

HISPANIC MINISTRY

MINISTRY STRATEGY IN THE CONTEXT OF TIER CLASSIFICATIONS



MINISTERIO HISPANO

DIÓCESIS DE KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH

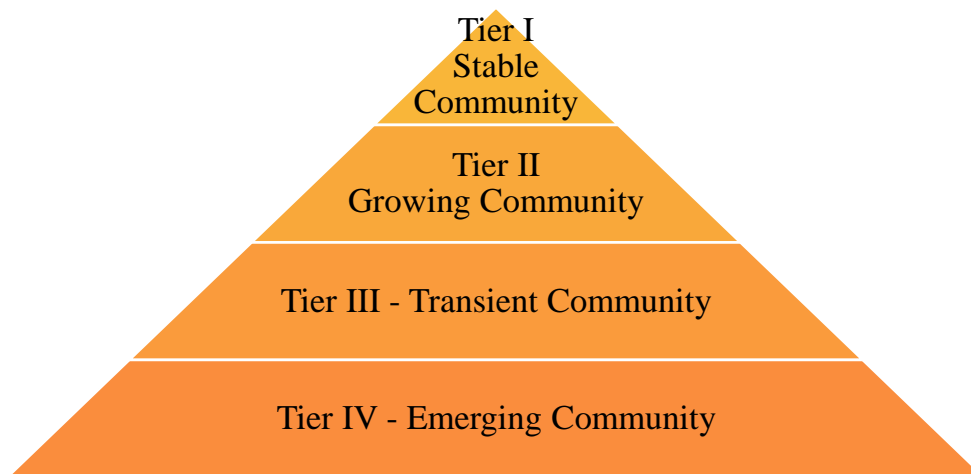
THE TIERED APPROACH

In the nearly one hundred parishes and missions of Kansas City-St. Joseph, we have identified FOUR TIERS of parishes with Hispanic ministry. These categories are useful in organizing our ministerial approach and how we collaborate with our pastors.

These tiers help us identify where a parish is in terms of its Hispanic growth, the socioeconomic reality of the parish, and its ministerial needs. The importance of understanding this context enables our offices to provide a tailored approach.

Being mindful of the priority outlined in our mutually shared Diocesan vision to: Use Our Resources Wisely¹, this tiered approach allows our office the flexibility to serve our community responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.

These tiers are:



TIERS EXPLAINED

Among the recommendations in the findings of the V Encuentro² was “that the priority should be on developing plans at the diocesan level through a collaboration between the clergy, lay leaders, and leaders in the main ecclesial movements to assess the needs and develop appropriate guidelines and practical responses”³ However, to be effective in that response we need to understand the level of Hispanic growth within that parish. To better serve the community, my office has developed a category of tiers which represent the current state of Hispanic growth in each parish.

¹ Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. (2022, May 20). *Our Vision*. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://kcsjatholic.org/our-vision/>

² On June 9, 2013, in San Diego, CA, The USCCB’s Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs convened pastoral leaders of the Hispanic/Latino community to engage again in the process of Encuentro. Its main goal was to discern ways in which the Church in the United States can better respond to the Hispanic/Latino presence and strengthen how Hispanics/Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the entire Church.

³ United States Conference of Catholic Bis, & Bishops, U. S. C. C. (2019). *V Encuentro Memorias Y Conclusiones (Proceedings & Conclusions)*. USCCB PUB., p.74.

THESE ARE, BEGINNING WITH TIER IV:⁴

- **Tier IV – Emerging Community.** This tier is best defined as a new community that may not yet have the critical population numbers or enough stability to enable a fixed Sunday Spanish-language Mass. However, enough of a population exists that the pastor and the diocese will want to monitor its growth and continually reassess its needs. It exists within a predominantly non-Hispanic context.
- **Tier III – Transient Community.** This tier is best defined as a parish community that has achieved the critical population numbers to warrant one fixed Sunday Spanish-language Mass and may even have some additional ministry offerings. However, they are characterized as transient because their enrollment may not reflect a stable community. They will typically not have a bilingual (Spanish-speaking) priest assigned and will need to have a priest scheduled for Masses. In addition, these communities may host transient populations such as migrant farmworkers or other seasonal laborers. It exists within a predominantly non-Hispanic context.
- **Tier II – Growing Community.** This tier is best defined by a parish community that exhibits a trend toward stability. They have the critical population numbers which necessitate one or more fixed Sunday Mass(es), bilingual parish personnel, a plethora of ministries in Spanish or geared toward Hispanics, and an assigned bilingual (Spanish-speaking) priest or deacon. It exists within a growing Hispanic context.
- **Tier I – Stable Community.** This tier is best defined by a parish community that has stabilized over many years. The parish shows growth in the number of families and/or the community is predominantly Hispanic. The parish is staffed with mostly bilingual, Spanish-speaking personnel, and offers most of its ministries either entirely in Spanish or bilingual. In addition, care is taken to ensure the Pastor is Spanish speaking as well as its deacons and/or pastoral associates. It exists within a predominantly Hispanic context.

Communities may transition from one tier to another over time. Ideally, the communities trend toward stability. However, it is possible for a parish community to trend in *reverse*, that is, to return to a prior tier. There are many complicated reasons why Hispanics can both comprise a larger part of the Catholic church while fewer Hispanics are Catholic.⁵ In addition, we have seen a troubling trend in our diocese as fewer and fewer Catholics attend Mass.⁶

In general, we have seen positive growth in the Hispanic Catholic population and are experiencing emerging communities throughout the diocese. Our attention therefore should be on growing and stabilizing these communities, while ministering to the Tier I and II parishes.

⁴ V Encuentro - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2015, June). *Key Demographic, Social, and Religious Statistics for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph* (Version 1) [An explanation of the key demographic, social, and religious data for the Diocese of KCSJ from the V Encuentro]. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <https://vencuentro.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/916-Kansas-City-St.-Joseph-EN.pdf>.

⁵ Funk, C., & Martínez, J. (2014, May 7). *Fewer Hispanics are Catholic, so how can more Catholics be Hispanic?* Pew Research Center. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/05/07/fewer-hispanics-are-catholic-so-how-can-more-catholics-be-hispanic/>

⁶ See Appendix A chart: Decline in Mass Attendance, Diocese of KCSJ

This tiered approach also allows us to address our ministry's FOUR PILLARS, or functions, as a targeted approach rather than a *one-ministry-methodology-fits-all* manner.

THE FOUR PILLARS

Informed by the work done through V Encuentro, four pillars were identified as the framework from which to understand our ministerial goals as an office serving the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. These pillars are:

Advocacy

- Underrepresentation in the planning process is a barrier to equal access to services and resources. The pillar of advocacy ensures the community is represented and has a voice within the diocesan decision-making structures. In addition, working within the Catholic Social Teaching framework, we advocate for the needs of Hispanic Catholics with local community organizations as well as at the regional and national levels.

Resources

- Each parish is unique in its mission and needs. But all require access to resources that strengthen and support their parish community. The pillar of resources allows us to continually assess the real-time needs of our Hispanic communities. In addition to addressing the community's material, spiritual, and mental health needs, we also safeguard the most effective ways to provide these resources.

Coordination and Collaboration

- Following our mutually shared diocesan Vision to be One Family, Restored in Christ, Equipped for Mission⁷, we recognize that working collaboratively to coordinate ministerial efforts assures that our community has access to all of our best efforts. We call this *pastoral en conjunto*. This pillar enables us to recognize the mutual responsibility we share with our Hispanic and non-Hispanic brothers and sisters. Our work is realized by coordinating and collaborating with other diocesan offices, our priests, and leaders within our ecclesial movements.

Formation

- One of the most consistent needs in our parishes is the ongoing formation of its people. In keeping with our mutually shared diocesan Vision: Growing God's Family⁸, we recognize the need to provide quality formation for our Hispanic community. In addition, we recognize the need to form our pastoral leaders, including the deacons who will serve our community. Therefore, the pillar of formation enables us to assess and prioritize the Christian education of our community, thereby growing disciples and forming the faithful.

⁷ Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. (2022, May 20). *Our Vision*. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://kcsjatholic.org/our-vision/>

⁸ Ibid.

MOVEMENT BETWEEN TIERS

It is important to understand the benchmarks which signal movement between the tiers. For example, an essential benchmark, which proceeds the inception of a ministry with Hispanics in a parish, is establishing a Spanish-language Mass⁹.

In providing a Spanish-language Mass, a pastor acknowledges the importance of offering the sacraments to its Hispanic members in the language of their prayer life. In addition to recognizing the importance of preserving the Hispanic spirituality among its members. Other benchmarks which signal movement into or between tiers may include:

- Awareness of the growing Hispanic presence in the area (Emerging presence)
- Recognizing the need of apostolates or ministries tending to specialized needs such as those for migrant farmworkers or the newly arrived (Emerging → Transient)
- Establishment of prayer groups/apostolates/ministries/need for Mass (Transient → Growing)
- Frequent requests for sacramental prep which may signal a stable number of families in the area (Growing → Stable)

SITUATING OUR PARISHES WITHIN THE TIERS¹⁰

Categories of Parishes with Hispanic Ministry	
Tier 1: Stable Communities <i>Note: these are predominantly urban parishes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Cross Parish (KCMO) • St. Anthony Parish (KCMO) • Our Lady of Peace Parish (KCMO) • Sacred Heart-Guadalupe Parish (KCMO) • St. Patrick Parish (St. Joe)
Tier 2: Growing Communities <i>Note: these are mostly suburban parishes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Sabina Parish (Belton) • Our Lady of the Presentation Parish (Lee's Summit) • St. John Francis Regis Parish – (South KCMO)
Tier 3: Transient Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Mark Parish (Independence)
Tier 4: Emerging Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Charles Borromeo • St. Matthew Parish – ESL and prayer group (South KCMO)¹¹ • St. James – prayer group (Liberty) • Holy Family Parish – Prayer group (Gladstone) • St. Gabriel Parish -monthly (North KCMO)

⁹ Aguilera-Titus, A. (2007). *8 Ways to Welcome Hispanics in Your Parish*. Liguori Publications, Pg. 7.

¹⁰ Hispanics/Latinos live in all 27 counties which the diocese represents. This grouping is not an exhaustive listing of all parishes with a Hispanic presence. Therefore it would be incorrect to assume this chart represents the entirety of the Hispanic reality in our diocese.

¹¹ Parish Closed November 2020

OUR MINISTRY APPROACH

As discussed, it is important to know where to situate a parish along the Tiers of Hispanic Growth. The chart below shows ways in which the Office of Hispanic Ministry approaches working within the different tiers.¹²

Pillar	Tier I - Stable	Tier II - Growing	Tier III - Transient	Tier IV - Emerging
Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USCCB NCCHM NACCDHM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent parish at diocesan events and meetings. Introduce lay leaders to community organizations or associations, partner with pastors for particular social outreach. Work on the regional and national level to ensure proper representation of diocesan needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent parish at diocesan events and meetings. Introduce lay leaders to community organizations or associations, partner with pastors for particular social outreach. Work on the regional and national level to ensure proper representation of diocesan needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with pastor periodically to monitor community growth. Introduce key Hispanic leadership to community organizations or associations. <p><i>Is it time to advocate for a bilingual pastor?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with pastor periodically to monitor community growth. Meet with Hispanic lay leaders to understand needs. Encourage at least one bilingual personnel. Help pastor, parish council and pastoral teams to understand how to welcome Hispanics into their parish. Let other diocesan offices know of emerging comm.
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mattie Rhodes El Centro AIRR Bishop Sullivan NFP Pastoral Juvenil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with pastors and budget for resources which speak to their needs. Pilot new ministries in these particular parishes. Work with lay leaders to understand specific needs. Meet with community organizations/associations to keep updated on their services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with pastors and encourage them to budget for growth (pastoral juvenil, familiar etc.) Offer to pilot new ministries Meet with key Hispanic leadership to understand their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help in identifying local community partners. <p><i>Are sacraments available in Spanish? Will they need migrant farmworker support? What resources are available in their area?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Pastor is aware of the resources we provide. Advise the parish council and pastor about identifying potential Hispanic leadership in parish.
Coordination & Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCC Cursillo Agrupación de Esposas Cristianas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source volunteers for ministries. Consult with pastors on ways to collaborate specific to their parish. Identify ecclesial movement leaders for collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Hispanic leadership to explore ecclesial movements Encourage collaboration between parishes to share resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If pastor is willing, work with him to develop growth plan. Ensure key Hispanic leadership network with other parish leaders around the diocese. Help them discover ecclesial movements. <p><i>Has a Hispanic pastoral team been formed? Are there bilingual resources, including staff?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If pastor is willing, bring an event or Mass during a special holiday to the parish. Work with Spanish-speaking priest to find celebrant. Find opportunities to bring sacraments in Spanish.
Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franciscan at Home USCCB CSI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of diocesan formation tools Formation for ecclesial movement leaders, provide/offer opportunities for continuous formation Work with vocations director to host Come and See events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of diocesan formation tools Work with pastor and Hispanic leaders to explore formation needs Encourage development of bible studies, prayer groups etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrant farmworkers may have specific formation needs due to their work schedules. Consider One-day formation opportunitie. <p><i>Do they have access to the internet? Is there a roster of available priests for specific events? Are there any deacons willing to offer formation?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Hispanic leadership to any formation opportunities. Look for opportunities to promote. <p><i>Are there any Hispanic leaders, including deacons, willing to do bible studies or other formation at these parishes?</i></p>

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH IS HISPANIC

Hispanics live and worship in all 27 counties represented by our Diocese. This means there are Hispanics, whether bilingual or monolingual in either English or Spanish, generational or newly arrived, who attend each of our parishes. Anecdotally, we know of small groupings whether one family or two who will attend an English-language service because there are no other options in their area. Their presence is small and silent, but undeniably *there*. There is not ONE PARISH within our diocese who can claim *not*

¹² Please see Appendix B for larger chart

to have a Hispanic presence. What we are trying to determine here is 1) where the community tends to worship in significant numbers, 2) where they are dispersed as they arrive, and/or 3) where they tend to settle as they grow and stabilize. The implication, therefore, is the reality of the Hispanic presence in our diocese is more complicated and far-reaching than the number of parishes we are able to categorize along the Tiers.

The diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry, as well as its director, acknowledges that a continual assessment of the Tiers, their definition, our parish realities, and the movements of growth within the Hispanic community are necessary to ensure this information is current and reflects what is happening in the diocese. What is certain is that “The U.S. Hispanic population reached 62.1 million in 2020, an increase of 23% over the previous decade that outpaced the nation’s 7% overall population growth.¹³” This in addition to the population dispersion of Hispanics¹⁴ which would indicate we can expect to see continual growth in our diocese. We must be in a perpetual state of welcome toward our Hispanic brothers and sisters lest we lose the “gifts and potential”¹⁵ of this community to other denominations, or worse, the so-called “nones.”¹⁶ If we fail to minister to the Hispanics among us, then we fail in Our Lord’s mandate to “*make disciples of all nations.*” (Matt 28:19)

Hispanics are not just a growing population, but an enduring one. According to a poll by the Public Religion Research Institute, “[t]he Catholic Church is experiencing an ethnic transformation. Twenty-five years ago, nearly nine in ten (87%) Catholics were white, non-Hispanic, compared to 55% today. Fewer than four in ten (36%) Catholics under the age of 30 are white, non-Hispanic; 52% are Hispanic.”¹⁷

Quite simply this suggests that Hispanic Catholics are “poised to make even more gains” due to their larger family sizes, and younger demographics¹⁸. What begins as outliers of one or two families here and there can, and as the numbers show, will become stable communities over time. This is a great gift to our Church in the Midwest to be sure, but it is a gift that will require proper nurture and discipling in order to flourish.

¹³ Passel, J. S., Lopez, M. H., & Cohn, D. (2022, February 3). *U.S. Hispanic population continued its geographic spread in the 2010s*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/u-s-hispanic-population-continued-its-geographic-spread-in-the-2010s/>

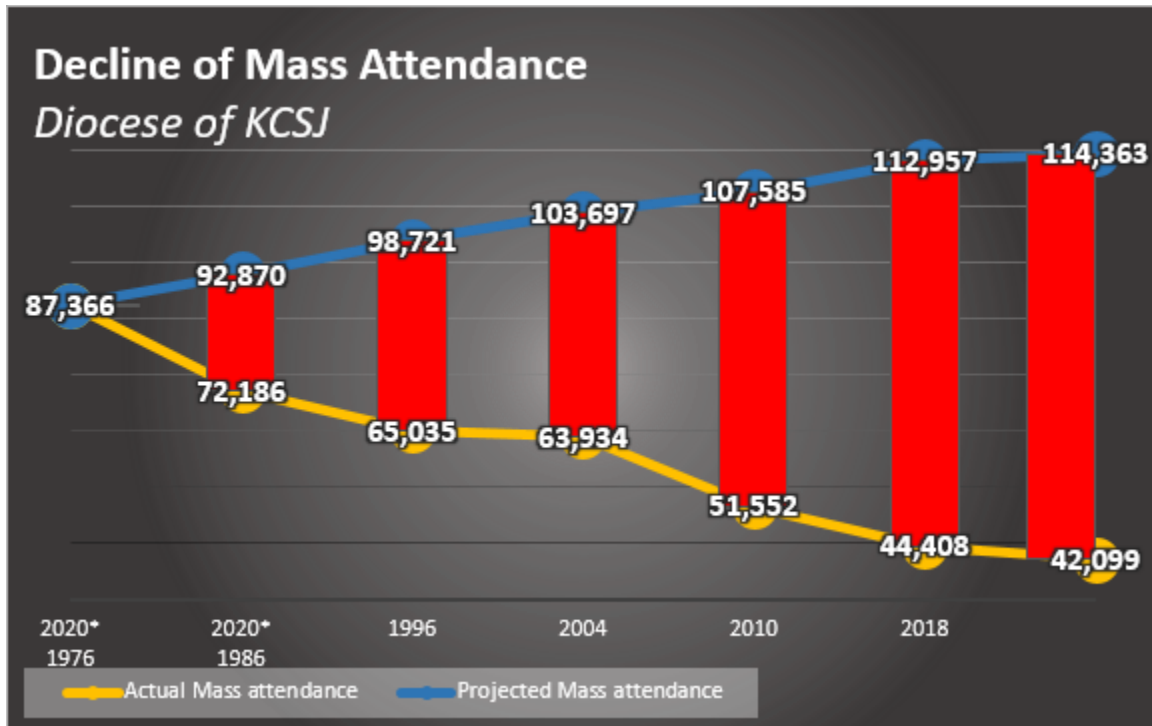
¹⁴ *Hispanic Population Growth and Dispersion Across U.S. Counties, 1980–2020*. (2022, February 3). Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/hispanic-population-by-county/>

¹⁵ E. (2016, November 30). *Pope Francis’ Message for the V Encuentro*. V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry. <https://vencuentro.org/pope-francis-message-for-the-v-encuentro/>

¹⁶ *The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States*. (2022, April 13). Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2014/05/07/the-shifting-religious-identity-of-latinos-in-the-united-states/>

¹⁷ PRRI. (2021, October 14). *America’s Changing Religious Identity*. <https://www.prii.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian-religiously-unaffiliated/>

¹⁸ *Ibid.*



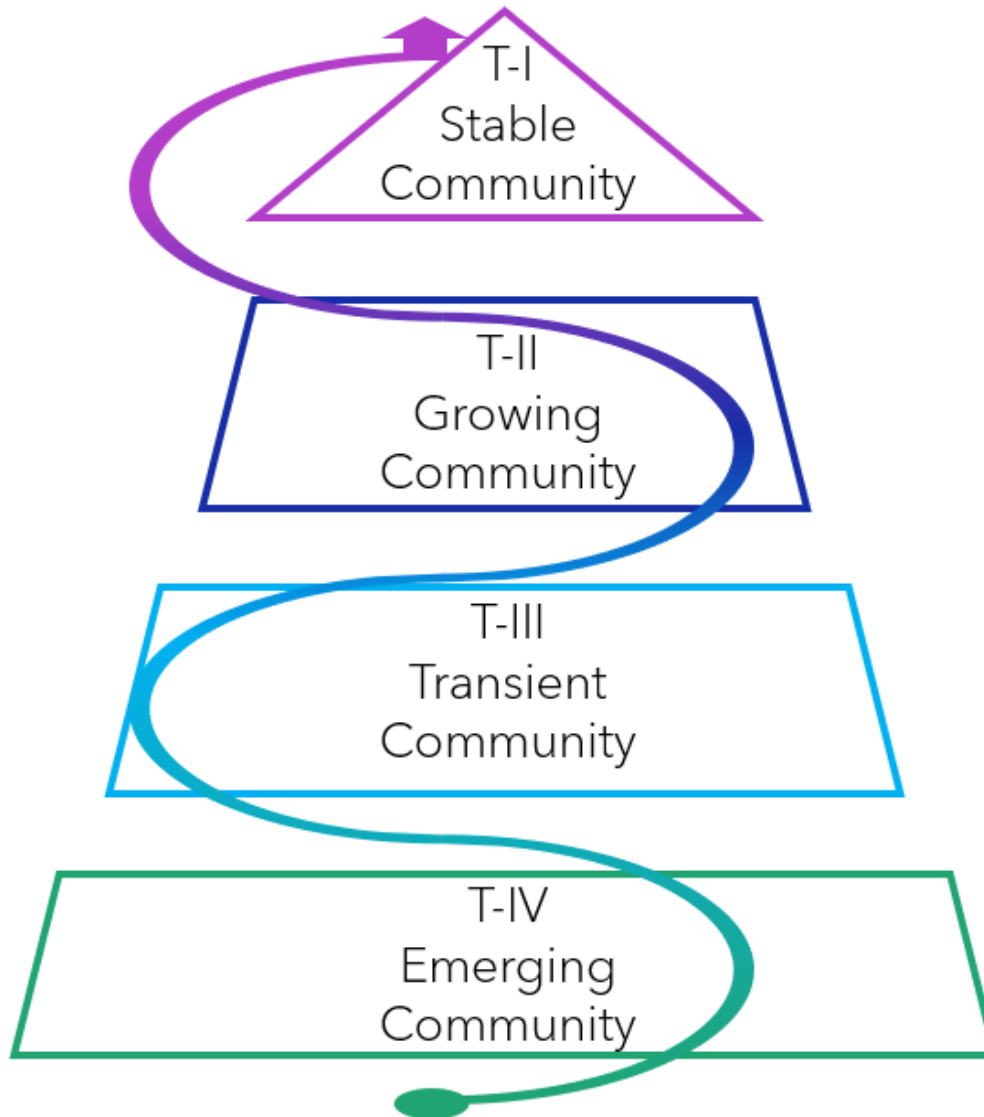
¹⁹ Mass attendance from 1976 through 2020. Numbers derived from Spirituality Reports provided by all diocesan parishes which indicate actual Mass attendance. Blue line depicts expected Mass attendance based on simple population growth. Yellow line indicates actual Mass attendance despite population growth. Even as the overall population grew in the diocese, the number of Catholics attending Mass declined. By 2020 despite a projection of 114,363 Catholics attending Mass, we are at only 42,099—half of the numbers in 1976.

APPENDIX B – OUR MINISTRY APPROACH

Pillar	Tier I – Stable	← Tier II – Growing	← Tier III – Transient	← Tier IV - Emerging
<p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCCB • NCCHM • NACCDHM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent parish at diocesan events and meetings. • Introduce lay leaders to community organizations or associations, partner with pastors for particular social outreach. • Work on the regional and national level to ensure proper representation of diocesan needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent parish at diocesan events and meetings. • Introduce lay leaders to community organizations or associations, partner with pastors for particular social outreach. • Work on the regional and national level to ensure proper representation of diocesan needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with pastor periodically to monitor community growth. • Introduce key Hispanic leadership to community organizations or associations. <p><i>Is it time to advocate for a bilingual pastor?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with pastor periodically to monitor community growth. • Meet with Hispanic lay leaders to understand needs. • Encourage at least one bilingual personnel. • Help pastor, parish council and pastoral teams to understand how to welcome Hispanics into their parish. • Let other diocesan offices know of emerging comm.
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattie Rhodes • El Centro • AIRR • Bishop Sullivan • NFP • Pastoral Juvenil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with pastors and budget for resources which speak to their needs. • Pilot new ministries in these particular parishes. • Work with lay leaders to understand specific needs. • Meet with community organizations/associations to keep updated on their services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with pastors and encourage them to budget for growth (pastoral juvenil, familiar etc.) • Offer to pilot new ministries • Meet with key Hispanic leadership to understand their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help in identifying local community partners. <p><i>Are sacraments available in Spanish? Will they need migrant farmworker support? What resources are available in their area?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Pastor is aware of the resources we provide. • Advise the parish council and pastor about identifying potential Hispanic leadership in parish.

APPENDIX B – OUR MINISTRY APPROACH

Pillar	Tier I – Stable	← Tier II – Growing	← Tier III – Transient	← Tier IV - Emerging
<p>Coordination & Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCC Cursillo Agrupación de Esposas Cristianas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source volunteers for ministries. Consult with pastors on ways to collaborate specific to their parish. Identify ecclesial movement leaders for collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Hispanic leadership to explore ecclesial movements Encourage collaboration between parishes to share resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If pastor is willing, work with him to develop growth plan. Ensure key Hispanic leadership network with other parish leaders around the diocese. Help them discover ecclesial movements. <p><i>Has a Hispanic pastoral team been formed? Are there bilingual resources, including staff?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If pastor is willing, bring an event or Mass during a special holiday to the parish. Work with Spanish-speaking priest to find celebrant. Find opportunities to bring sacraments in Spanish.
<p>Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franciscan at Home USCCB CSI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of diocesan formation tools Formation for ecclesial movement leaders, provide/offer opportunities for continuous formation Work with vocations director to host Come and See events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of diocesan formation tools Work with pastor and Hispanic leaders to explore formation needs Encourage development of bible studies, prayer groups etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrant farmworkers may have specific formation needs due to their work schedules. Consider One-day formation opportunities. <p><i>Do they have access to the internet? Is there a roster of available priests for specific events? Are there any deacons willing to offer formation?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Hispanic leadership to any formation opportunities. Look for opportunities to promote. <p><i>Are there any Hispanic leaders, including deacons, willing to do bible studies or other formation at these parishes?</i></p>



Tier I

This tier is best defined by a parish community that has stabilized over many years. It exists within a predominantly Hispanic context.

Tier II

This tier is best defined by a parish community that exhibits a trend toward stability. It exists within a growing Hispanic context.

Tier III

This tier is best defined as a parish community that has achieved the critical population numbers to warrant one fixed Sunday Spanish-language Mass and may even have some additional ministry offerings. It exists within a predominantly non-Hispanic context.

Tier IV

This tier is best defined as a new community that may not yet have the critical population numbers or enough stability to enable a fixed Sunday Spanish-language Mass. It exists within a predominantly non-Hispanic context.

