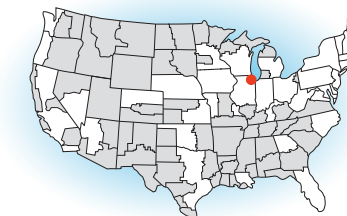


# Making a Dream COME TRUE

New Hispanic leaders gathered recently for a lay leaders conference. They will be instrumental in helping to pass on the faith to future generations.



CATHOLIC EXTENSION  
HISPANIC LAY LEADERS CONFERENCE  
Chicago, IL



*Hearing a consistent need, Catholic Extension initiates a program to establish 100 new Hispanic lay leaders.*

Statistics prove what is already visible in expanding faith communities, packed churches and vibrant celebrations throughout many of the mission dioceses. Nearly 40 percent of America's Catholic population is Hispanic. Some predict that as soon as 2020, Hispanics could be the majority in the Catholic Church.

But currently, Hispanics comprise less than 10 percent of paid Church leadership. In some mission dioceses, one Hispanic lay leader literally is ministering to thousands

of parishioners. With this growing need in mind, Catholic Extension is embarking on a new initiative aimed at positively impacting Hispanic ministry in our country. By launching the 2012 national Hispanic Lay Leadership Initiative, Catholic Extension is making a three-year commitment to fund the salaries of Hispanic lay leaders in poor mission dioceses across the United States.

"To build a solid future for the Catholic faith in the U.S., we must support Hispanic ministry in the Church," said Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall. "At Catholic Extension, we've been working on a dream—to have this wonderful initiative of hiring 100 skilled Hispanic lay leaders for the future of our Church in our country. Today, we think that dream is becoming a reality."

Joe Boland, senior director of grants management for Catholic Extension, heard a consistent message from the mission dioceses—that we must do a better job of building

Hispanic lay leadership. "The Hispanic Lay Leadership Initiative is a creative solution that will build pastoral capacity in dioceses where Hispanics are present in significant numbers," Boland said. "These new leaders will be able to reach out to thousands of Hispanic Catholics in our country."

Dr. Arturo Chavez, president and CEO of Mexican American Catholic College, is one of many leaders across the United States who echoes the increasing need for Hispanic ministry within our country's faith communities.

"There are many gifts and many opportunities that this growing population offers the Church and the country," said Dr. Chavez. "But the greatest challenge today is that only eight percent of the estimated 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers nationally are Hispanic."

Tim Matovina, a professor at the University of Notre Dame and author of *Latino Catholicism*, believes these needs facing the Hispanic community can be met through faith formation.

"How we pass on the faith to the children and grandchildren of Latino immigrants is the leading indicator of where the Church will be 30 years from now," he said. "This is not a priority just for Hispanic ministry; the entire Catholic Church needs to be involved in it."

## UP AND RUNNING IN YOUNGSTOWN

As one of the first participants in the Hispanic Lay Leadership Initiative, the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, has found a future leader for Hispanic ministry in Alma Ciriello. Though she arrived in the United States with little more than a simple suitcase, she met a religious sister who encouraged her to get involved in the Church and to pursue an education. She graduated

from the University of Youngstown, and has since taken on several roles within her faith community. As Hispanic Coordinator for Stark County, Ciriello will put her deep faith and talents to use as she helps her diocese build a flourishing Hispanic ministry program.

Ciriello noted that one of her biggest goals is to keep Latinos from leaving the local parishes: "Many people are going to different places. But, I want to bring the Hispanic community back to this Church."

The addition of positions like Ciriello's is not merely a temporary solution to address an immediate crisis. The Hispanic Lay Leadership Initiative will serve as a catalyst for a more substantial leadership investment in Hispanic ministry on the part of Catholic dioceses.

Over a three-year period, \$15 million will be invested in these leaders—the cost of the positions being split equally between Catholic Extension and the mission dioceses. At the conclusion of the three-year partnership, dioceses will

be responsible for sustaining the positions on their own.

"We've had over 70 of the 91 mission dioceses show great interest in this initiative," said Father Wall, "which means that we will be supporting a new generation of pastoral leaders that will build faith, inspire hope and ignite change and serve as the hands and feet of Christ to a world in need."

With the help of donors, Catholic Extension is at the forefront of a dream for Hispanic ministry that will ensure the vibrancy of the Catholic Church into the future.

"I think many people are like me," said Ciriello. "They want to do something, but they don't have the opportunity. This is a great opportunity to find leaders...I think it's something that God sent me." ●



*"I want to bring the Hispanic community back to this Church."*

—Alma Ciriello

# Stepping FORWARD

Recognizing the need to keep Catholic schools strong to grow the next generation of Church leaders, Catholic Extension currently is funding 37 schools to work with Catholic Schools Management, Inc.

DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON  
DIVINE REDEEMER SCHOOL  
Hanahan, SC



*Catholic Extension helps Divine Redeemer and other Catholic schools keep a competitive pace.*

If Principal Peggy Vice has her way, Divine Redeemer School in Hanahan, South Carolina, will be bursting at the seams in a few years.

The vivacious, new leader of this Catholic elementary school in the heart of the Deep South is a hands-on principal, calling every student by name, leading the morning assembly prayers and school spirit cheers, and even teaching two junior high literature classes. All the while, she is working to tackle the challenges her small school and other Catholic schools face.

Despite a wonderful sense of community, which she maintains is the “gift of Catholic education,” Divine Redeemer still is experiencing decreasing enrollment and a strapped budget. An educator for 28 years, Vice pragmatically explains that parents are faced with “either paying for college or nine years of elementary school.”

While the challenges may be plentiful, Vice believes the school has taken a solid step forward. It received a four-year grant from Catholic Extension enabling it to work with Catholic Schools Management, Inc. (CSM, Inc.) CSM was founded by Richard J. Burke, who has an impressive record in providing strategic support to Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools and universities nationwide. Of the more than 3,000 schools Burke has consulted with, many in very challenging circumstances, only 12 have closed.

## HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

Recognizing the need to keep Catholic schools strong to grow the next generation of Church leaders, Catholic Extension currently is funding 37 schools to work with CSM. The schools are located in the Dioceses of Beaumont, Texas; Charleston, South Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; Richmond, Virginia; and Youngstown, Ohio.

As part of the initiative, the schools will be enrolled in CSM's Strategic Management and Development Program, which is a four-year onsite consultation service that helps struggling schools strengthen their school boards; enhance school image and communication; enhance fundraising capabilities; manage enrollment; and market themselves more effectively.

A recent survey of Catholic school superintendents and principals conducted by CSM for Catholic Extension confirmed that marketing, fundraising and leadership development continue to be their most pressing needs.

Moreover, as Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension, said, “It's especially important to support and strengthen Catholic schools in the mission dioceses because there are far fewer Catholic schools in these areas. There are only 17 in the average mission diocese, and many have far fewer. It's critical to support these valuable institutions that do so very much to build the next generation of Church leaders.”

## IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Principal Vice maintains that working with CSM gives Divine Redeemer the ability to identify—and begin to resolve—its problems. It also gives the school a road map to follow—a strategic plan to address each area of need—and involves the entire staff and parent body. “I'm learning I can't do it all,” Vice said, acknowledging that everyone's involvement is critical to the school's success.

A California native, Vice is more than impressed by her new South Carolina community. “Everybody pulls together here,” she said. “After a parent meeting, all the parents stay to help mop the floor. Everyone pitches in to help. The children are just as generous as their parents. It is a family.”

Working with CSM has helped the school rank its goals by priority, including the need for greater fundrais-

ing support. In addition, there is a tremendous need to update technologies to keep the school competitive. Currently, there are no science and social studies books for the junior high students because the ones they had been using were completely outdated. And, of course, increasing enrollment remains a top priority. The school had 114 students last year, but only 95 enrolled for this new school year.

One small step at a time, Divine Redeemer is working to create a stronger, better school. “We all believe in what we're doing,” Vice said. ●



A morning “welcome assembly” builds school spirit while also giving the children a chance to let out a burst of energy before heading into their studies.