Filipino is the official national language which is native to the peoples of Central Luzon. The Philippines is, nevertheless, the third largest English-speaking country in the world.



During the sixteenth century, Spain conquered the islands which they named for King Phillip II as "Las Islas Filipinas" or the Philippine Islands. After 327 years of Spanish domination, the Filipinos revolted, and won their independence in 1898. However, after the Spanish-American War, the United States controlled the Philippines until 1942, when Japan seized control until they were liberated by the Americans. Finally, in 1946, the American Congress granted independence to the Filipinos, and the second Republic of the Philippines was born.

Filipino Migration

Historians identify four major waves of Filipino migration to the United States. The first wave between 1898 and 1941 was comprised mostly of "pensionados" or scholars sent by the American government to U.S. schools, and large numbers of laborers recruited to work on farms in Hawaii and California. Filipino soldiers, who served in the U.S. armed forces and their families, came from 1945 until the early '60s. Professionals were encouraged to come in the 1960s and '70s during the boom years of the U.S. economy. The final wave came when U.S. immigration policies favored family reunification of those Filipinos already in the United States as immigrants or citizens. The 1990 U.S. Census Bureau reports that more than twenty-five percent of the foreign-born population claimed Asia as their birthplace, with the largest Asian group of Filipinos numbering 1.2 million persons. The states with the largest Filipino population are California, Hawaii, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Washington, Virginia, Texas, Florida, and Maryland.

Filipino Culture

Filipino culture is a mixture of Eastern and Western culture. The main influences are derived from three centuries of Spanish rule. These influences can be seen in their folk music, folk dance, language, food, art, and religion. Filipino food is a mixture of Asian and European dishes.

Filipino Family

Family is central to the Filipino culture and society. In the Philippines, there are not many retirement homes or orphanages. Often in Filipino homes, it is not unusual to find grandparents or an extended relative living with their son or daughter's family.

The Filipino individual looks to the family for support, nurturing, and protection. This may include behaviors such as sharing of material things or buying things for a family member. Other Filipinos living in the United States with family or relatives back home will routinely send money called "remittances" and/or often send "Balikbayan" boxes of shipped household goods, clothes, canned foods and other items to the Philippines especially around Christmas Time.

The latest wave of migration to the United States and other countries has been teachers, non-professionals and other professionals, whereby young parents or individuals have left the Philippines to pursue employment opportunities or to receive more educational training. This sense of family obligation is an extension of the strong family ties and gratitude to their parents. This family loyalty is seen as "utang na loob," debt from within, which creates a culture bound in respect, obedience, and love.

For those Filipinos in the United States, there is a deep longing for home. Often, it is seen in local business of Filipino stores and/or restaurants catering to the taste and cuisine of their clientele with products imported from the Philippines from food, clothes, DVD Filipino movies and other items.

Filipino Catholics

Filipino Catholics' experience of church is very different from that of most U.S. parishioners. Filipino parishes are very large, with little personal interaction between priest and people. Filipinos are not used to registering in a parish or contributing through Sunday envelopes. Also, according to the Commission on Education and Religious Instruction of the Filipino Bishops' Conference, "Filipino Catholicism has always ... [stressed] ...rites and ceremonies. Fiestas, processions, pilgrimages, novenas, innumerable devotional practices...mark the concrete devotional practice of Filipino Catholics. Much of what they know of Christian doctrinal truths and moral values is learned through these sacramental and devotional practices." (A Catholic Response to the Asian Presence, Washington, DC: NCEA, 1990)

Recently, however, Filipinos have begun to take an active role in American Church life. Their sheer numbers, their youth and vigor have forced parishes to recognize their presence. For example, in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Filipinos comprise approximately eighteen percent of the church-going population. As their religious heritage is more appreciated, they are encouraged to share their unique practices of popular piety such as, Simbang Gabi (pre-Christmas novena of Masses), Flores de Mayo (Marion devotion), Pagbasa ng Mahal na Pasyon (solemn readings of the passion,), devotions to the saints, novenas to the Nazareno, the feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz (the first Filipino martyr), etc. Today, many dioceses in the United States have offices that focus on Filipino ministries.

A survey conducted in 1995 indicates that there were approximately 300 Filipino priests, brothers, and deacons, and 200 sisters in the United States. Several priests were appointed pastors, many religious were appointed Catholic school principals, and many Filipinos have responsible positions in diocesan chanceries. Recently, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops through the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees appointed a priest-delegate to act as liaison to Filipino priests and religious and as a point of contact with the Bishops of the Philippines.

Starting in 1990, Filipino Catholic leaders gathered at four large national "Sandiwa" Conferences to proclaim their identity and establish their place in the American Church. That special place is symbolized by the dedication of the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage of Antipolo at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. There she stands side by side with the religious symbols of the peoples of many other countries who have come to make this land the great nation that it is. After 100 years, it seems the Filipinos have finally arrived.

Regarding ministry with Filipinos in the United States, the survey cited above identified several directives to be pursued by pastoral ministers:

- Focus on Filipino youth who are doubly coping with being second generation Americans, and with the culture and religious devotions of their parents.
- Offer continuing religious education to Filipinos who came to this country as "cradle Catholics."
- Evangelize the native religious traditions which now sustain the faith of the first generation Filipinos.
- Focus on Filipino marriages, because spouses are coping with a liberal social environment and also with the pressures of financial stability.

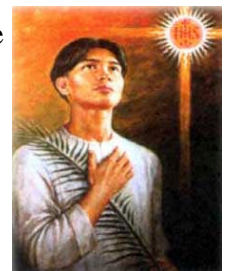
Filipino Feast Days

- 3rd Sunday of January - The Fiesta del Santo Niño de Cebu (Festival of the Child Jesus of Cebu)
- March or April "Holy Week" - Semana Santa
- May - Flores de Mayo celebrates in honor of the Virgin Mary
- June 12- Philippine Independence Day
- September 27 – Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz (only Filipino Saint)
- Dec 16-24- Simbang Gabi (A novena of nine masses in Spiritual preparation for birth of Jesus Christ)

Filipino Saint & Blessed

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz- He is the first Filipino saint. He was a married layperson of the Archdiocese of Manila; and a member of the Confraternity of the Rosary. He was martyred in 1637 and Pope John Paul II canonized him on October 18, 1987. His feast day is September 28th.

Blessed Pedro Calungsod- (seen on right) He was a young, layperson and catechist of the Archdiocese of Cebu. He was martyred in 1672 defending a Catholic priest. He is remembered on April 2nd. (<http://saints.sqpn.com/saintp86.htm>)



Ed Tiong belongs to Corpus Christi Catholic Mission. He collaborated with the Office of Multicultural Ministries to help begin the Filipino ministry called "Paaralang Pinoy" which is a Filipino Cultural School in the Diocese of Arlington. He likes to help coach basketball. He has a wife and three school-age children.



Tips on Ministering to the Filipino American Population

1. Invite parents, family, young adults, and youth to an evening to recognize the contributions by the Filipino American community in the Catholic Church. There are many adult and youth volunteers who serve the church as catechists, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, music ministry, altar servers, prayer groups and other church positions.
2. Invite the Filipino American leaders and members of the community through social and civic organizations or prayer groups/Diocesan Ministry to fully participate in liturgy or joint projects. A good resource to use to reach out to Filipino Catholics is the Filipino Ministry of Northern Virginia. (www.filipinoministry.catholicweb.com or the office of Cultural Diversity from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)
3. Most Filipino Americans do not have problems with speaking or understanding the English language. You may be able to reach out to parents and students by speaking at Religious Education classes with permission from the Director of Religious Education.
4. Organize programs that recognize Filipino culture, customs, tradition and language. Celebrate their annual Philippine Independence in the month of June or Filipino American Heritage Month in October. Better yet, why not attend a Filipino celebration or function and be immersed in the culture and community.
5. Invite young students, adults or parent volunteers to be part of the youth ministry program or CYO sports program. Most Filipino youth have an interest in basketball and often have organized Filipino basketball teams arranged by volunteers outside the school. Another popular sport among Filipinos is tennis. For more information contact 703-403-5624 Filipino American Tennis Organization of Northern Virginia or go to www.filamtennis.com. This community tennis association works with the United States Tennis Association in promoting and developing the sport through participation in CYO or other local programs.
6. Attend or reach out to Filipino youth by immersing yourself in the culture. Filipino Ministry of Northern Virginia offers a program called “Paaralang Pinoy” which is a Filipino Cultural School geared to the young students to learn about culture and language. Their classes are held on Sundays from 2–4pm during the months between October and May and is usually held at St. Bernadette School in Springfield, VA. Please visit their website at www.filamyouth.com
7. Family ties run deep and are a central part of the fabric of Filipino American Society. There is great emphasis on respect, support and obedience within the structure of the family.
8. One of the most celebrated feast days in the Filipino Culture is Simbang Gabi which is a novena of nine Masses starting from Dec 16-Dec 24 or Dec 15-Dec 23, come and join

them on their celebrations at the liturgy and the reception after the Mass called “Salo-Salo”. Get to know their culture and the people.

9. Unlike the second and third generation Filipino Americans, first generation members the parents or family of the first generation maintain their ties of culture and values. With the varied influences of the current generation from consumerism, media, and liberal values, there needs to be more emphasis or assistance in creating an environment of faith and culture for them to be unswayed from the throngs of peer pressure leading to their confusion and identity as Filipino American Catholics. Parents who may be too busy with work and other things need to be more involved and take a stake in their children’s future. To minister to the parents may also be crucial in having the consistency needed to teach the Catholic values at home and church.

(Credit information from: <http://www.usccb.org/apa/filipino.shtml>)

Ministering to Hispanic Young People

by Fr. Ramón Domínguez, Y.A.

The Context

US Census data reflects the following numbers for our Diocese:

Population of Virginia (July 2008): 7,769,089 (US Census Bureau (USCB))

Hispanics in Virginia (July 2008): 531,396 (USCB)

Population of Diocese of Arlington geographical area (July 2008): 2,820,999 (USCB)

Population of Virginia (July 2006): 7,628,347 (USCB)

Hispanics in Virginia (July 2006): 484,257 (USCB)

Population of Diocese of Arlington geographical area (July 2006): 2,737,276 (USCB)

Population of Catholics in Diocese of Arlington (2008): 413,360 (CDA Directory)

Hispanics in the United States do not come from a single national group as is the case of Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, etc. While all too often they are grouped together as Hispanics or Latinos, their origins come from a wide variety of countries and cultures. While holding Spanish as a common language base, the regional variances are quite diverse. Furthermore, national origin is an important factor as the various Latin American countries are often at war or in conflict with each other.

Nonetheless, there is a shared identity that is helpful to recognize when ministering to this community, especially when it comes to serving the youth. The Hispanic population can generally be grouped into three broad categories. While these categories are fluid, they give an idea of how immigrants move through the process of integrating into the U.S. culture. The first group is the newly arrived. The second group is the U.S.-born children of newly arrived parents. The third group is the U.S.-born children of the second group.

As newly arrived, first generation Hispanics are often faced with the difficult task of learning a new language, culture and academic performance. Their parents, often working long hours or multiple jobs, are limited in their ability to learn English and often depend on the older children to assist them in navigating this new country. While this is often expedient, and in many cases a necessity, since newly arrived parents may not have the educational background to readily learn a new language, it places significant burdens on the development of the young person. Depending on the age of arrival to the U.S., these youth are usually fluent in Spanish and gradually become fluent in English.

As time continues and U.S. born children are added to the newly arrived's families, a new dynamic arises as well. These younger children are usually fluent in English very quickly and only possess a passing ability to speak Spanish in the home. Often their vocabulary is limited to household conversations, religious prayers, and the like. Their music, clothing, and language of choice is predominantly English and from the United States. Culturally, however, they see themselves quite distinct from the general U.S. population and mostly socialize with other Hispanics. While this is not always true, in areas with large groups of Hispanics, this is quite often the case.

By the time these youth have their own children, they still retain the cultural awareness of being Hispanic, but by and large, their ability to speak Spanish, and truly understand their

country of origin's customs is limited to what they learn from their grandparents and what is practiced in their local community.

“Traditional values like hospitality, respect owed to elders, the significance of giving one's word, the importance of the historical memory of families — all this is mingled with attitudes prevailing in the U.S. cultural environment. These attitudes are often different from, or even antagonistic to Hispanic family perspectives. The dangers and opportunities offered to our youth by the dominant culture come in great variety. What commitment, happiness, and the good life mean, and what sex is all about, take new paths when the Hispanic child goes out to encounter the values of the dominant culture of the United States.” (*Bishop Flores, 10/13/2008 ANSH Colorado Conference*)

Recognizing this process, these varying perspectives and these basic groups present the Coordinator of Youth Ministry (CYM) with some challenges in terms of language, cultural sensitivity and social preferences. “The unspoken assumption that they would simply assimilate into the existing mainstream parish youth group, programs and activities has proved to be incorrect.” (*Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Origins, V36, #18, Oct. 12, 2006*)

One practical approach to address this area of concern is to seek out natural groupings of youth and include them as part of the structured youth ministry program without requiring them to give up those aspects and features that make them valuable and attractive to one another. Often these groupings can be seen connected loosely with gatherings of adults. For example, in many parishes Hispanic adults meet to have charismatic prayer services, or praise and worship. In these parishes sometimes there develops a natural group of youth who are present, but not engaged or involved in the prayer group. This natural grouping is one to which the CYM could begin to connect and provide support and guidance. Establishing contact and a relationship with this group is the first step in building bridges of connectivity between the different cultural groups.

Taking advantage of these natural groupings is a useful first step in identifying and engaging the youth of the parish. As much as we would like to assume that the young read the bulletin, mainstream U.S. youth rarely read it, and Hispanic youth are even less likely to read it, so reaching out to Hispanic youth through bulletin announcements is, at best, marginal. Engaging them in this first step is essential to validate the importance of providing an ecclesial space for them to live and practice their faith in the context of the parish community. These groups need to be affirmed while at the same time, the CYM needs to build bridges and find points of encounter between the Hispanic group(s) and the mainstream youth program.

By CYMs validating and encouraging their participation in these Hispanic youth groups, these youth will acquire a sense of belonging. Hopefully through the efforts of the CYM this sense of belonging will weave into the broader context of the parish community and eventually form youth that can take ownership and the parish will reap their stewardship.

“[To achieve] full commitment to the life and mission of the parish, young people and their families commit to:

- Strengthening the unity of the parish while honoring and embracing the diversity of each one of the cultural/ethnic groups that constitute the parish. Such commitment flows from the conviction that each culture has a piece of the good news that is lived and communicated through the traditions, language, ethos, cultural values and norms of that community.

- Being alert and ready to invite and welcome newcomers in their midst and to provide them with the space and support they need to begin their unique journey of ecclesial integration in the diverse parish family community.” (*Alejandro Aguilera-Titus, Origins, V36, #18, Oct. 12, 2006*)

In *Renewing the Vision* the Bishops call for youth ministry to be multicultural. This is only achieved “when it focuses on specialized ministry to youth of particular racial and ethnic cultures *and* promotes multicultural awareness among all youth ... [and] needs to develop program content that is culturally appropriate and relevant to the needs of the participants” (p.22-23).

There are a number of online resources available for Hispanic youth ministry. These include sites such as:

www.maccsa.org
 www.sepimiami.org
 www.ncchm.org
 www.laredpjh.org
 www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs
 www.ansh.org
http://www.fipusa.com/index_english.html

Learning about, engaging, and walking with the Hispanics of the parish is an essential experience that can be enriching for the CYM. These youth represent a significant sector of our population and it is vital to instill in them the truth of what it means to be Catholic. It cannot be left to the traditions of the home country, nor can we entrust it to the popular culture. If we wish to touch their hearts and instill in them a fervor to live as true members of the Body of Christ, we must seek them out, build up relationships so that they will walk with us as we lead them to Jesus Christ.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. (I Cor. 12:12-14, NAB)

Let us pray that our vision of youth ministry is such that each CYM values each part of the Body of Christ, yet also seeks to keep them focused on the true purpose of ministry which is in the words of Bishop Flores: “to provide a community and social context to experience the joy of prayer, of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of service to others.” (*Bishop Flores, 10/13/2008 ANSH Colorado Conference*)

Fr. Ramón Domínguez, YA is a Consecrated Cleric member of Youth Apostles Institute. He was ordained in 2000 in the Diocese of Fall River for Youth Apostles and has ministered as the Director of the Hispanic Apostolate for the City of Fall River, later as Administrator of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and St. Hedwig parishes in New Bedford, MA, and is presently the Program Director of Youth Apostles Institute’s Don Bosco Center which reaches out to at-risk Hispanic and other middle school youth in the City of Manassas, VA.

A Journal of a Bicultural, Bilingual Teen

by Carmen "China" Briceño

3-12-09

Last night was sooo embarrassing! When mom dropped me off at the church for our youth night she wanted to speak to my youth minister, Kelly. I can still see it now! Mom was speaking her broken English and Kelly was speaking her broken Spanish. Then they tried using hand gestures, but they still couldn't understand each other. I saw people starting to stare and whisper so I stepped in and translated everything like I have to do a lot of the time. Sometimes I feel like even though I am her daughter, I am like a mother to my own mom since she depends on me to translate for her when she doesn't understand things in English. It was nice, though, that Kelly made an effort to speak Spanish. She told us a few weeks ago that she was listening to CDs so she could learn Spanish!!! She must really care about us...

I really like Kelly because I feel like she really tries to understand me. Most adults assume that just because I speak perfect English I must be American. But Kelly is great because she understands that my life is more complicated than others since I usually feel out of place, not completely American or Salvadorian. It's so frustrating sometimes because my Salvadorian family thinks I am too "American." Even my mom says that she doesn't understand my siblings and me at times since the culture we are growing up in is sooo different from what life was like back home. To top it off, every time I have to fill out a form, I'm reminded that I am "Hispanic" and not American.

I remember the first time I heard the word Hispanic. There was a new kid in school who had just moved from El Salvador. I wanted to welcome him so that he didn't feel left out. It turned out awful, another embarrassing moment! I walked up to the wrong boy and started speaking Spanish to him. He just stared at me and was like, "I don't speak Spanish, I'm white." I remember being confused by what he said so I looked at my skin and thought, "I'm white, too!" It wasn't until later that I realized that even though my skin was white, I was considered Hispanic.

Kelly has really helped me feel comfortable about being Hispanic. She's always telling me what a gift it is to be bilingual and bicultural. She helped me realize that others could learn from my unique experiences of the faith. Back home being Catholic is not only a part of who we are but it's a part of our culture, too. I know that just as I am a part of my immediate family, I also belong to an even larger Catholic family. I really don't think it was until I moved to the U.S. that I learned that being Christian didn't necessarily mean you being Catholic. When my uncle became Protestant my family really struggled with it since it felt like he had not only left the Catholic faith but the family, too.

I remember when I started public school. I realized right away that not all of my friends were going to be Catholic or even Christian for that matter. This made me want to have answers for all the questions people asked me about being Catholic. I tried to look for books in Spanish about the faith that would make sense to me as a teen but there weren't many out there. Once again, Kelly was such a great help. She realized that even though I had a strong faith, I didn't know very much about why I

believed what I did as a Catholic. She made sure that I was able to give answers to the questions my friends asked me and to understand why I believed what I did as a Catholic. I know that a lot of teens don't know about their religion or faith or whatever very well; but I still always felt like my American Catholic friends had a better idea and knew more than I did about being Catholic.

One of the things that Kelly has brought out in me is my leadership qualities. I think she sees that I am used to being an adult a lot of the time because of my family situation and that I could use those same skills to be a leader on our core team. She reminds me how much other teens can learn from me and how much I can learn by accepting more responsibility on the team. I help with planning our activities and I've even given some talks at retreats and stuff. She said she really enjoys how I use YouTube videos and popular music in my talks. Being a leader in the group has been important to me; it has helped my self-esteem and really made me want to keep coming back and being a part of the core team. It's also made me feel like I belong and I am appreciated. My mom is also happy because she feels like people in the group respect my Hispanic culture and don't just put up with me. Unlike school sometimes, at church I feel like I am part of a group and not just someone out of place on the sidelines. Kelly is always telling us about how the Church is one big family and that we share that family with people all over the world. I definitely feel that way about my Church. I remember one time she had us pray the rosary in both English and Spanish, that way my Hispanic friends and I didn't feel so dumb when we didn't know how to respond in English. It wasn't that we didn't know the prayers; we knew them, but only in Spanish. It was nice because we all learned a lot from each other that day.

I feel that I have grown a lot in these past years at church, being on the core team and going to the events and stuff. I feel appreciated and valuable as a member of my core team. I have grown to love and embrace my culture, which for me means not only where I am from but also who I am.

~ Sofia

Carmen "China" Briceño is the Director of Youth Ministry for the Sol Vocational Institute of the Diocesan Laborer Priests in Washington. She is also a member of the mission of the Vocare Foundation, and also coordinates music ministry for the Ascendo Nights at the Sol Center. She has experience as a speaker and facilitator in the fields of youth ministry, young adult retreats, missionary camps, vocational seminars, evening prayers/vigils, formation for young adults in "Theology of the Body", and liturgies for young people among others. Carmen is the creator of "Sex and the City of God" workshops. She will become a Consecrated Virgin on August 22nd, 2009.

Fifteen Questions and Answers on the Quinceañera

1. What is a quinceañera?

The quinceañera is a traditional celebration of life and gratitude to God on the occasion of the fifteenth birthday of a young Hispanic woman. The ritual emphasizes her passage from childhood to adulthood. The family usually requests a Mass or a blessing to be held in the Church. The rite is frequently celebrated in several countries in the Americas, including Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It is frequently requested by Hispanic Catholics in the dioceses of the United States of America.

2. What is the origin of the quinceañera?

The tribes of Meso-America, possibly the Mayas and Toltecs, celebrated elaborate rites of passage for their young men and women. Rites of passage are known to have existed in the Iberian Peninsula as well. The Spanish conquistadores may have brought the practice to Meso-America. It is possible that the missionaries would have approved of this practice, since these rites closely paralleled Christian practices of initiation and marriage. The ancient Mozarabic Rite of the Iberian peninsula had elaborate rituals marking the passage of baptized adolescents, each of which included specific references to Christian initiation and each of which was celebrated following the reception of Holy Communion at Mass. With the suppression of the Mozarabic Rite, many of these rituals passed into popular religious practice.

3. How is the quinceañera celebrated?

In the presence of family and friends, the young woman (the quinceañera), often accompanied by fifteen young men and women of her choice, (damas y chambelanes), enters the Church in procession, together with her parents and godparents. If she has prepared the readings, she may serve as the lector for at least one of the readings. After the Liturgy of the Word, the quinceañera makes a commitment to God and the Blessed Virgin to live out the rest of her life according to the teachings of Christ and the Church by renewing her Baptismal promises. Then, signs of faith (medal, Bible, rosary, prayer book) which have been blessed and may be given to her. A special blessing of the quinceañera concludes the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After Mass, the young woman is presented to the community. The ritual continues with a dinner and sometimes a dance in her honor.

4. Who are the participants in the celebration?

The quinceañera and fifteen young men and women of her choice are joined by members of her family and friends for the celebration. The priest(s) or deacon has a key role as the one who represents the Church and who prays the blessing over the young woman. The local community is also encouraged to gather for the celebration.

5. May the quinceañera take place outside Mass?

The ritual may be celebrated simply, outside Mass with the young woman, accompanied by her parents and godparents, coming before the priest or deacon to receive a special blessing in the Church. Or, there may be a more elaborate celebration with elegant clothes, flowers, music and decorations and with more than one priest presiding.

6. Why would this blessing be included in the Book of Blessings?

The Book of Blessings (De Benedictionibus) provides blessings for persons, places, and objects in a wide variety of circumstances and occasions. The Bendición de la Quinceañera is proposed for inclusion in Part I: Blessings Directly Pertaining to Persons, alongside orders for the blessing of a family, a married couple, children, sons and daughters, etc.

7. Why is it necessary to have an approved order of blessing for this practice?

The traditional blessing, part of the popular religion of Latinos and common in some countries of Central and South America and the Caribbean, has developed in the United States into an unofficial “liturgical rite” and is regulated in some dioceses with specific guidelines and norms.

In recent years, the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy has been approached by a number of Bishops requesting the development of a quinceañera ritual for use in the dioceses of the United States of America. There is currently no approved Blessing for the Quinceañera. In a number of US dioceses, unapproved “rituals” of a variety of origins are in widespread use. In the absence of an approved rite, celebrants often spontaneously create prayers and ritual actions. Since only approved and confirmed rites may be used in the Liturgy, a Blessing for the Quinceañera has been proposed by the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy.

8. Why do parents present their daughter for this celebration?

The parents, in coming to the parish Church seeking the blessing, acknowledge that their daughter has reached the age where she is capable of handling additional responsibility. They see the quince años Mass as a way to thank God for the blessing of their daughter’s life and to seek God’s blessing and guidance as she enters adulthood. The extended family, (grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles and cousins) is usually present, to celebrate with the quinceañera. Esponsores, other couples acting as sponsors, may bring forward the blessed religious articles which are presented to the quinceañera.

9. What is the positive value of this celebration for the parish?

The Virgin Mary is a model for women of every class and age group. In a culture where machismo is still evident, the choice by a young Hispanic woman to celebrate her fifteenth birthday in the Church offers a host of possibilities for her and the parish. If the young women are received with understanding and a willingness to meet their needs, the celebration of the quinceañera can be a “teachable moment” for the parish.

10. Could a parish institute a period of preparation for the quinceañera?

The quinceañera, and the fifteen teens who form part of her celebration, could be asked to participate in a day of retreat or in one or several sessions of preparation with talks, activities and prayer, together with the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, prior to the date of the celebration. The focus on the positive contribution of women in society as well as their becoming active participants in the life of the parish can also be emphasized. They may be encouraged to take a more active part in the various parish ministries.

11. Why is this celebration necessary when the Church has the sacrament of Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the three sacraments of initiation by which the baptized “are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy

Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”¹ The celebration of the quince años complements the Sacrament by providing a special blessing for a young Catholic woman as she enters adulthood, preparing her for her new responsibilities.

Today’s teenagers live in a culture which urges them to embrace “the facile myths of success and power,”² in direct contrast to the Catholic values espoused by their parents. At the time of the celebration of the blessing of the quinceañera, a young woman comes to the Church seeking a blessing. Standing before the altar, she is publicly presented by her family and friends in a gesture of thanksgiving.

12. Does this celebration sometimes become too costly and extravagant?

Yes. Unfortunately, the advantage of living in a country where material things are readily available often encourages families to give into a competitive consumerism and spend exorbitant sums on such celebrations. The same tendency is often seen in the planning of celebrations of the Sacrament of Marriage.

However, as with weddings, many Hispanic families save for years to provide the celebration for their daughter, granddaughter, goddaughter or niece. While to an uninformed observer, the financial expenditure may appear far beyond the means of the family, the reality may be very different. The custom of having padrinos/madrinas and esponsores makes it possible for there to be a larger array of donated gifts and services. Family members who are seamstresses, musicians, drivers of limousines, florist shop workers, cooks, bakers and photographers often donate their services as gifts. The church decorations, food and music for the fiesta, are often provided by family and friends.

Parishes may also give pastoral guidance in having the celebration for several girls at one Mass, thus focusing more on the liturgy than on any one family, or offering the use of the parish hall for the fiesta which follows. A parish, a parish organization or several parish organizations could sponsor a fiesta following a monthly religious celebration for all the quinceañeras of the parish. It is suggested that a time of preparation be set before the date of the celebration so that all participants understand the meaning of the religious celebration and have an opportunity to ready themselves spiritually.

13. How can this celebration be a means of strengthening the faith of Latino youth?

Adults have a responsibility to pass on the faith to younger members of the community. The celebration of quince años is a crucial time in the life of a young Hispanic woman. While society invites youth to gang membership, drug and alcohol abuse and irresponsible sexual behavior, the Church can offer the quinceañera an opportunity to reflect on her role as a Catholic Christian woman in a society which often distorts the woman’s role.

The U.S. Bishops’ pastoral letter, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* is a call to personal discipleship, evangelization and leadership of youth so strong that the bishops ask the entire Church to make ministry with adolescents its concern as well. The letter focuses on three goals: empowering young people to live as disciples of Christ in today’s world; drawing young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the

faith community; and fostering the personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

The quinceañera ritual is valuable for the religious message it sends not only to young people, but also to parents, grandparents, godparents and the entire parish in calling them to prayerfully join with youth in making a commitment to God and the Church.

14. Why is the rite just for girls?

According to traditional usage, the Bendición de la Quinceañera has been a celebration for young Hispanic women. This is the practice in the countries of origin of the young women requesting the blessing. Recently, in the Western and Southwestern parts of the United States a limited number of young Hispanic males have requested this blessing for themselves or, in one case, twins (male and female), requested a joint celebration. There is no basis in the traditional usage, however, for the inclusion of young men in the rite.

The celebration also can be a strengthening of the identity of the quinceañera within her family and as a Catholic, as well as an affirmation of the gift of women as a blessing to the Church. In the Hispanic community, traditionally it has been the women who hand on the faith. The abuelita (grandmother) holds a special place in the family for that reason. Women organize feast days, celebrate rituals and offer prayers. The mother sets up the altarcito in the home where prayers are offered for the living and the dead. She makes the home a domestic church. Hispanic women are the evangelizers and teachers of values, yet their leadership has often gone unrecognized. The Quince Años Blessing publicly acknowledges this historic role.

15. Why is the Bendición de la Quinceañera presented in English and in Spanish?

In many parishes the young women who come to the church asking for the Bendición de la Quinceañera speak only Spanish, others are bilingual, and some of those who were born in this country speak only English. Those participating in the celebration, the parents, godparents, relatives and friends, also share in this linguistic diversity. Many young women who choose the Eucharistic celebration in English and who pray in this language, nevertheless desire to participate in the traditional custom of the Quinceañera and prefer that at least some of the celebration be done in English.

¹ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11; Cf. OC, Introduction 2.

² Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day Address, August, 2005.

Source: USCCB, Committee on Divine Worship, <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/page2.shtml>

Tips on Ministering to the Native American Population

- 1.) Invite Native American families to take part in the visible part of the church: leadership, liturgical ministers, bringing up the gifts, as well as prayer groups or bible studies.
- 2.) Let Native American teenagers wear their native dress if they want to, for special events and occasions. Allow the incorporation of elements of their culture into funerals, i.e. drumming if the family asks or a Native American blanket as a funeral pall.
- 3.) Have an older Native American come in and speak about the struggles of being Native American and the rejection they faced.
- 4.) Teach the young people the significance of the dream catcher and the medicine wheel, and how these are used in the culture, and their specific spirituality.
- 5.) Special Occasions of the Native Americans are as follows:
 - Thanksgiving (Last Thursday in November)
 - Green Corn Festival (Celebration of First Harvest, last for several days, ribbon dance, singing, tasting first corn.)
 - October 10-16 (Native American Awareness Week)
 - Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Feast Day July 14th
- 6.) Look at the recent Bishop's statement on Native American Catholics.
- 7.) Lastly publicize the existence of the Holy Family Kateri Circle (a support and prayer group for Native Americans).
- 8.) Some of their symbols or rituals are:
 - Smudging (blessing, purifying) with cedar, sage, sweet grass, and tobacco.
 - Eagle feather used in blessings.
 - Dance and drums used for liturgy.
 - Indian music in liturgy.
 - Indian naming ceremony in conjunction with baptism.
 - Native attire used in local and diocesan celebrations.
 - Four-Directional prayer.
 - Sweat lodge
 - Statues, relics of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.
 - Medicine wheel.
 - Native crucifix and cross.
 - Sacred vessels, decorations, and vestments with native design.
 - Sacred pipe.
- 9.) Incorporating any of these traditional symbols or rituals would be something visible and affirming to their culture and presence in the community.

Tips on Ministering to African American Culture

- 1.) Make a point to ensure that the African American community is invited to a full participation in liturgy, leadership on councils, and join in prayer groups.
- 2.) Read the “Brothers and Sisters to Us,” and “What We Have Seen and Heard,” statements from the Black Bishops of the United States and what these mean for the ministry and parish.
- 3.) AIDS/HIV is a major concern for the African American population, since 50 percent of cases occur in African Americans. Teaching and educating on AIDS and the role of the Church is something that will help this problem.
- 4.) Make the parish aware of the strong influence and leadership that the African American community has had, starting the first lay group.
- 5.) A few African Saints are:
 - St. Augustine feast day August 28
 - St. Monica feast day August 27
 - St. Benedict feast day April 12
 - St. Martin De Porres feast day November 3
 - St. Bahkita February 8
- 6.) Include Kente cloth and African designs sometimes in the liturgical décor.
- 7.) Introduce and celebrate the holiday of Kwanzaa (December 26-January 1).

Kwanzaa is a unique African American celebration with focus on the traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement.
- 8.) Implement a “Tolerance” program into the religious education process, to educate the young people on racism and the role of the church in that battle. Maybe invite an older African American who can speak to what it was like growing up with racism.
- 9.) Use the series “Enduring Faith” as a course in the parish. Make sure it is a mixed group of people. Contact the Diocesan Religious Education Office.
- 10.) 56 percent of African American children are born into a household where mother is not married to the father.
- 11.) They hold a great importance on the extended family and kin. Grandparents have a crucial role in the African family as a caregiver.