

NCDVD 2010 CONVENTION

In Conjunction with MATS AND NCEA Seminary Division

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Introduction

- One thing I am sure about: you chose this workshop not on account of the speaker but for the issue we are to address here! And I am fine with this: it is good for my growth in virtue! However, I think I can offer an interesting perspective in giving this talk. I am a Hispanic and my whole life I have been working in academic and priestly formation and for almost ten years I have been collaborating with Hispanic vocations for the Archdiocese of Denver. I have some experiences – good and not that good ones- to share. Probably this is why I was invited to give this talk.
- We are here because we are aware of the urgency of the response to the challenge in the Church in US by the growing Catholic Hispanic population in our country. It is a pastoral challenge that we cannot dismiss superficially without compromising the mission Jesus Christ gave to each one of us. (Anecdote of the beginning of the Hispanic ministry in Colorado by the Theatine Fathers)
- John Paul II in *Ecclesia in America* reminds us that “*Migrants should be met with a hospitable and welcoming attitude which can encourage them to become part of the Church's life, always with due regard for their freedom and their specific cultural identity... In this way the most adequate and complete pastoral care possible can be ensured.*”

The Church in America must be constantly concerned to provide for the effective evangelization of those recent arrivals who do not yet know Christ. (no. 65)

More recently the *Aparecida Document* (2007) says on the same issue: “*Dialogue between the sending and receiving churches must be enhanced so as to provide humanitarian and pastoral care to those who have moved, supporting them in their religiosity, and appreciating their cultural expressions in everything having to do with the Gospel. Awareness of the reality of human mobility must be developed in seminaries and houses of formation so as to provide a pastoral response to it.* (413)

Migrants should be pastorally accompanied by their churches of origin and urged to become disciples and missionaries in the lands and communities that take them in, sharing with them the riches of their faith and their religious traditions. (415)

- There is a common awareness of the pastoral challenge of ministering to the Hispanic immigrants, both in the USCCB and in the Latin American Dioceses. There is a common understanding that in elaborating a response both, the countries of origin and the welcoming country, should be committed. There is common conclusion that part of the pastoral response is to provide priest able to minister to this growing immigrant community.
- In some way the participants at our National Conference this year cover two of the most important dimensions of the problem:

Vocations to work in this field (Vocations Directors) and formation for this ministry (ATS.) We have the principles; we need creativity.

- Unfortunately, like in the Spanish poet, Antonio Machado lines, that Juan Manuel Serrat popularized with his song: “*Traveler, there is not road; as you go you make the way*”, this is our situation. We have millions of Hispanic Catholics living among us (legal or undocumented) and we need to assist them pastorally.
- It is true that the US had a history of intense immigration moments: Italian, Polish, German, Irish... it happens like Machado’s poem continues: “*Traveler, there is not road; you make your path as you walk*”, “*As you go, you make the way and stopping to look behind, you see the path that your feet will never travel again. Wanderer, there is no way— only foam trails in the sea.*” In other words, we are to elaborate our way for our today for our living Church in the US.

As Pope John Paul II wrote in *Ecclesia in America*:

“In its history, America has experienced many immigrations, as waves of men and women came to its various regions in the hope of a better future. The phenomenon continues even today, especially with many people and families from Latin American countries who have moved to the northern parts of the continent, to the point where in some cases they constitute a substantial part of the population. They often bring with them a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements. The Church is well aware of the problems created by this situation and is committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people,

in order to help them settle in their new land and to foster a welcoming attitude among the local population, in the belief that a mutual openness will bring enrichment to all.” (no. 65)

Nevertheless we have to walk our own way, we already have some guidelines provided by our Pastors in the document “*Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*” issued by the USCCB and the Mexican Episcopal Conference in 2003: let me try to summarize them in what pertains to our topic:

Collaborative Pastoral Responses

Collaboration between Episcopal conferences for more effective pastoral responses in the development of a more systematic approach to ministerial accompaniment of migrants. The numbers of migrants who leave Central and South America and Mexico and who enter the United States are so large that a more concerted effort is needed in the preparation of priests who accompany them (48)

In previous centuries, when immigrants from eastern and western Europe came to all parts of the American continent, the Church in some countries:

- Established national seminaries to prepare priests to serve in the lands where others in their country were settling, particularly in North and South America.*
- Or developed religious communities of men and women to accompany emigrants on their way;*
- Forming national or personal parishes;*

- Exchange or temporary programs in which commitments are made to supply priests for a period of three to five years. Up to the present there have been individual exchanges of priests between Central and South American, Mexican, and U.S. dioceses. These efforts have been very positive, but the results have not been uniform (49)

In the line of providing the part of the pastoral response to the immigration pastoral issue, I want to propose your three approaches our topic dealing with Vocations and ministry for Hispanics: Recruitment, Formation and Culture. It is not my intention to address the idea of bringing priests from Latin America to work among the Hispanic communities, its difficulties and results. instead, our perspective is about what we can do on our part, not what the Churches of origin might or are supposed to do.

I. RECRUITMENT

Let's start with a word of hope and trust: God's promise by Jeremiah the prophet: "*I will give you shepherds after my own heart*" (Jer. 3:15), is always effective, also for the Catholic Hispanic immigrants.

The Church in the United States, like everywhere else in the world, doesn't count with enough priests. There is no Diocese able to say, 'I have even some to share.' To this already difficult situation we add the reality of an ongoing immigration of millions of people who profess their Catholic faith in another language and express it in a different cultural frame. Consequently, every diocese in the United States is looking for

Hispanic vocations (besides the general effort in most Dioceses to form priests able to minister in both languages: English and Spanish.)

A. Origin and Motivations:

Usually we can find Hispanic vocations to the priesthood in two ways: bringing people from abroad (Mexico, Colombia, etc.) or looking for vocations among the Hispanic communities already living in our country. When we bring men from abroad I think it is very important to consider their motivation to come.

1. Hispanic Vocations from abroad

- Usually countries in Latin America have an even bigger need of priests for the numbers of Catholics they have to deal with. For instance, in Mexico there are 5,500 Catholics per priests (but they are in an uneven balance: for instance in the Cancun-Chetumal Prelature they have 23,000 Catholics per priest); In Mexico they have one thousand more Catholics per priest that in the rest of the countries in Latin America where the statistics is 4,402 per priest. In Africa the ratio is of 4,875 Catholics per priest. In the United States, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) of Georgetown University, there are 1,590 Catholics per priest.
- Standing the fact that the Church in Latin America may wish to send some priests to the United States for the pastoral care of the Catholic Hispanic population –what is really appreciated and fair to do- we

must be careful of not depriving the Latin American Dioceses from the priests they urgently and desperately need.

- Most of Latin American countries have a very good tradition in forming future priests and they are willing to form them adequately to minister to their people.
- In this sense I would propose to pay careful attention to the motivations some Latin American men or seminarians might have for coming to the United States. It is not infrequent that young seminarians from Latin American countries contact our Dioceses asking for admission. (I found more seminarians or former seminarians doing it than lay men.)
 - a) Some times they have been looking on line at different Diocese without having an idea of the Church in the United States and the pastoral work going on here. When this happen we can presume that their knowledge and motivation might be not that valid. They don't know our Church in US, the pastoral challenges we have, the structures and ways we work. The success of these vocations is very uncertain and it can have negative in the seminary life and in the future of his ministry in this local church.
 - b) Some times they know a seminarian who was a friend of his in the former seminary and moved to the United States and invited him to join him.
 - c) Some times what they are looking for is financial support in their formation because they cannot afford Seminary tuition in Mexico.
 - d) Particular caution is recommended when they have been dismissed from the seminary. (According to Canon Law 241 we must require the report from the former seminary; and according to PPF

Addendum A, two years no subsequent application will be considered in the two years following the dismissal; or a sufficient time should be allotted to evaluate carefully the application when it was other than dismissal.)

- I think a good policy might be not to accept seminarians from Latin American Dioceses unless there is a serious and strong motivation to justify it. These motivations could be:
 - a) Their family, or part of it, lives in the United States
 - b) They have lived in the United States and they know the Catholic community here
 - c) They feel a especial vocation to minister to the Immigrant Hispanic population
 - d) They are sent by especial request of their Bishop.

In other words: not without a valid motivation to come to the United States. The need our Dioceses have of priests to serve the Catholic Hispanic population might not be enough reason to taken them from their Dioceses.

- We must be aware that the “American Dream” also happens in churchy settings. I wouldn’t but motivation of the kind: “I saw in your web page that you are looking for priests”; “you offer a better formation program”; “my seminary is a disaster and I heard that you have a very good one”; “one of my seminary classmates moved to your seminary and he invited me to join him”, etc. (Of course, part of your job and charisma is to take them case by case.)

2. Hispanic Vocations from within the United States

- We all have seen how in the last years a numerous, vigorous, active and young Catholic Hispanic communities have sprung out in many parishes in the United States. In these communities it is very easy to find big youth groups characterized by a deep appreciation of the priest and his vocation. It is true that young Hispanic Catholics pay their tribute to the cultural change, but nowadays there are still very committed to family and the Church, and most of them have no prejudices about the priesthood.
- Vocations from these communities can be found in different status and consequently with a different problematic.
 - a) We might find men called by Jesus to be his priests who have been living in the United States and have been educated here;
 - b) Or we can find men who have been working illegally in this country and probably with none or a limited educational background.
- Hispanic vocations from legally established families in the United States offer many advantages: no immigrations issues, they speak English and they have been able to complete at least High School studies. We know that the financial issue of College might be a problem for working status families, like many of them come from. But if in our Dioceses we truly appreciate a vocation to the priesthood money for College shouldn't be an impossible problem to resolve.
- I'm sure Vocations Directors have met young Hispanic men that have been living many years in our country, that have been really committed to ministry in their own parish community, that feel called

to the priesthood but they are undocumented (working illegally, using a false SSN) and sometimes not even with Secondary School completed. They might be true vocations to the priesthood, that is, men called by Jesus Christ, who is not bound by nationalities, borders or human conventions. What do to?

- Human prudence and honesty prevent us to admit them into our Seminaries. According to immigration lawyers the implications for the Diocese and the Church in the United States might have a really bad impact in the Church's life and ministry.
- Law can change, but at the moment, I think it is necessary to ask these men, if they are willing to follow their vocation, to leave the country. They may go their own country to get formation and to be ordained for that Diocese. In this way, his vocation to the priesthood is accomplished even though not in the United States.
- If he really wants to come to serve the Church in US, especially the immigrant Hispanic Catholic community because his family lives here and he had spend many years in this country –that is, he has valid reasons to come back- at this moment I think the only way we have at hand is to send him for formation to the Seminario Hispano de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe in Mexico City or any other good Seminary in Mexico, eventually financially sponsored by the US Diocese. It might be imprudent to admit him officially as a seminarian for your Diocese knowing (and filing this knowledge) that he has been illegally in our country. Here things become very complicated in order to keep legality and options together.
- If the law changes they might be able to get a student visa to come to study to the United States. Otherwise, if they complete their studies

and are ordained in Mexico, they might be able to apply as priests for a Religious Worker Visa to come to work in your Diocese and later on to get their residence status and eventual incardination.

In my opinion we are still lacking in US of something we need urgently: an effective vocational pastoral plan for Hispanic vocations in our local churches. This plan must depart from the awareness that Hispanic men will not come to us asking for admission to the Seminary. You have to tell them that Jesus might be calling them to be his priests! Remember: they have a strong sense of the physicality of “being called”!

The vocational pastoral plan for Hispanic must involve the Diocese, the clergy and especially the Seminary itself. Vocational plans in Latin America include a plan organized at diocesan, regional, local and familiar level. In these plans they include activities like:

- Constant prayer for vocations to the Priesthood (in my home Diocese must parishes pray Paul VI’s prayer for vocations at the end of the Mass. People know it by heart.
- Especial week of prayer for vocations to the Priesthood (Semana del Seminario) where seminarians “preach” in parishes about the Seminary and ask for prayers and financial support.
- Altar servers: in my diocese –they don’t have girl servers- after serving Mass they enter into the Sacristy and before the Crucifix they pray: “*O Lord, give us holy and numerous priests. And if you need me, here I am.*”
- Youth groups, vocational retreats (Jornadas)

- Contests on vocational matters (for instance, the Archdiocese of Monterrey used different contests on vocational topics in art: from Graffiti to songs and theater.
- Vocational prospects are invited to live a missionary experience during Christmas and Holy Week
- The Vocations director with a vocational team visit parishes and organize the Vocational Week in the parish
- Pre-Seminary experiences

B. Some legal immigration issues

In our experience at SJV it has been easy to get a student visa for men requiring them from Mexico. None have been denied. However, it is very recommendable to be in contact with the lawyers of your Diocese to calculate very well each step we move ahead regarding non documented men asking for admission to the seminary. You must know that one of the questions applicants are asked when filling the immigration papers is if they have been in this country before and if they have worked here. In order to get the visa they will have to lie and the Diocese cannot be supportive of it or at least knowing it when admitting someone to the seminary. (Another thing would be if a man from Mexico and in Mexico is invited to study to your Seminary in the US. He fills his application for the Student Visa –with the correspondent invitation by your seminary- and he comes to the US. If after getting the student visa –we don't have to check how he got it- he applies for admission to the Seminary in US, we might admit him without compromising the Diocese in the Visa application process.)

II. FORMATION

Formation issues related to the pastoral attention of the Catholic Hispanic immigrant population go in two directions. One is providing the content and language skills to all American seminarians in order to make them able to minister to the Hispanic population too

A. American seminarians

Here I want to recall “*Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*” document when on nn. 50 and 51 we read:

For this pastoral challenge it is necessary:

- *To provide priests and religious who are suited for this important ministry. (50)*
- *To study the possibility of a more comprehensive preparation and assignment of clergy who dedicate themselves to pastoral accompaniment of migrants (51);*
- *A special academic subject on pastoral migration or human mobility be included as part of the regular curriculum in our seminaries, institutions, and houses of formation.*

(Some times I find it difficult to make understand that the pastoral care of Hispanic in US is inevitable, and we must address it in our programs. I understand that it is difficult to find the biblical foundation of the limousine for the Quinceanera, but at least we can try to get and to heal this expensive senseless display!)

- At least a class on Hispanic Ministry or Cross Cultural Ministry –the title is not important-
- the study of Spanish grammar
- the improvement and experience of this language in a Latin American country
- the field apostolate in a Parish with a Hispanic community
- the living and studying with some Hispanic seminarians

These are good ways to get seminarians integrated and provided with the skills to minister to the Catholic Hispanic growing population.

(I think it is not fair to think that we will be always able to bring Hispanic priests from Latin America to take care of them.)

B. Hispanic Seminarians

We have Hispanic seminarians in our Seminary formation program. (I don't mean Hispanic seminarians who grew up in the United States and generally are at least partially culturally and socially integrated.) We all have seminarians who have come from Mexico or any other Latin American country or who were called by the Lord here in the US but they were not raised or educated here. In this case, we may find three kinds of issues to address:

- Academic
- Formative
- Cultural

1. Academic

a) English

English is always an issue. Seminarians studying in the US or getting prepared to serve in the US must speak English and they must speak it well. This makes the ESL program necessary. However, as Hispanic seminarians will very hardly get the level of spoken and written English American born seminarians have, they will struggle all the time with papers and active participation in class. The grades unfortunately some times do not reflect their study and knowledge of the subject, but the patronizing of the language. This may be frustrating for some of them. I understand that the Academic faculty is to keep some high standards but at the same time there must be some understanding of this reality. Tutors offer a very good help.

b) Perspective and Structure

Also in the academic field, men coming from other Philosophy or Theology programs in other seminaries abroad, come from a different structure and methodology. Seminaries Academic Programs in Latin America have a stronger pastoral perspective of the academic program (in American seminaries the Academic program is very strong); their study is based mainly in the structured presentation of Philosophy and Theology in manuals; and they are more focused in assimilating and learning the doctrine, than in creating a critical thinking. Papers and extra readings are not required but exceptionally.

c) Methodology

In American seminaries Hispanic seminarians will need to be introduced to the technique of reading (usually professors leave many pages to read each class); the methodology to write papers; and the mind-set for critical thinking.

When Hispanic seminarians, besides the difficulty of the language, are introduced to Philosophy or Theology programs without the due preparation, the experience might be frustrating for some of them who will see themselves from being excellent students to second rank ones.

2. Formative

On account of the Hispanic cultural background and for those coming from seminary formation in Latin America the American Seminary formation system might be also a challenge.

I'll try to find some challenges for each dimension of any Seminary formation program.

a) *Human Formation:*

- The perspective: Hispanics are very good in expressing their feelings but they don't have a "culture" of looking deeply into themselves. Hispanic life is more on the objective dimension that the subjective dimension of life. Sometimes these men

don't have the training to look and to name their fears, feelings, or emotions. They tend to be more based on duties, things you are expected to do, ways you must be.

- The program: The American formation system gives important margin for personal responsibility and free management of each one's resources and time. Hispanic culture and Seminary formation is based mainly in tradition and discipline. Latin American seminaries tend to have the whole day scheduled. Seminarians know any time what they are supposed to be doing. When Hispanic men enter into the Seminary system some times they need to be trained in the responsible use of their time and resources.
- Relationship Formator/Seminary authorities – Formatee: Authority in family or in the Seminary is seen by Hispanic seminarians with deep respect and distances must be kept. They need to get used to a different kind of relationship in US that tend to be more equalitarian and very attentive against any kind of entitlement. There is more dialogue between Formator and formatee. In Latin America the function of the authority is still very strong.
- Friendship and integration: On account of the language and cultural barrier it is challenge to get the seminary community integrated by priestly and friendship bonds. I think the challenge works both ways. Hispanic seminarians tend to hang

around together. Some times it is difficult for them when they try to get into an Anglo group in something else than a mandatory “community day.” However, I have to say that I have seen –not frequently though- good and deep friendships between Hispanic and Anglo seminarians. It is possible. It is hard.

- Cultural identity: Some intellectuals speak of a complex of inferiority in Hispanics on account of their origins. A phenomenon we have seen in our Seminary –not many cases though- is that some Hispanic seminarians (I mean those not born in US) make an incredible effort to camouflage into the Anglo circle and not to be labeled as Hispanic. They get to speak good English and don’t want to be very much involved in Hispanic ministry. Other Hispanic seminarians feel marginalized by them. Hispanic seminarians must embrace heartily the values of the American culture and the living Church here, but at the same time they must keep their values of their own culture and expressions of their faith. We don’t want to create a “sociological churchy crossbreeding” (mestizaje) but to form men whose true identity is to be priests of Jesus Christ willing and skilled to serve his brothers in any cultural frame they found them.

b) Spiritual dimension of formation

- Hispanic seminarians in an American Seminary Program find another challenge in passing from a strong devotional spiritual life based, to a more personal prayer based one. While devotions are some times entrusted to each seminarian, for Hispanic seminarians it might be important to have them integrated in the community seminary life. (They miss, for instance, flowers in the sanctuary, a statue of our Lady by the Altar, the communal prayer of the rosary, preached retreats...) They need especial training in silent prayer (what to do with all the available time!), interior meditation and direct dialogue with God, mainly through the Bible.
- Hispanic seminarians are also more dependant from the objective structures of Authority and formation than from themselves. They have a very strong consideration of the Bishop's role and they will obey him in whatever he says regarding, for instance, his personal vocation. They also trust and have a deep appreciation of the voice of his Formators. Probably they will need to be trained to balance it with a responsible personal decision making and accountability.

c) Apostolic dimension of formation

- Here we need a whole transfer from Latin American categories to the American standards: from the understanding of what a parish is, how it is organized, what is the role of the priests/authority, the participation of the laity, especially

women, etc. to financial management, human resources and administration.

- Seminarians need to understand that the US is not Mexico: historically, culturally, socially and religiously. Enculturation classes have an important role in getting it.
- They come with an understanding of the priest as a very hard worker who celebrates a minimum of 5 masses every Sunday and has to take care of many communities and spends most of his time in celebrating sacraments: One who does many things by himself and who has the untouchable authority in the Parish, and some time, even in the whole town. But at the same time they understand the priest as God's man for the people and they have a strong sense of his identity.
- It is difficult for them to integrate all the "administrative" work of the pastor in the idea they have of what a priest is.

I think if bringing up these ideas, we realize that what we have in front of us is a work of integration of two colors of the same light: Jesus and the way of being the Church. In this sense Hispanic seminarians are enriched with the American Catholic experience and are able to bring their own rich Catholic tradition. Mutual knowledge and understanding are essential.

III. CULTURE

Culture is important to be able to understand Hispanic seminarians in order to form them to minister to the Catholic Hispanic community in the US, and not only.

We must begin acknowledging that we are human beings and therefore socialized beings, and the fact that our becoming priests didn't cancel it. We learned to live in the world, to interpret it and to relate to it in a very specific and particular way. We grew necessarily in a culture, family and social perspective. The culture we grew up penetrates our whole person and world view. Therefore we face necessarily cultural differences not only among different countries, but also in the same country, like here between the Eastern US and the Westerns. For instance, I realized that I was a Hispanic when I came to the States, but I never thought I was a Hispanic while living in Mexico. You realized of cultural differences when you enter in contact with a different one.

In culture we can identify two basic tendencies, or as Psychologists say 'two basic construal of the self': The Individualistic or independent one, and the collectivistic or interdependent one.

The individualistic tends to construe the self as separate from all others and prefers to view behaviors and emotions as consistent across all situations and with all individuals (the importance of the law fits very well with this view.) The individualistic and independent perspective has been identified as representative of the US American value system.

The collectivistic culture is more representative of the Latino culture and construes the self as more interdependent with other people. Social roles are highly important. It is a culture defined by traditional gender roles for men and women and by a high regard for parental roles. “Respect” and “dignity” are important keys in this culture to maintain roles.¹

In the individualistic culture the identity responds to what you get; in the collectivistic one the identity comes from the group.

Each one of these cultural patterns diversifies by values, fundamental beliefs, the sense of time, relational forms and expectations.

Let me give you some examples that probably touch more closely our reality here.

a) Different world view: (I will try only the Anglo and Hispanic perspective that corresponds to my own experience and that regards a very concrete situation we live now in US; but of course a similar analysis can be done considering the African or Asian cultural contexts).

The basic assumptions of the individualistic world view is that

- the universe is ordered and follow physical laws,
- life is analyzable in neat categories,
- linear time is divided into neat segments,
- it is a human-centered universe,
- professional success, money or possessions are the measure of value,

¹ Cf. A. Romero, Assessing and Treating Latinos: Overview of Research: Handbook of Multicultural Health: Assessment and Treatment of Diverse Populations. Academic Press 2000, p. 215.

- unlimited wealth is available to individuals who pursue it;
- competition is good;
- change is good.

The collectivistic-Hispanic- one sees the world like a:

- Pre-determine universe, with a cosmic nature, with different rules for different groups;
- in life everything is connected with a magic realism and providence;
- time flows and does need not to be quantified;
- it is a God-spirit centered universe, a family centered universe;
- Family relationships are the measure for success in life;
- competition is bad, cooperation is good;
- Changing is bad (it destroys traditions.)

Now you understand why when you want to make an appointment an American will tell you: “see you at 1 pm.” A Latino will tell you: “see you after lunch.” For an American it means time and money; and for the Latino it means relationship, a time to be with people

Talking about relational forms (relationships), the Latino-collective construal, based on the group, is all about touching, hugging, kissing. The American is about individual boundaries, keeping your distance.

There are also different expectations: in the independent model if God is with you, you will succeed. In this sense the poor is not the man who doesn't have opportunities but the one who doesn't have the same human quality: “he is not that good as I am, that is why he is where he is.” For the

Latino the opportunities are for some ones, not for everyone and he must accept what life offers to him.

Octavio Paz, a Mexican writer, Nobel Prize 1990 describes the difference between Mexican and American in these terms:

*“Mexicans delight in contemplating horror, they are familiar with horror, the bleeding Christs of the small town churches.... Americans are credulous; Mexicans are believers. They love stories and police novels; we, myths and legends. Mexicans lie because of their fantasy, despair or to overcome a tough life; they –the American- do not lie, but replace the true truth, that is always displeasing, with a social truth. We, Mexicans, get drunk to confess our failures; they, to forget theirs. Americans are optimistic; we are nihilist... Mexicans distrust; they are open. We are sad and sarcastic; they are happy and humoristic. Americans want to undertake, we want to contemplate. They are active, we are quietist; we enjoy our wounds, they, their inventions. They believe in hygiene, health, work and happiness, but perhaps they do not know the true joy, that is drunkenness and turmoil, the scream of a feast night.... Mexicans believe in communion, feast; for them there is not health without contact...”*²

Some Latino limits are:

- Easy for susceptibility. Easy to be offended if he thinks he has not been treated in the due way. In this case, even if he doesn't manifest it externally, he emotionally takes the distance and very hardly he will recuperate his confidence in the person who apparently offended him.

² Octavio Paz, El laberinto de la soledad, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, Pág. 27

- He considers important if he is greeted or not, if he is object of attention or not (this is very important for him), if you have details of attention with him or not.
- Manners are very important for him (this is very important if you want him to accept a negative answer or to tell him something he has to do)
- You get more fruits appealing to his good sentiments, to his heart, his faith and religious sensitivity than to authority.
- To listen is always important, but for Hispanics is decisive. They like to be listened. A rush and cold treatment is not good for them. Most of the times it is necessary to go around, to give explanations before saying what we have to tell them.
- Another limit is inconstancy in their purposes and tasks.
- Improvisation of their activity, informality and a lacking of programming. This attitude changes only in those Hispanic who get a good level of education.

The dichotomy of models however is not only the fact of having two possible patterns to follow, but that one is considered good and the other bad. From this prejudice derive the so-called “stereotypes” by which we judge persons not in themselves but based in “stereotypes” ideas: “He is American, then he is all about efficiency.”; “He is Asian... he is mysterious”; “He is Mexican... he is poor”, “He is an immigrant... then he is illegal, poor and uneducated.”

Typical ethnic stereotypes are the joke:

“Heaven is the place where the cooks are French, the police are English, the mechanics are German, the artists are Italian, and everything is organized by the Swiss.

Hell is where the cooks are English, the police are German, the mechanics are French, the artists are Swiss, and everything is organized by the Italians”

These stereotypes really enter deeply into the people’s subconscious and people act from them without realizing of their influence.

What happens is that when we relate to one another we relate from stereotype to stereotype. It is a relationship based on ideas, concepts, patterns, but not personal. I relate to the other as “American”, “Mexican” “African” but not as whom he really is as a person –not by his culture or race.

I think it has been done a lot of emphasis in our cultural differences, but it is time now to emphasize our affinities above all in what regards our Catholic faith. Our Church is based on faith, not on culture.

Hispanic seminarians must understand that they are not a problem, but they are part of the solution to accomplish the mission of the Church in the United States.

In our Seminary formation programs we are dealing with men called by Jesus Christ to be his priests, independently of his language, origin, race or culture. Men called to serve the Catholic Hispanic immigrant population in the US. We must understand and prepare them in the respect due to their

cultural identity and Catholic tradition, but at the same time providing them with all the skills and knowledge of the American culture they are called to embrace and love as part of the mission Jesus entrusted to them.