

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one can go to you unless the Father calls him or her. Through this process of the V Encuentro, cleanse us with your life-giving water from all the dust gathered on the paths we have traveled and free us from all forms of slavery and guilt.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, who in your passion experienced thirst, free those who in their thirst drank water from false wells, and return them to your fold through the missionary action of your faithful.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one took your life from you because you surrendered it freely. We want to drink from your open side and take that living water to our sisters and brothers who remain in the periphery, and to those whose strength is spent in the ways of the world.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

LEADER

We praise you, Father, who give water to your Church to make the fields of your Reign fruitful. We thank you for making us one in Christ through Baptism and renewing the opportunities for us to return to true life. Lord, send your life-giving waters to our homes, where you call us to be missionaries so that the seeds we plant in your name may grow into an abundant harvest in our children, our families, our communities, and in all of creation. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Song: *Llamados al Encuentro* (Santiago Fernández) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

Instructions to get involved



Choose one person of the group with whom to go in missionary action in pairs.



Decide where you will go to get involved. It is recommended for the different pairs in the group to go to different places: a square, a store, a park, a detention center, a cafeteria, a place of work, etc.



Once you are in the place of mission, you can initiate the dialogue in a spontaneous way, or by introducing yourselves and asking for permission to converse. At the end of the dialogue, offer a sign of peace (e.g., a word, a gesture) to the person or persons with whom you spoke. You can give to one of them a V Encuentro wristband. When you get home, write down the most important ideas from the conversation in the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is most important in your life?
- What are your concerns?
- What makes you happy?
- What are your dreams?
- What obstacles prevent you from achieving them?
- What are you most certain about?
- What do you expect from God?
- What do you expect from the Catholic Church?
- What do you offer to others, to society?

SESSION 3

Walking Together with Jesus



OREGON CATHOLIC PRESS

OBJECTIVES

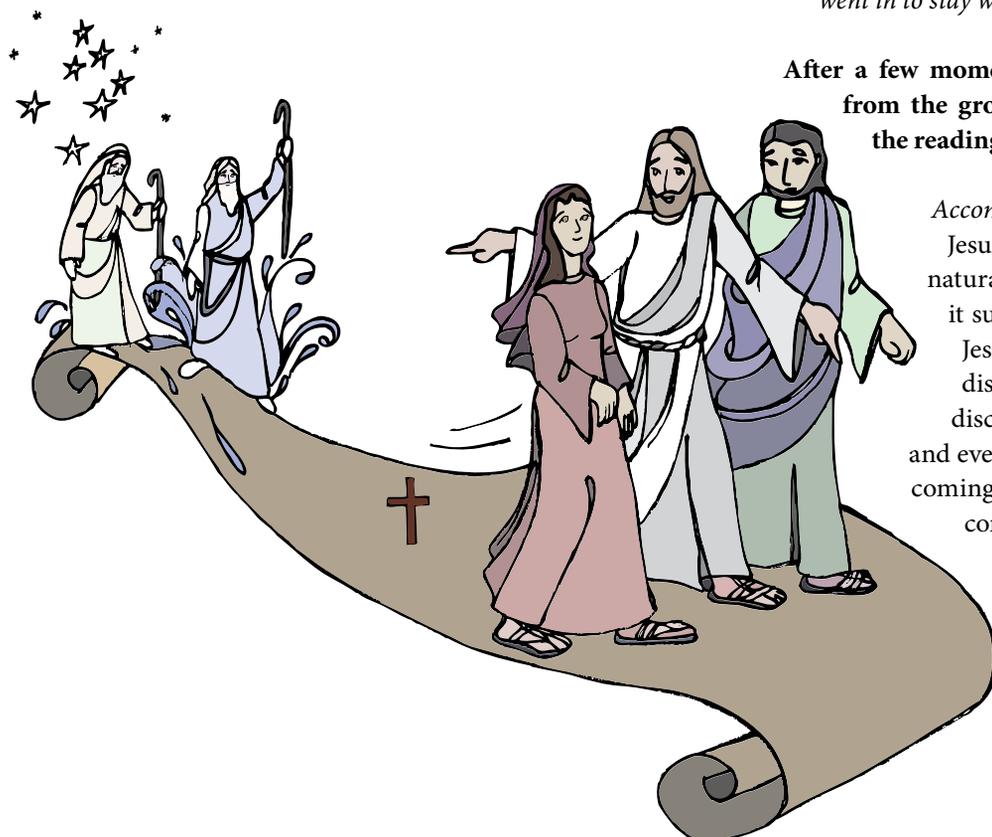
- Share about the missionary experience following the previous session, including the results of the consultation.
- Use the Scriptures to interpret life and inspire hope.
- Learn more about the spirituality of accompaniment.
- Prepare for missionary action with emphasis on the kerygma.

SYMBOLS

Bible and V Encuentro Wristband

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before starting the session, prepare the place where the small group will meet. Arrange the chairs in a circle and place the image of a path in the center. On a table, place a copy of the Bible, the Word of Life that gives meaning to our lives. Prepare a small basket with the bracelets of the V Encuentro, which are signs of our journeying in friendship with Jesus and those who walk together with us in life. Each participant will receive a bracelet during the prayer at the end of the session.



PRAYER

 **Song:** *Un Pueblo que Camina* (Emilio Vicente Matéu) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

This third session of the process of the V Encuentro goes deeper into the meaning of Christian accompaniment. It emphasizes the importance of walking with Jesus to feel his friendship, listen to his word, and understand our lives in light of his promises of full and eternal life. Walking with Jesus leads us to say to him at the end of the journey: “Stay with us.”

The session starts with the following reading from the Scriptures:

And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. (Luke 24:25-29)

After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

Accompanying, walking together with Jesus . . . Jesus’ action in this passage seems quite natural for a teacher: he teaches. What makes it surprising is the way he chooses to teach. Jesus does not start the conversation with his disciples by teaching them. Most likely, the disciples would have felt very uncomfortable and even annoyed by the intrusion of a stranger coming to teach them at a time of sorrow and confusion. That is why Jesus first asks and listens to what the disciples have to say about their own reality, about their way of interpreting the events, which allows them to unburden their hearts and minds on the stranger who joined them along the way. This unburdening makes it

possible for the disciples to be ready to listen to what the stranger has to say, since the stranger has listened to them. There is no doubt that Jesus' listening attitude helps to create a bond of trust with the disciples. This trust will be evident later, when the disciples decide to invite the stranger to stay with them in order to continue the conversation.

Jesus chooses the most appropriate moment to share with the disciples a very different interpretation of what happened in Jerusalem in the past few days. He also chooses a kind, yet direct way to bring the disciples out of their obsession and pain when he says: "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer those things and enter into his glory?" And he proceeds to interpret what the Scriptures said about him, starting with Moses and continuing with all the prophets.

The power of the Word and its interpretation from the perspective of the promise of the Resurrection gradually restores the hope of the disciples as they walk. It prepares them to recognize the Risen Jesus in the stranger that accompanies them and speaks to them. When the disciples arrive at the place where they will stay, Jesus gestures as if he would continue along his way, but the disciples tell him that it is getting late and invite him to stay with them. This gesture by Jesus, giving the impression of continuing on his way, shows that the stranger does not want to impose himself on the disciples or force them to continue the conversation. Jesus gives them the opportunity to continue the dialogue or say goodbye. The disciples take the initiative to continue in the company of the stranger, and they invite him in with the beautiful words: "Stay with us." This gesture by the disciples of concern for a stranger after a long and difficult day is welcomed by Jesus. Jesus accepts the invitation to remain with them, and in this way he prepares the stage for a moment of closeness and trust at the table.

With his way of teaching, Jesus models for us the importance of communicating with gestures and messages that awaken hope. This implies expressing a deep respect for the people we meet along our way, since they are also on a personal journey of faith. At the same time, it is our turn to share God's Word and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the

Church so they can understand, see, and feel their reality from the perspective of faith in the Risen Christ and the promises of his Reign of justice, love, and truth.

SEE

The facilitator invites the participants to get ready to share in light of their own experience and to listen with an attentive heart.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that while a person is sharing his or her experience the other one is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

Let us consider some moments in our lives when we have felt accompanied by someone. Let us also think of some words from the Bible that give us hope and have helped us to understand a difficult moment in our life in a different way.



PATRICIA JIMÉNEZ

Share an experience when someone welcomed you generously in his or her home or family. How did you feel being welcomed and accompanied? What changes did that person or family make in their own lives to welcome you? What words from the Bible have helped you during difficult times in your life?

At the same time, we know that there are many people around us who are alone and who are frequently rejected because of their social status, the color of their skin, cultural differences, or their migratory status. Have you ever felt rejected? How deep was the wound of that rejection? How did God become present at that moment?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

In the past fifty years, several initiatives to pastorally accompany the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States took place:

After the III National Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry (1985), Hispanic ministry was established in a significant number of parishes nationwide. Many diocesan offices were created to support Hispanic ministry. These offices increased the efforts of those that had been established years before and facilitated the rise of national organizations of Hispanic ministry. In 1988, a group of Hispanic theologians established the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), which fosters reflection on the central convictions of the Christian faith in the light of what it means to be a U.S. Hispanic Catholic. In 1991, the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry was created (NCCHM) as an organization to gather and support multiple national ministerial organizations working with Hispanic Catholics. In 1992, the National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry (NACDDHM) was created. In 1997, the *National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La RED)* was established to support processes of ministerial accompaniment of Hispanic Catholic youths and young adults, who today constitute the majority of U.S. Catholics younger than 25. Along these efforts, organizations of Hispanic priests, deacons, religious women and men, catechists, and pastoral institutes were renewed. And the increasing impact of various ecclesial movements such as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo de Cristiandad, and the Christian Family Movement, among others, inspired a new wave of creativity and pastoral service in the Church of the United States. Such growth has made it possible for the work of thousands upon thousands of pastoral leaders in parishes, dioceses, and movements to have increasing impact. In recent years, other national ministerial organizations have begun adapting their structures to better serve and accompany Hispanic Catholics.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Do you know about a ministry or a group in your faith community that was created to specifically accompany Hispanic Catholics in your parish? Share a few details about its origin and what it does.
- What type of ministries or initiatives would you like to see arise from the process of the V Encuentro in order to better accompany Hispanics in your parish and in the diocese?



JOSÉ LÓPEZ, HISPANIC YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DIOCESE OF STOCKTON

JUDGE

One of the deepest convictions we hold as Christians is that God accompanies us. God walks with us every day, in joyful moments and in difficult ones. It is possible to imagine, as many people do, that God created the world and left it to its own devices. When we experience suffering, violence, difficulties, rejection, abandonment, misunderstanding, and even the harsh reality of death, it is tempting to think that God is not with us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, however, clearly revealed to us that it is especially during those difficult moments that God is with us. God does not abandon the poor, the immigrant, the sick, the imprisoned, the person who feels lonely, nor does he abandon one who struggles with serious sin. God accompanies us with the power of the Word, sustaining us. God accompanies us in the sacraments, strengthening us with his divine grace. And it is in the Eucharist most of all that we discover that the Lord is with us, closer than anyone else could be. In the sacrament of Reconciliation we are truly forgiven by God.



CATHOLIC EXTENSION

Among the most tender experiences through which we experience God's accompaniment is in our relationship with Mary. She said yes to God, and the Word became flesh in her. Now Mary accompanies us as the first missionary disciple, inviting us to say yes as she did one day in Nazareth. At the time of the conquest, when the European and the indigenous cultures met on the American continent, division and violence were everywhere. Many people were suffering. Mary, in her avocations of Our Lady of Guadalupe, became part of this history with her apparitions as a mestizo woman affirming the dignity of the people who suffered. Mary of Guadalupe became a sign of hope and unity. Today, the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the strongest popular devotions among Catholics in the United States.

In the apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis offers Mary to us as a model of accompaniment: "Mary is able to recognize the traces of God's Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town 'with haste' (Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization" (n. 288).

At this historical juncture we are invited to reach out like Mary, to set out in haste to be with others and accompany them. In a special way, we are invited to set out in haste to be with the many Hispanic young people who are drifting away from the Church and who, for many reasons, need someone to listen to them and give them witness of the tender love of God. We are invited to set out in haste to be with the families, Hispanic and non-Hispanic, who are bringing new hope to thousands of Catholic communities throughout the country. A Church that reaches out in the United States is a Church that accompanies the Hispanic family. In the words of Pope Francis, the Church "wishes, with humility and compassion, to reach out to families and 'to help each family to discover the best way to overcome any obstacles it encounters'" (*Amoris Laetitia*, n. 200).

A missionary disciple who accompanies others must follow the examples of Jesus and Mary. He or she must be able to discern the presence of God in ordinary life, make the decision to go out to the peripheries, walk with others, in the style of Jesus, act with justice and tenderness, and reach out to others.

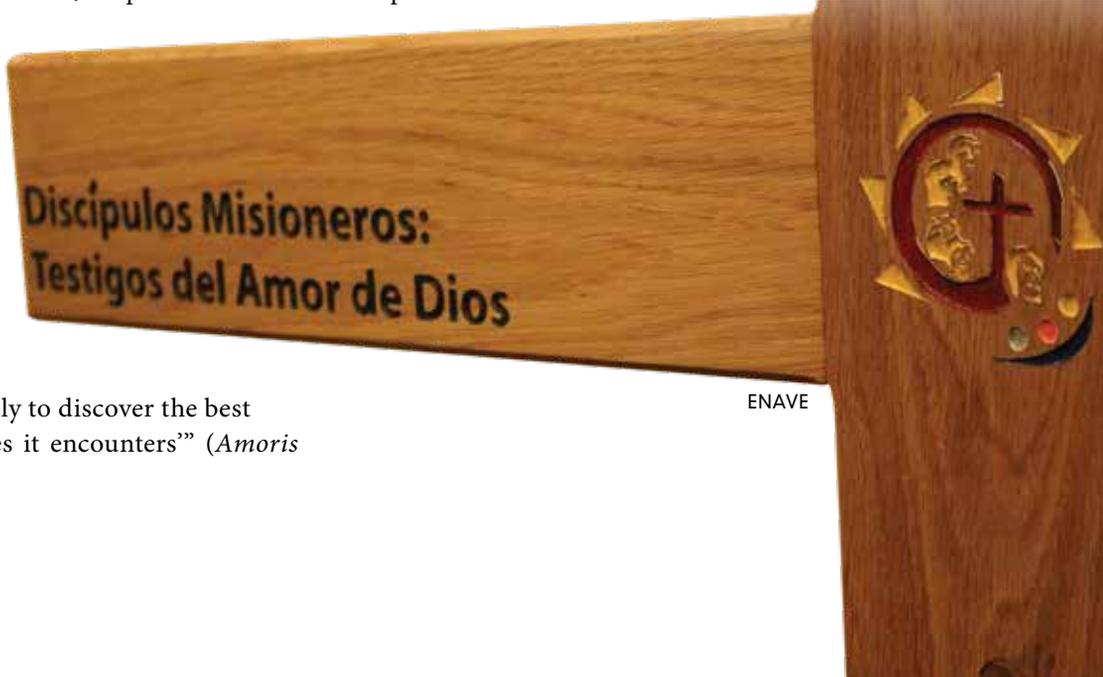
ACT

Accompanying all

The passage of Luke at the beginning of this session portrays in detail the meaning of accompaniment and the pastoral sensitivity we must have to propose to others the novelty of the Gospel, without distinction of races or cultures. There are many places and many areas of ministry demanding this special accompaniment, as is the case of ministry with young people and families.

There is no doubt that many times the Hispanic community has been accompanied, as it gradually was integrated more fully into the life of the Church and U.S. society. Part of our action should be investing in the special areas of ministry. It could be tempting, however, to think that the ministry of Latinos is only for Latinos, and particularly immigrants. Such would be a very limited action.

When the apostles began to preach the Good News, they first focused on the Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They, however, soon discovered that it was necessary to open up the tent. The Acts of the Apostles (10:22-27) tells us the story of the centurion Cornelius, who was not a Jew, but received the Holy Spirit, accepted Jesus Christ, and was baptized together with his entire family. By accompanying them in this very important process, Peter makes it possible for Cornelius



ENAVE

and his family to now belong to the Church. Humanity is represented by Cornelius.

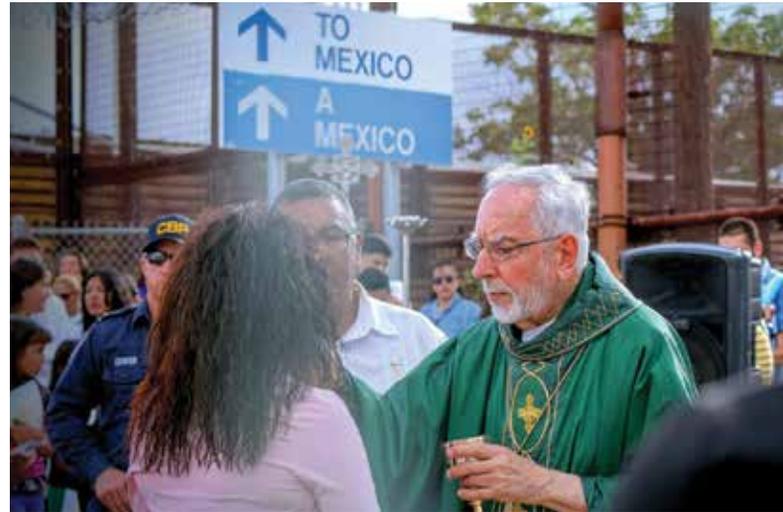
- How important is it for us to share the Gospel with people who are not like us, who do not speak our language nor share our cultural traditions? Is it possible that our pastoral activity may have become self-referential?

The mission of the Church is to preach the Good News to all. And, as St Paul reminds us, in order to hear the Good News, someone has to announce and preach it. Hispanic ministry as an integral ministry in the Church is an experience of evangelization that starts with Hispanic Catholics, yet is not limited to this population. Our Church is increasingly diverse with a great number of cultural families that want to listen to the Gospel. Therefore, all pastoral agents have the responsibility to accompany Hispanic Catholics in the best possible way so they become authentic missionary disciples of the Lord. At the same time, Hispanic Catholics have the responsibility to accompany the rest of the Catholic population in the United States, both in our faith communities and in the peripheries, so that they can also become missionary disciples of the Lord.

- What type of Hispanic ministry is needed in the midst of today's culturally diverse context in the Church? What type of change (or pastoral conversion) needs to happen so that we, as a Church, may accompany Hispanic Catholics more fully in their faith experience?

In the process of evangelization, accompaniment means the proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus and the fulfillment of his promises. The Word of God helps us to understand our own history as part of the History of Salvation and it fills us with joy and hope.

In our daily life. . . . Let us go back to that young person we identified in our families at the end of the previous session. Let us approach him or her with the desire to accompany him or her. Share with that person something about your own experience. How has God accompanied you in your own life? What biblical passages have inspired you to live with hope and joy? Invite this young person to reflect on the difference it makes to be in relationship with the Lord Jesus. Ask him or her if they want their faith to grow or have any questions about the Church, and what passages from the Bible inspire them and give them hope. Sometimes we



DIOCESE OF TUCSON

encounter persons and even entire families that have never even heard the announcement that this Jesus who was crucified is risen from the dead, and offers us forgiveness, peace, and new hope. As Pope Francis reminds us, when we accompany others in their struggles, at an appropriate moment the Spirit will prompt us to share with them this Gospel announcement. We should not be afraid to do this (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 164)

In our community. . . . let us go back to those young people we identified at the end of the previous session in the neighborhood, the workplace, or in our faith community. Let us approach them with the desire to accompany them and share how God accompanies us in our own lives. Share with them a passage or teaching of the Bible that encourages us and gives us hope. Identify a family that is in need of hearing the Good News and to be encouraged on their journey. Look for a way to dialogue with that family, knowing it a little better, share with them the Word of God, and pray with and for them. Speak to them also about your experience in this process of the V Encuentro. Invite them to reflect on the difference it makes to come into relationship with the Lord Jesus. Ask them whether they have questions about the faith or the Church. Invite them to ask.

In the periphery. . . . go back to the place in the periphery that you visited last time and enter into conversation with the young people you identified last week. See if there is a possibility to meet their families and visit them with a message of welcome and hope. Follow the same model of dialogue and accompaniment suggested for the previous missionary action.

CELEBRATE

The Word of God is faithful

 **Song:** *Oración de San Francisco* (Sebastian Temple) or *Instrumento de Tu Paz* (Koren Ruiz)

[The group gathers and prepares to receive the Word of God. Several candles are lit, and there are flowers].

LEADER 1

The Word of God comes to us, and to our community, meeting us where we are, in order to lead us to the Lord. This is why we are a pilgrim people, being led by the Word. This message is the same that the Patriarchs, kings, and prophets heard in old times. This message was heard by the early Christians, the desert fathers, the holy men and women of our Church. This message was known by our grandmothers and grandfathers who taught us how to pray. The same message was heard by the pioneers of Hispanic ministry in the United States of America. The leaders who started these ministries also strived to be faithful to this Word.

LEADER 2

Let's consider what the Gospel contains
(Different voices)

- The Good News of our salvation
- The stories of how Jesus lived doing good to all
- The testimony of those who saw and touched the Word of Life
- Nourishment, a lamp to guide our feet
- Safe pathway
- Purification, healing, and renewal
- Spirit and life, words of eternal life

LEADER 2

This message comes to us today surrounded by light, brought in with joy and an outpouring of refreshing water. Let us welcome the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ!

[Participants welcome a procession with the Bible. The person carrying the Book lifts it up.]

I invite you to receive the Word of God. Honor it. With incense, let us lift up our prayer that the V Encuentro may allow us to grow as disciples who listen to the Good News.

[Song. The procession enters slowly with lights, incense (when possible), flowers, and the Bible, which is placed open on a small table prepared in advance.]

LEADER 2

Sisters and brothers, we walk as part of the V Encuentro journey with the conviction that a light will guide us on our way. This Word has remained always faithful. It is not “yes” today and “no” tomorrow. It is the true Word that brings consolation and hope, a flame that purifies and consumes.

Come forward asking for the grace to be faithful. Let us kiss this holy book with devotion and take the bracelet that will remind us of God's faithfulness. Let us be encouraged to participate in God's own mission as we bring the Good News to our sisters and brothers.

[All come forward singing, kiss the Bible, and take two wristbands, one for themselves and one for the family they want to reach out to.]

CLOSING PRAYER

God of life and wisdom, you are always faithful to your promises and bring your plans to fulfillment. Walk with us in this process of the V Encuentro so that at each step we may find your message of love and tenderness. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the living face of your mercy and has given us your Holy Spirit to keep us faithful to you, and lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.

 **Song:** *Salgamos a Llevar el Evangelio* (Santiago Fernández) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

1

Invite one person from your group to join you in missionary action this week.

2

Decide which family living in the periphery you plan to visit.

3

Start the dialogue by introducing yourselves, offering a greeting of welcome and peace, and identifying the parish, ecclesial movement, or Catholic organization to which you belong.

4

Get to know the family a little better by using last week's questions proposed for the missionary action to get involved.

5

Share your testimony of how God accompanies you in your own life. Use examples from the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*, based on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God.

6

Give witness of how God accompanies you in your life:

- At the time of contemplating the Mystery of God... **Wisdom**
- At the time of understanding the teachings of the Church more clearly... **Understanding**
- At the time of distinguishing and choosing good in our daily lives... **Counsel**
- At the time when courage is needed to overcome difficulties... **Fortitude**
- At the time of knowing and caring for the created order as a gift from God... **Knowledge**
- At the time of experiencing God's presence and feeling God's infinite tenderness... **Piety**
- At the time of fearing to be separated from God and resisting evil... **Fear of God.**

7

Continue the dialogue. Invite them to share. Have they ever experienced God's presence in similar situations? At the end of your visit, pray for that family, and say goodbye, wishing them peace. When you get home, write down the most important ideas from the conversation in the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*.