

Mission Congress 2005

Preparatory Reflection Booklet

Introduction

Mission Congress 2005 is designed to continue the work of Mission Congress 2000. Mission Congress 2000 raised three areas for development – combined efforts at mission education; outreach to younger missionaries; and the implications of globalization for the work of mission. Recognizing the need for ongoing collaboration and the continuation of the dialogue, the Congress participants mandated that similar gatherings be convened at timely intervals.

Mission Congress 2005 – Horizons and Possibilities will address the theme: ***What is the responsible contribution of the Church in the United States in mission with the global community?***

In addressing this question, we will consider how the style of mission can be adapted to meet the needs of evangelization today.

In the desert setting along the US/Mexico border, *Mission Congress 2005* will offer us a retreat-like experience that will serve as a locus for our reflection on faith and culture in the context of mission as reconciliation. The core of our reflection process will be visits and dialogue with people who experience directly the benefits and shortcomings of globalization and how it challenges their faith. This border-state of Arizona presents a rich diversity of peoples and cultures in their traditional settings – border communities, Native Americans, and other cultural groups in the Tucson-Phoenix area.

Although set in the geographic context of the Mexico/US border, *Mission Congress 2005* will challenge us to keep a truly global worldview as we reflect on the various “borders” experienced in culture and Church. Discussion will focus on globalization and its implications for the Christian community’s call for solidarity.

To facilitate the retreat we have engaged two persons who bring to this very important gathering their professional skills and sensitivity to intercultural process. Key presentations will be integral to the reflection process. Prayer, ritual, and celebrations in the beautiful desert setting will enhance our reflection.

To prepare for the reflection and dialogue which will take place during the Congress and to broaden the narrative beyond those of us gathered we will rely on the stories collected in the *Voices for Mission: Engaging a Globalized World* project begun in January 2004. The project collected narratives from two groups – “Missioner Narratives” and “Core Narratives.” These provide narratives of personal experiences of missionaries and the people with whom they live and work in various geographic areas, including the US, from 1990 – 2003, a period of accelerated globalization. They describe the changes that have occurred during this period, evaluate the impact of these changes on local people, and reflect on their personal experiences of these changes as well as how they imagine the future of mission in this global context. The narratives will be integrated into the Congress agenda through prayer and ritual. Several of the “core” narrators will participate in the Congress.

To read a selection of the narratives see:

www.uscatholicmission.org