

*God's Mission, Many Faces
A Portrait of U.S. Catholics in Mission*

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

Ad gentes #2

To say "Church" is to say "Mission."

Pastoral Statement on World Mission "To the Ends of the Earth" #16

The Church is either missionary or she is not faithful to the Gospel.

*Pope John Paul II to the National Directors of the Propagation of the Faith
May 1986*

A new trajectory in thinking is needed in order to arrive at a better understanding of the implications of our being one family; interaction among the peoples of the world calls us to embark upon this new trajectory, so that integration can signify solidarity rather than marginalization.

Caritas in Veritate #53

All ecclesial structures and all pastoral plans of dioceses, parishes, religious communities, movements, and any Church institution must be imbued with this firm missionary decision. No community should excuse itself from entering decidedly with all its might into the ongoing processes of missionary renewal and from giving up outdated structures that are no longer helpful for handing on the faith.

Aparecida #365

Mission Congress 2010 is organized by the
Catholic Mission Forum

Members include: the Bureau of Black and Indian Missions; the Catholic Church Extension Society; the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service; the Conference of Major Superiors of Men; the Leadership Conference of Women Religious; the Pontifical Mission Society; the USCCB Offices of Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church, Evangelization and Catechesis, Home Mission, and Latin America; and the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) which acts as the convener.

PLEASE SEND ALL INQUIRIES AND RESPONSES TO:

**MISSION REFLECTION
UNITED STATES CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION
3025 FOURTH STREET, NE, SUITE 100**



**MISSION
CONGRESS 2010**

*God's Mission, Many Faces
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Dear Friends,

This pamphlet is designed to guide us in reflection as we prepare to celebrate Mission Congress 2010: "God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission" in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 28-31, 2010.

We invite you to copy it and use it as a reflection tool with any and all groups interested in mission. As your group prays and reflects, remember that you are among thousands of others around the country who are engaging in the same process.

We hope that this sharing will increase awareness of the presence of the Spirit in our midst and encourage our own active participation in the mission endeavors of the Church. We look forward to hear the responses from the reflection groups. What you share will help us put together a broader and more accurate picture of the diversity and depth of the mission activity of the Church in the US.

As we discern and discover the movement of the Spirit, we hope to invigorate and celebrate the many faces of US Catholics in God's mission! May this Mission Reflection be a worthy tool to animate ongoing mission renewal in our church.

For the Catholic Mission Forum,

Rev. Michael Montoya, MJ
USCMA Executive Director

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear. Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Trust that meaningful conversation can change your world.

Rely on human goodness.

Human beings have always sat in circles and councils to do their best thinking.

Margaret Wheatley

FORMAT FOR MISSION REFLECTION

Preparation: Set a time and place for the Mission Reflection
Invite a group of 5—15 participants

INTRODUCTION

Gathering Gather in a circle around appropriate symbols such as a globe, map, Bible, Crucifix, candle, pictures of missionaries, etc.

Description of Purpose

We are gathered as part of a national reflection process in preparation for Mission Congress 2010. Our purpose is to **Discern** the movement of the Spirit among us, to **Discover** the variety of mission activity in the Church in the US, to **Invigorate** mission activity and leadership in the US and to **Celebrate** the faces and creativity of US Catholics in mission.

The Mutual Invitation Method is a respectful way to include everyone in the conversation. No one interrupts or speaks without being invited by name. No one has any more authority than anyone else. Each person is invited to share and after sharing, that person has the privilege of inviting the next person who will share.

Reflection #1: Jesus said “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.” Confident that Jesus is indeed in our midst, we enter this sacred space at this sacred time.

Welcome everyone, inviting them to introduce themselves. You may begin with a familiar song with a mission theme. Ask a volunteer to lead a short prayer invoking the Holy Spirit 's presence among the group.

Process We will use the following “Respectful Communication Guidelines

R: Take **Responsibility** for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E: Listen with **Empathy**

S Be **Sensitive** to differences in communication styles

P: **Ponder** what you hear before responding

E: **Examine** your own assumptions and perceptions

C: Keep appropriate **Confidentiality**

T: **Trust ambiguity:** we are not here to debate or to find the only correct answer.

Eric H.F. Law. “The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lambs.”

Method

1. The facilitator clarifies the theme of the sharing.
2. The facilitator gives guidelines about the use of time.
3. The facilitator may share first or may invite another person by name to begin the sharing.
4. You can invite anyone in the group.
5. After that person has shared, she or he will invite the next person who will share.
6. If someone prefers not to share, that person invites another.
7. The process continues until all have had the opportunity to speak.
8. Then, those who passed are invited once again.
9. The main activity of the group is to listen in such a way that all are encouraged to contribute.

Eric H.F. Law. “The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lambs.”

The first round of reflection asks us to share about the following questions.

- Where is the Spirit moving mission in the US Church or in our community?
- How do we see ourselves involved in mission?
- What gives us energy to be in mission? What do we want to celebrate?

HEADLINES & LEAD PARAGRAPHS

When the group has had sufficient discussion, invite them to reflect what they have heard. Ask them to jot down a headline that would capture the gist of their discussion.

An *alternative* to this, write a Twitter entry (140characters).

For example: St. Therese has twinned with San Francisco for 20 years! We know more about the struggles of poverty and feel more Catholic.

Reflection # 2

Mission Congress 2010, “God’s Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission” calls us to reflect on 4 objectives:

- **DISCERN**
- **DISCOVER**
- **INVIGORATE**
- **CELEBRATE**

- Invite each participant to share their headline.
- Note which are similar and invite the group to choose two that capture their discussion.
- When the two headlines have been chosen, write a couple of sentences that explains their headlines.

Take a few minutes to think quietly and then share where you:

1. **DISCERN** the movement of the Spirit within the US Catholic Church in mission.
2. Where do you think we can **DISCOVER** the mission alive among US Catholics? Name 3 elements that are essential to painting a portrait of the US Catholic Church as you experience it.
3. Name what can **INVIGORATE** the mission identity and leadership in the US Catholic Church in the coming decade?
4. Name 3 of the faces and creative impulses of US Catholics in mission that we would like to **CELEBRATE**.

REVIEW AND RESPOND

When the participants have had sufficient time for discussion, invite them to articulate their conclusions and the actions that flow from them. Write your answers on the sheet provided.

You may also divide the group into four smaller groups with each smaller group answering one of the questions on the answer sheet.

1. The Spirit is moving in our midst, and we see that in ... Therefore, we will commit ourselves to ...
2. The mission of Jesus is alive and well among us as Catholics and we see that in.... In order to continue that, we commit ourselves to....
3. The Spirit always asks our collaboration in carrying on the mission of Jesus, we will **INVIGORATE** that mission and our leadership by....
4. Because we know the importance of **CELEBRATION**, we will plan to...

CONCLUSION

Share the responses to the group. Allow time for questions. Invite the group to make concrete plans for their next steps in mission. Plan to participate in Mission Congress 2010.

CLOSING PRAYER

End the sharing with a short prayer of thanksgiving and commitment to participate in God’s mission. You can bring the prayer to a close with the *Lord’s Prayer* and ask for God’s blessing. You might then sing a song celebrating our being sent on mission.