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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE

July 20, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Inspired by the love and faith of our growing Hispanic community, I wish to call upon the assistance of the vibrant Hispanic communities in our diocese to assist with the renewal of our Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry.

On December 12, 1998, our first diocesan plan for Hispanic Ministry was promulgated. At that time, we had only a few small Hispanic communities. But the pastoral reality has changed significantly in the almost 22 years since that first plan was developed. Today, we have growing Hispanic communities in 29 of our 51 parishes. Our goal in renewing this plan, then, is to continue to build on past successes and to further strengthen our collaborative approach to ministering to the pastoral needs of our Hispanic brothers and sisters who represent such a beautiful part of our Catholic community in East Tennessee.

As such, I ask our pastors, clergy, religious and lay leaders to assist the Office of Hispanic Ministry with their timeline for renewing our pastoral plan, to include our ongoing efforts with the V Encuentro.

I am very grateful for the wonderful work of our diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry and the training and workshops they put together with the assistance of the *South East Pastoral Institute* (SEPI) who have organized two training workshops on the methodology that will be used during this process of renewal.

Please join me in prayerfully entrusting all of our efforts to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary whom we invoke under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. God bless you all and all you do!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Richard F. Stika  
Bishop of Knoxville