

Presentation
V Encuentro

Justice & Peace Breakout
Saturday, September 22
Bishop Richard Pates

I believe it is important to strongly affirm the remarkable gifts which our Hispanic sisters and brothers bring to our religious and civic communities.

They are God-fearing. They have deeply embedded relationships with the Lord Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit. Their faith arises from their hearts and feelings which are expressed spontaneously with affection and conviction.

They are family-oriented, supportive of community, and consistently hard workers. They are upbeat, positive, generous and fun loving. They are a rich asset to our church, USA and local communities.

Similar to all immigration waves, certain insecure, prejudiced people do not render the justice owed to them, insofar as they are created in the image and likeness of God and thus entitled to respect and dignity as children of God.

The list of injustices to Hispanics which has surfaced in the encuentro process is no surprise. They represent hardship, suffering, inconvenience, poverty all endured with patience and resilient hope.

The multiple experiences of indignities are related to:

Immigration

DACA

Unaccompanied minors

Racism

Incarcerated population

Community organizing

In addressing these issues, there are resources that can be marshalled by comprehensive Faith In Action groups. On the local scene they could incorporate human development funding (CCHD), State Catholic Conferences, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities . . .

Attention should be drawn to normal accompaniment opportunities on the individual level to court, doctors appointments, IRS, social security, immigration as well as providing information about resources which can be beneficial to their integration into US society.

Education is key to development as well as the training of leaders who will promote and organize Hispanic team efforts in service to their own advancement.

Because Catholicism is rooted so deeply in a significant majority of our recently arrived friends from Latin and South America, our relationship with them and advocacy on their behalf are organic. They go beyond obligations of our common humanity. They are family. They share our deepest beliefs and convictions. With these sisters and brothers, may we build communities where peace, truth, justice and love flourish.