



**DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH**  
**OFFICE OF HISPANIC MINISTRY**  
**OFICINA DEL MINISTERIO HISPANO**

*"The Hispanic presence in the United States is a blessing from God." (Encuentro and Mission, USCCB, 2006.)*

To the incoming Bishop of our Diocese, Your Excellency Msgr. James Vann Johnston,

By means of this letter, we the clergy and laity of the Diocesan Hispanic Ministry Council (DHMC) wish to extend a special and warm welcome to you on behalf of the Hispanic community of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

We represent the Diocese's eight parishes with Spanish mass and the many apostolates that are active with the Hispanic community, including Cursillo, *pastoral juvenil*, The Bishop Helmsing Institute, the Charismatic Renewal, Knights of Columbus, among others. We also represent the growing population of over eighty-eight-thousand Hispanics currently living in the territory of this Diocese, a group that is approximately 65% Catholic. Indeed, this large population has roots in our diocese that are over 100 years old with the arrival of the first Mexicans working on the rail lines, and extend to today with migrant orchard workers and urban laborers. We are priests, deacons, parish and diocesan staff, volunteers and servant-leaders; all working together in this beautiful and often challenging vineyard of the Lord.

The presence of the Hispanic community among us is, as the Bishops have said in their document *Encuentro and Mission*, "a blessing". They are a promise in this nation of new growth and an enriched spirituality shared with our Latin American neighbors. But it also signifies an opportunity and a profound challenge. Indeed, the Hispanic population of our community is often beset by many difficulties that often impede integral development, including legal status, poverty, neighborhood violence, language barriers, limited formal catechesis, and profound culture-shock. It is our goal and mission to accompany our brothers and sisters through their *calvario* and resurrection in Christ.

It is our heartfelt wish to walk with you as *gente-puente* in this journey of welcoming our Hispanic community, not by assimilation or devaluation of their rich spirituality and heritage, but rather by an authentic integration into the life of the Church at all levels as fellow baptized men and women, affirming their roles as missionaries to this nation, rather than merely immigrants.

It is an exciting time for Hispanic Ministry, as our communities and ministries are growing. Please count on us as we build together our *pastoral de conjunto* by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in union with Christ, and in obedience to the Father.

Sincerely,  
*en Cristo Rey,*

The members of the Diocesan Hispanic Ministry Council.  
 Gathered at the Fall Meeting 26 October 2015

*Hilda Beck*  
 St. Mark's Parish

*Fr. Andrés Moreno*  
 Associate Pastor  
 Presentation Parish

*Fr. Dick Pibel, S.J.*  
*St. Anthony's*

*Rebecca Rizo*  
 Sacred Heart - Gpe Church

*Miguel Salazar*  
 Director del  
 Ministerio Hispano

*Ramona Arroyo*  
 Fr. Luis Felipe Suárez

*Araceli G. Bernardino*  
 Sacred-Heart G.

*Carlos Cardenas*  
 St Mark's Parish.

*Francisco Casarez*  
 Holy Cross

*Kris Larkey, St. Sabina*

*Edith Montes*

**THE CATHOLIC CENTER**  
 PO BOX 419037 • Kansas City, MO • 64141  
 20 West Ninth St. • Kansas City, MO • 64105  
 (816) 714-2323 • [www.ministerio.diocese-kcsj.org](http://www.ministerio.diocese-kcsj.org)

*Adelto Martinez*  
 Holy cross kemo  
 Angel Rizo