



Bishop-supported Leadership Training for Immigrants Transforms Parish Communities

~ by Katie Collins Scott, National Catholic Reporter

It was at the start of the pandemic and Maricela Pineda, an immigrant from Mexico and mother of five, was worried about many things, foremost her children.

“My kids used to get very good grades, but when school went online the grades started coming down,” she said. “And one of my sons had depression. There were a lot of unknowns, and I was scared.”



Maricela Pineda, a participant in the “Recognizing the Stranger” program.

Then Pineda began attending a training and formation program hosted at her Northern California parish, where over several gatherings, sometimes held in the parking lot as a pandemic precaution, she heard other immigrant families’ stories.

“People weren’t sure if there’d be enough food, they didn’t have money to pay rent, their kids had problems,” recalled the 52 year-old. “I realized we all had a lot in common.”

The meetings didn’t stop there. Participants not only listened to one another but also learned to address hardships – pandemic and non-pandemic-related – in concrete ways.

Maricela Pineda is one of some 4,000 individuals who has participated in a parish-centered initiative that aims to identify, train, and mentor immigrant leaders and to nurture relationships between immigrant and non-immigrant communities.

Called “Recognizing the Stranger” and first launched as a pilot program in 2016, the program has been funded for five years by a grant from the U.S. bishops’ Catholic Campaign for Human Development and implemented by the West/Southwest

Industrial Areas Foundation, a network of community and faith-based organizations. The national grant, totaling \$500,000 ends this year.

The intent is “for us to help immigrants recognize the church is their church, a place where they can discuss their pains and sorrows and also their joys and to see if there are things we can work on together that help us in our daily lives,” said Fr. Tim Luschen, who is involved with trainings in the Oklahoma City Archdiocese.



Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas is seen at the U.S. - Mexico border wall holding photos of two migrant children who died in U.S. custody. (CNS/David Agren)

Pope Francis has expressed support for Recognizing the Stranger, as have many U.S. bishops. Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, the new chairman of the U.S. bishops' migration committee, hopes the model might become a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops-endorsed program that is further developed and replicated in additional dioceses. To read the full article please click [here](#)

It is Dangerous to be Catholic in Nicaragua

~ by J.P. Carroll and Erica Lizza in AMERICA

Being Catholic in Nicaragua is dangerous. To show your faith in any way, whether through displaying religious images or being seen with clergy, is to single yourself out for likely punishment and a dark, uncertain fate.

The regime of President Daniel Ortega has expelled the Missionaries of Charity (the order of religious sisters founded by St. Teresa of Kolkata), and deported or imprisoned Catholic clergy. This year, the regime has also dissolved John Paul II University and banned public processions of the Way of the Cross. And the Nicaraguan government has proposed a suspension of diplomatic ties with the Holy See, which has since resulted in the Holy See closing its embassy in Managua.

As the Ortega regime seeks to effectively criminalize Catholicism, U.S. Catholics must open their hearts to persecuted Nicaraguans fleeing our country. This mortal life has no purpose when separated from its spiritual end. Catholics in the US can call their elected representatives regarding the situation in Nicaragua. US Catholics can demonstrate their solidarity with Nicaraguans through uniting our prayers to theirs and by using our freedoms as Americans to call for justice.

To read the entire article, please click [here](#)

Synod's 'Messy,' 'Joyful' North American Phase Concludes

~ by Gina Christian, National Catholic Reporter

The final document for the North American phase of the 2021 – 2024 Synod on Synodality was released on April 12, capturing a process of dialogue and discernment that two participants described as ‘messy,’ ‘joyful’ and unifying – like the synod itself.



“It’s amazing what comes about when...you invoke the Holy Spirit in the conversation,” Julia McStravog, a theologian and co-coordinator of the North American team for the synod’s continental phase, told OSV News.

The North American synod team – consisting of eight bishops, three laywomen, two priests, two laymen and two women religious - spent time in prayer, silence and discussion to distill responses for inclusion in the text, which forms a response to the Document for the Continental Stage issued by the Holy See’s General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops in October 2022.

Launched by Pope Francis in October 2021, the multi-year synod of bishops – the theme of which is “communion, participation and mission” seeks to cultivate an ongoing dynamic of discernment, listening, humility and engagement within the Catholic Church.

The North American report highlighted three key themes: the implications of baptism, communion with Christ and one another, and missionary discipleship as living out of the baptismal calling.

An “authentic acknowledgement and respect for the gifts and talents of young people is another vital aspect of a co-responsible church in North America,” said the document.

The document candidly acknowledged that a “significant threat to communion within the church is a lack of trust, especially between bishops and the laity, but also between the clergy in general and the lay faithful.”

The clergy sexual abuse in particular has caused “major areas of tension in North America”.



Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Perez (l.) joins college students during a listening session at LaSalle University in 2022. (OSV News photo/CNS file, Sarah Webb, Catholic Philly.com)

Synod participants listed “women, young people, immigrants, racial or linguistic minorities, LGBTQ+ persons, people who are divorced and civilly remarried without an annulment, and those with varying degrees of physical and mental abilities” as marginalized within the church.

Synod participants consistently articulated a longing for better formation in the faith and in Catholic social teaching, the document said.

As the synod process moves into its next phase...[there is] a need for humility and openness to God’s will. To read the entire account, please click [here](#)

A Reflective Beginning to Holy Week

On April 1st, a group of women and men from the NY area (and one from Chicago) gathered at St. Frances X. Cabrini Shrine for a mini Lenten retreat led by Sr. Bernadette Anello, MSC. With Holy Week starting the next day, the timing was ideal.



The key concepts covered were surrender, yield, letting go in order to let be, and detachment. In the words of some of the participants:

"It was calming, meditative, helpful." ~ Moira

"Sr. Bernadette's mini retreat provided a quiet, safe space to consider how our assumptions can be an impediment to our relationship with Jesus. We need to look beyond the obvious to understand that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Paraphrasing a quote Sister shared, the first step is not the end of the journey. It is the beginning of discovery." ~ Ed

~ submitted by Julia Attaway, Executive Director, St. Frances X. Cabrini Shrine

Hailing the Cabrini Immigrant Services Nutrition Program Graduates

Cabrini Immigrant Services (CIS), Dobbs Ferry, NY, celebrated with our students who completed the course, 'Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program' - Part 2.

Lucy Diaz, a Nutrition Program Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester County, presented the program. The students had already completed Part 1 of the nutrition program and returned to learn even more information. A Certificate of Completion for the course was given to the students. In addition, they received an insulated bag filled with many useful goodies.

~ submitted by Lorraine Campanelli, CIS Director

Congratulations to all our 'graduates' of the nutrition program. We are so proud of you.



Photo above: Lucy Diaz, a nutrition program educator, presented Part II of the program at Cabrini Immigrant Services in Dobbs Ferry, NY.

Photo below: This young lady is all smiles as she displays her Certificate of Completion.



Please Save the Date!
More info
Next Week!

The Uniqueness of Holy Week in Guatemala

~ a reflection by Sr. Evarlyne Ndeti, MSC Novice



The colorful and detailed Alfombras are made from a variety of natural materials including sawdust which must be watered constantly to keep the elements from flying away.

Spending the Holy Week in Guatemala was the most animated and spectacular experience that I will remember. I truly loved the whole experience, especially the beauty and creativity [of the] carpets (Alfombras) and the religious procession. These Guatemalan intergenerational rituals put forward a distinctive heritage.

The creation of the ‘Alfombras’ (carpets) is one of the most beautiful traditions in the Holy Week. Guatemalans create them to show their devotion, gratitude, and love towards Jesus. The Alfombras are made from sawdust, vegetables, flowers, fruit, palm leaves, and paper, and are laid out in the streets. Neighbors work together to create artistic impressions. The sawdust must be constantly sprayed with water to ensure that it doesn’t fly away. The Alfombras are walked alongside during religious processions. Alfombras can also be seen in other parts of Latin America but [are not as prevalent] as in Guatemala.

Religious processions can be observed in various places around Guatemala in the lead up to Easter Sunday. It is stunning how each day has its own



singularity of different clothing, music, and statues. The most detailed processions take place in Antigua, drawing thousands of locals and tourists to the city. I had a unique opportunity of witnessing a live procession here in Barcenas on Good Friday that illustrated Jesus carrying the Cross followed by Our Lady of Sorrows. Some of



Look at this Alfombras created entirely of fruits and vegetables: cherries, carrots, corn, cabbage. A labor of love for Holy Week as an expression of love for Jesus

the “Andas” (floats) are so long and heavy that they require more than 50 men to carry them.

According to Guatemalan history, the Holy Week’s celebration is an exceptional one since it combines pre-Columbian elements with Catholic beliefs imported by the Spanish more than five centuries ago. The Catholic passion that exists in Guatemala today has almost magical, mystical overtones and that is why Holy Week in this country has no comparison in the world. These and other reasons led the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to declare it Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a fact shared Sister Juana Z. Mendoza, MSC.

Guatemalan Holy Week is syncretic, that is, the meeting and reconciliation of different beliefs and doctrines. In this case, they combine elements of the Mayan culture and Catholicism, brought from Europe. Guatemalan Holy Week draws together many symbols such as the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ as much as other parts of the world. In addition, this religious festival has unique characteristics in Guatemala. This makes it superb and emblematic.

Finally, I give credit and thanks to my community members (Sisters Ana Jilma Argueta, Juana Mendoza, Maria Elena Plata and Sonia Osorio), the staff at Dispensario Madre Cabrini, and my Spanish teacher (Alejandra Rodriguez) for sharing Guatemalan culture and its significance with me.

~ submitted by Sr. Evalyne Ndeti, MSC novice



Melons, mangoes and pineapples are the focus of this magnificent Alfombras.

Cabrini University Celebrates UNITY 2023!



Who is My Neighbor?

Realizing Jesus' Commandment to Love Our Neighbors
As Ourselves

Thursday, April 13, 2023

Bruckmann Chapel

2:00 to 3:30 pm

Join us for this this essential conversation with diverse religious and spiritual leaders about the universal call to create a just and loving world for everyone.

Invited Guests:

Father Fidelis Olokunboro
Prof. Francisque Meristal
Rev. Twana Malone
Imam Malik Mubashshir

To register, please
scan the QR code.



Hosted by the Office of DEI and Belonging



Prayer Requests

Cabrini Community member

Kindly pray for a member of the Cabrinian community who will begin follow-up treatment this coming week. Pray that the treatment will be well tolerated and will be effective.

With a Grateful Heart

Marie Takes

Deb Takes, former Cabrini University Board Chair and Interim President, shares that her mother, Marie Takes, for whom we have been praying, is doing much better. She is now at home. Deb is grateful for the prayers, notes and well wishes for her Mom.