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VISION STATEMENT

The American Catholic Church faces a future challenge that must be met if it is to be faithful to the mission of Jesus and the mission of his Church. If this is a challenge to the American Church, it is likewise a challenge to the religious of Holy Cross serving in the Church. The challenge is meeting the needs of the Hispanic peoples who are not only the oldest group of immigrants to the country, but also the newest wave of immigrants. Currently they are not only one ethnic group among the poor of the U.S. , but also constitute the majority of that poor. The Hispanics are in need of our response and have a right to that response as a people who consider themselves Catholic and are consequently family among us. (Cf. Robert Heyer, New Catholic [World, July-August, 1980, p. 146)

The most recent statistics indicate that Hispanics have increased in population between 25.7° and 126.7% in the various geographic regions of the U.S. between 1970 and 1980. Concurrently, the Catholic population of the U.S. has grown only 0.6% to 21.5 in the various regions. Typically 85% of Hispanics are Catholic and 33% of them are actively Catholic. The recent statistics indicate a pattern of alienation from the Church will grow unless pastoral neglect is stopped. This situation is intensified by the widespread efforts of fundamentalist proselytizing of Hispanic Catholics. (Cf. Noticias, Region XI, vol. 2, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 2-3)

A. The Poor

Since the term "the poor" has been a source of confusion in CSC discussions and congregational planning, the Hispanic Ministry Committee would like to offer its fellow religious the following clarifications:

1. "The poor" can be adequately delimited as a group by the following characteristics:
 - a) they have been exploited of the legitimate fruits of their labor
 - b) they live in economic insecurity about their survival and their ability to meet their basic human needs
 - c) they are powerless to shape their future

Since the majority of the U.S. poor are Hispanic, a CSC preferential option for the poor must include a significant effort to redirect province and regional priorities to serving Hispanics.

2. "The poor" should not be defined as those who lack a

possible good. By this concept every person in the world is poor and apostolic service priorities cannot be clearly developed.

B. Preferential Option for the Poor

By "preferential option for the poor", the Hispanic Ministry Committee understands not theory, law, or recommendations, but concrete allocations of personnel, time, and money. This option is not politically or economically motivated. Rather it is motivated by our desire to follow God in Jesus who was born poor, proclaimed himself as God's servant of good news for the poor, lived with no place to lay his head, and died in the crucified poverty of total rejection and abandonment to the Father.

The preferential option for the poor is operationalized on three major levels:

- a. efforts toward systematic change (trying to create what Pope John Paul II has called the civilization of love rather than one dominated by the profit motive or the totalitarian oppression of human rights)
- b. education in the social reality, Gospel values, and concrete strategies to serve the poor in various regional contexts
- c. direct service to the poor

Therefore, to operationalize a preferential option for the poor, each region or province of U.S. Holy Cross needs to assess the need in its geographical area and allocate personnel, time, and money to each of the three levels according to the prudential judgments of chapters and major superiors.

The preferential option for the poor does not romanticize the poor as more moral or more deserving of ministry because of their innate goodness. It chooses them because God chooses them. Because this service recognizes the need of the poor for the revelation and forgiveness of Christ, the Church's preferential option for the poor is centered on the ministry of integral evangelization.

C. Evangelization

The concept of evangelization developed by Pope Paul VI in his pastoral letter of 1975 "Evangelization in the Modern World" defies an adequate summary in a short

space. Therefore, the Hispanic Ministry Committee recommends that regions and chapters of Holy Cross reflect on this document and the resolutions of the Hispanic pastoral plan developed for the U.S. in 1977 at the Segundo Encuentro Nacional in Washington D.C. In the meantime the Hispanic Ministry Committee offers U.S. Holy Cross the following capsule summary of the meaning of "evangelization".

Evangelization is the explicit living and preaching of Jesus and the Gospel. It invites the hearers of its message to repentance and an interior transformation of heart that continues in a lifelong process of conversion into living the new life in Christ. This announcement of Jesus is made in union with the universal Church and the pope as the visible symbol of the unity of the Catholic faith. This announcement of Jesus as the living Lord and invitation to become his disciple is intimately linked to human promotion in all its forms. Ultimately evangelization strives not only for the eternal salvation of souls, but also for global peace on earth.

The ministry of evangelization is operationalized on three levels:

- a. personal announcement of Jesus and the Gospel to individuals
- b. communal formation of household-size groups for faith development, Bible study, catechesis, transforming action in the neighborhood, etc.
- c. mass: larger assemblies, radio, T.V., and printed media

Evangelization is possible in a number of different settings and different modes. Caring service and Christian example in all forms serve as the occasion for explicit evangelization. This occurs authentically at appropriate moments sensitive to the mystery of personal freedom and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic evangelization is always aware that the evangelizers themselves need to be continually evangelized into the fullness of the mystery of Christ. In the Hispanic context Holy Cross can be itself evangelized by the practical faith and the incarnational richness of the popular religiosity of Hispanic peoples.

Evangelization remains both saving and integrally liberating as a ministry when it avoids social, political, and economic naiveté about the implications of preaching the Gospel. Concretely, Holy Cross religious need to be aware of the efforts of the political right and left to manipulate and

distort Christian language and *symbol* to promote partisan self-interest.

For Holy Cross to commit itself to the service of U.S. Hispanics means that it will allocate personnel and financial resources to the three levels of evangelization according to the prudential judgments of chapters, assemblies, and major superiors.

II CONCRETIZING THE VISION OF HISPANIC MINISTRY IN THE THREE SOCIETIES OF HOLY CROSS IN THE UNITED STATES

While having no desire to interfere in provincial and regional decision-making processes, the Hispanic Ministry Committee has both information and lived experience with Hispanics it would like to share in the form of concrete suggestions to its fellow Holy Cross religious. Our suggestions and questions will be organized under these headings: Parishes, Formation and Vocations, Migrant Ministry, Education, Pastoral Centers, Direct Personal Evangelization, and Health Services.

A. Parishes

It is necessary that the Church awaken the consciousness of the Hispanic community to a realization that it is indeed Church when it comes together as a Parish family.

What is the current Holy Cross response to the need for vibrant parishes serving Hispanics?

We make the following suggestions:

- a. Staff parishes with tri-societal teams which also include lay persons.
- b. Locate new Hispanic parishes in areas where Holy Cross is already involved in ministries. This will give witness to the Church-at-large and to the Holy Cross Community, and allow Holy Cross in other apostolates to be able to use their resources for the Hispanic parish.
- c. Use the Holy Cross Hispanic parish as a site for formation as well as to attract vocations from among the Hispanic community.
- d. Place Holy Cross religious to serve for short periods of time, such as summer time for those in education.
- e. Diversify the parish ministry to include: monitoring of bilingual education programs, dropout prevention and career education, crisis intervention in regard to housing, employment, lack of food, immigration status, and the like.

Questions :

- a. How do we assure that the cultural option of worship and service in the Hispanic ambiente and mode is available in our parishes?
- b. How do we support priestless parishes? Do we staff them with sisters and brothers? Do we train lay people to run the parishes?
- c. How can we help parish teams to develop as groups with shared responsibility, authority, etc.?
- d. How can parishes become community centers expressive of the identity of Hispanics? How can parish personnel encourage this?
- e. 'How is our parish planning based on the conclusions of the Segundo Encuentro Nacional of 1977?

B. Formation and Vocations

U.S. Hispanics need more priests and religious of their own ethnic origin serving them.

What is the current Holy Cross response to this need?

Suggestions:

- a. Orientate Hispanic parents to an awareness of the possibility that their son or daughter may experience a call to religious life.
- b. Welcome the participation of Hispanic families in all Holy Cross apostolates.
- c. Sponsor vocation retreats orientated toward potential Hispanic candidates.
- d. When it is best for the individual, place CSC Hispanic candidates in communities involved with the apostolate to the Spanish-speaking.
- e. Include the study of Spanish and Hispanic culture and Hispanic pastoral field experience as part of Holy Cross formation for all.
- f. Continue to provide in-service training in Hispanic culture for formation personnel.
- g. Establish "houses of transition" for Hispanic young people to live together in proximity to Holy Cross religious in preparation for formal entry into the candidate programs of the Community.
- h. Organize tri-societal ministry projects for those in formation.

C. Migrant Ministry

The still large number of Hispanics who work in the nation's fields and travel from area to area in search of this type of work are in need of a special form of ministry.

What is the Holy Cross response in this area?

Suggestions:

- a. Form mobile teams of lay ministers to migrants, especially catechists.
- b. Provide advocacy to insure that agencies meant to serve the Hispanic communities actually deliver services.
- c. Maintain personal presence to migrants through Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Basic Christian Communities), liturgies, and other sacramental ministry at the camps.
- d. Prepare for an immediate response to pressing physical and health needs of migrants.
- e. Assist Hispanics to realize the importance of the unionization movement and conscientize the rest of the Church to this need.
- f. Conscientize settled Hispanics to the needs of their own people by connecting them with their migrant past in ways which allow them to serve and accept others still in the migrant stream.

D. Education

The Hispanic community in the U.S. presents some unique educational challenges including language deficiencies, an often undereducated adult and parent population, cultural characteristics which often cause conflict in the academic environments of our schools, financial problems, the experience of racism, the need of Christian community support for minority Hispanic students in the schools, and the need for adaptation of educational institutions to Hispanic students.

What is the Holy Cross response to this reality?

Questions:

- a. Do the student population and the faculty composition of Holy Cross schools reflect the proportion of Hispanics in the population of the city, region, or neighborhood which the school serves?
- b. What efforts does the school make to attract Hispanic students, such as:
 1. recruitment in Hispanic schools and parishes
 2. scholarships for needy students
 3. summer programs to better prepare incoming students
 4. ongoing programs with parents and students to help retain students once they enter?
- c. What faculty-staff in-service or pre-service programs are made

- available in the areas of: 1. bilingual/bicultural education
2. religiosity of Hispanics?
- d. What special educational programs are provided by the school, such as:
1. parish assistance programs, such as catechist training and leadership development
 2. alternate educational models (E.S.L., G.E.D., adult education)?
- e. What is the school community (student/faculty/staff) doing in order to make itself aware of the needs of the economically poor, especially the Hispanic poor?
- f. How can Holy Cross provide alternative education in direct personal service to Hispanics not associated with any existing schools?

E. Pastoral Centers

The Segundo Encuentro Nacional, which developed a national pastoral plan for Hispanics in 1977, asked for the creation of specific Diocesan Pastoral Centers to serve Hispanics.

How has Holy Cross responded to this request?

Suggestions:

- a. Through these centers, prepare Hispanic leaders, youth, and adults to work in evangelization.
- b. Train leaders for the service of the mission of the Church in the world in Cursillo, C.F.M., catechetics, ministry to migrant workers, Bible study, youth ministry, mass media, liturgical music, lay ministry training, Basic Christian Communities, diaconate programs, etc.
- c. Whether based in the pastoral centers or the Diocesan Office of Communications, support mass evangelization of Hispanics.

F. Direct Personal Evangelization

Large parish centers always struggle against the anonymity of the membership. This is a special burden for Hispanics used to the personal caring and support of the extended family.

What has the Holy Cross response been to this issue?

Suggestions:

- a. Assign personnel to the ministry of home visitation among Hispanics.
- h. Assign personnel to develop Basic Christian Communities among Hispanics.

G. Health Services

The conclusions of the Segundo Encuentro Nacional, a planning document for the U.S. Catholic Church developed by grassroots

Hispanics, asks that "the official ministers of the Church, as well as religious, establish criteria so that service to minorities be a priority, especially service to those who do not know their rights or have no means to defend them." The Holy Cross Health System Planning Document states that Holy Cross has a current objective in health care to "identify and seek out needs of the poor in areas where we are currently serving and assure that appropriate programs of response are developed."

What is the current Holy Cross response to the needs of Hispanics for improved health care?

We suggest the following:

- a. organizational linkages with institutions already established to provide health care to Hispanics.
- b. diversification of services in areas other than acute care according to the local needs of the area.
- c. projection for services in strategic long range planning based on growth factors and median age of the local Hispanic population.
- d. adoption of an advocacy role for Hispanics in presenting to Catholic health care and to the Congregation of Holy Cross the particularized needs of Hispanics and successful methods for meeting these needs. Some areas specific to Hispanics are:
 1. Illness due to environmental and behavioral factors which are major health problems, such as disease related to farm and migrant life, alcoholism and other substance abuse, and lack of education in health maintenance or wellness programs.
 2. Attitudes toward undocumented workers and their rights.
 3. Leadership in establishing Spanish language outreach programs in all levels of care and human service programming, especially as hospitals become centers for acute care and the length of stay of patients decreases. This is especially important in regard to the elderly.
 4. Determination of innovative methods of funding programs and charity care.
- e. actively recruit Spanish-speaking personnel and provide opportunities or incentives for staff to learn Spanish and/or aspects of local Hispanic culture.
- f. affirm in institutions those elements of Hispanic culture and Catholicism which make up such an enduring and faithful segment of the Catholic Church in the United States.
- g. promote health-related career education for Hispanics via hospital-sponsored projects or participation in career education projects for the local community.
- h. provide or establish memorial scholarships for Hispanics pursuing health related careers.
- i. establish a method to coordinate the above concerns on a Health System Corporation level and on a local level for each health care institution to provide for information flow and accountability.

- j. give attention to needs of Hispanics when considering sponsorship of hospitals or establishment and location of new health facilities.
- k. Periodically focus on health care to Hispanics in hospital and Health System publications to raise awareness of work in progress.