

Bishops Hear Plea Of Hispanics

By Marie Basile
Religious News Service

Chicago — Gathered here for their annual spring meeting, America's bishops were treated to a program of colorful Hispanic music and dance and warned that the Church must begin paying attention to the needs of its Spanish-speaking members.

"The Church can no longer afford to ignore the reality of Hispanic Catholics in the United States," Father Frank Ponce told the bishops, following a dinner of rice and beans at a Chicago Hispanic parish.

The priest, associate director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's secretariat for Hispanic affairs, noted that with more than 23 million Hispanics, the U.S. ranks fifth among Spanish-speaking countries of the world. Only Mexico, Spain, Argentina and Colombia have more, he said.

Hispanics — especially those from the Southwest — have an identity with the U.S. which can never be broken, he said. "They are not interlopers, but an indigenous people," he said. Mexican-Americans, who live mainly in the Southwest, account for 60 percent of all Hispanics in the country, he said.

Hispanics frequently feel the Catholic Church has been more interested in "Americanizing" them than in evangelizing them, he said, and because they feel neglected, many Hispanics have left the Church entirely

or have converted to evangelical groups, some openly hostile to Catholicism.

"Perhaps as many as five million Hispanics have joined evangelical sects," he said, adding that the task of reversing this trend is "the responsibility of the entire Church, not simply that of a committee or office."

Plans for the Hispanic day began at the fall 1978 bishops' meeting, when Auxiliary Bishop Raymond J. Pena of San Antonio gave an address on evangelization in the Hispanic community. It was because of that talk, Bishop Pena said, that the "bishops felt the need to study in much greater depth the needs of Hispanics in this country and ministry to Hispanics."

The scheduled fiesta coincided with the announcement that Pope John Paul II had appointed Bishop Pena ordinary of the El Paso Diocese. At his installation, June 17, Bishop Pena will become the second consecutive Hispanic bishop of El Paso, succeeding Bishop Patrick F. Flores, who was named Archbishop of San Antonio last August.

Archbishop Robert F. Sanchez of Santa Fe was principal concelebrant at a Mass in Spanish at the parish of San Francisco de Asis. In his homily, Archbishop Flores said, "The Hispanic Catholics of our country are not a problem to be solved; they are a people, a people to be loved and a people to be respected."

"The Hispanic has yet much to teach us, the teachers: things that this whole country is hungry for," the archbishop declared to a packed church. He called Hispanics "a countersign to the spiritual impoverishment of modern times."

"The Hispanic is ready," he said. "The potential is there for new and active leadership. We have only to see how active many Hispanics become when they join Protestant denominations and how quickly they achieve leadership there."

The bishops also heard an address by Father Virgilio Elizondo, president of the Mexican-American Cultural Center in San Antonio, who told them, "The greatest contribution that you, our pastors, can make to the Hispanic communities is to have a fundamental change of attitude in relation to us."

Father Elizondo said, "A faith that is portrayed as highly rational, intellectual and complicated cannot be the good news to the simple and lowly of society for whom it is primarily intended. No amount of knowledge, moral rigidity or liturgical precision can substitute for the spirit which alone transforms the heart from within."

"Hispanic communities do not want to form a separate church, but want to help create a new expression of the Church that will be more Catholic," he said.



Scholarship Dinner

The Mother Cabrini Circle, the interracial, interfaith group of women who have for nearly 35 years helped pay tuition for Black students to Catholic High Schools, will hold its annual scholarship benefit dinner, Sunday, May 18, at Immaculate Conception Parish Center, 70 Glasgow St., from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shown here are program planners (standing) Nola DeRouen, Ethel Thompson, (seated) Mrs. Nannie Ingram, Lorraine Lawson and Carl Ingram.

Blood Drive Scheduled

Holy Cross School, 4488 Lake Ave., will host a Red Cross community blood drive on Wednesday, May 7 from 3 to 7 p.m.

Anyone between the ages of 17 and 66, weighing at least 110 pounds and in good health is eligible to give.

Chairmen for the drive, Holy Hour

Father Bruce Ammering will lead a Holy Hour at 7:30 p.m., Monday, May 19, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Infirmary. The weekly holy hours are sponsored by the Holy Trinity Chapter of the Peoples Eucharistic League.

Dick Flanagan and Betty Farley, stress the need for participation on the part of the community. "We're asking all area residents to take time to give blood. It's simple, quick and easy. And it saves lives."

It takes only about 45 minutes to give blood, including registration and

medical history, the donation and refreshments afterwards in the donor canteen.

The Rochester Region of American Red Cross Blood Services has set a collection goal of 90,000 pints this year, 355 every working day. The Rochester Region serves 45 hospitals in 15 counties in New York and Pennsylvania.

Memorial Fund Raises \$125,000

New York (RNS) — More than \$125,000 in contributions has been made to the Archbishop Romero/El Salvador Memorial Relief Fund established in March by Catholic Relief Services.

The fund was established by CRS executive director

Edwin B. Broderick to honor the memory and goals of assassinated Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador.

Donated funds will be used by the CRS program in El Salvador to alleviate the immediate and medium term needs of the people across the

country who have been uprooted by political upheaval and civil strife.

"The poor of El Salvador have lost their leading proponent of social justice," Bishop Broderick said. "We are fortunate to be able to help them through this difficult period."

Initially, the fund will provide food relief, medical and legal services including first aid training and a traveling medical team. Funds will also be used for temporary shelter and material support to refugees. The fund will also contribute to the establishment of a blood bank center, to collect and stock increased supplies against future needs.

Future projects include helping to build low-cost housing and providing small farmers with seeds, tools and fertilizers. Contributions to the fund are sent to Catholic Relief Services, 1011 First Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

NFP Information

A Natural Family Planning information session has been scheduled from 7:30 to 9 p.m., May 15, at St. John the Evangelist School on Humboldt Street.

Joe and Terri Petracca will provide information on NFP and fertility awareness. The session is free and open to all.

Further information is available from NFP, 464-8705.

Emotions Seminar Scheduled

A seminar on Emotions and You will be given by Sister Rita Anne Houlihan, R.C. June 6 to 8 at the Cenacle Renewal Center, 693 East Ave. The seminar, dealing with the basic workings of the mind and the emotions, is set in a Christian context and is oriented to personal growth.

Sister Rita Anne is a Religious of the Cenacle from Lake Ronkonhoma, N.Y. She is internationally known for her work in presenting seminars on effective living, emotions and discernment. A fee of \$50 covers the entire seminar. Registration and reservation information is available by calling the Cenacle Ministry Office (716) 271-8755.

The Cenacle announcement stressed that Sister Rita Anne's presentation is not a religious retreat, but is a seminar on the subject.

TV Subject Of Workshop

A Television Awareness Workshop, led by Linda Kreiger, a licensed trainer in Television Awareness, is slated for the next Family Ministry Enrichment Night Wednesday, May 21, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center.

The evenings are sponsored by the diocesan Office of Family Life and are open to all.

According to a statement from the office, the May 21 workshop "is intended for family-focused groups and adult program planners to offer a significant skill and awareness-building experience around television's effects on values."



Mother's Day

A Cambodian mother looks proudly at her small child. They were among earlier refugees in a village northwest at Phnom Penh. Mother's Day is May 11. Persons wishing to donate for the refugees of the strife in Cambodia are asked to send funds to Cambodian Relief, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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