

Honoring National Hispanic Heritage Month – September/October 2026

Share, Learn, and Celebrate

The **Share, Learn, and Celebrate** initiative (SLC) of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington promotes multicultural awareness, understanding and unity within the Church. It encourages our parishes, ministries, Catholic Schools and the faithful to engage in activities that highlight the richness of diverse cultural communities. To celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month please consider the SLC recommendations to honor this legacy and foster a Church that reflects the diversity of the Body of Christ.

National Hispanic Heritage Month: A Celebration of Faith, Culture, and Contribution

National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15) celebrates the cultures, traditions, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans. For the Catholic Church, it is also a sacred time to honor the deep faith and enduring legacy that Hispanic Catholics have carried with devotion, joy, and deep spiritual strength for generations.

The month begins with the independence anniversaries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, followed by Mexico on September 16 and Chile on September 18, dates that remind us not only of national freedom, but also of the spiritual freedom found in Christ. With over 31 million Hispanic Catholics—about 43% of U.S. Catholics—this community is vital to the Church's present and future. This year's theme, ***“Together, We Are More: A Synodal Church in Mission,”*** invites us to reflect on the resilience, joy, and devotion that define Hispanic Catholic identity. From Our Lady of Guadalupe to saints like Óscar Romero and St. Rose of Lima, Hispanic spirituality has deeply enriched the Church.

Let us celebrate with gratitude and purpose by honoring the stories, devotions, and saints of Hispanic heritage. This is a time to uplift the voices and traditions that enrich our faith and to recommit to a Spirit-filled, inclusive Church. We recognize the lasting impact of those with roots in Spain, Latin America, and the Caribbean—whose contributions have shaped history and strengthened the Catholic Church in the United States. Together, we learn, share, and celebrate a vibrant legacy.

Archdiocesan Level Activities and Resources

Share

Resources have been curated to support parishes and schools in the celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month. The Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach ([OCDO](#)) can assist in providing the resources described in this document. Please contact culturaldiversity@adw.org for more information.

Learn

As the Archdiocese celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month, it is important to recognize the vital role of Hispanic Americans in sustaining and enriching the Catholic community across the United States. We are excited to share the recently unveiled National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. As we delve into this resource, we discover a comprehensive roadmap that supports our Catholic communities and provides essential guidance for pastoral ministers and educators. This multifaceted plan addresses critical aspects of Hispanic/Latino ministry, including strategic approaches, prioritization at diocesan, parish, and regional levels, and considerations for various pastoral contexts. Download the document (PDF) in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Please take a moment to explore the rich diversity of the Hispanic Catholic community in our archdiocesan region. You can find information in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). For a broader look at Hispanic Catholic representation in other parts of the country, click [here](#). Should you require more details about our Hispanic Ministry or the Hispanic Catholic population in our region, please feel free to contact OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org. Please visit the [ADW website](#) to find the parishes celebrating Mass in Spanish, [here](#).

Celebrate

We invite you to mark your calendar and join us for the Archdiocesan [National Hispanic Heritage Month Mass](#) at *St. Joseph Catholic Church, 11007 Montgomery Rd, Beltsville, MD 20705, on Sunday, September 20, 2026, at 12:15 p.m.* Click on the following to download the fliers: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Parish Level Recommendations

Share Invite parishioners with Hispanic backgrounds to tell stories of their connections to the church. This is an opportunity to learn about one another, how Catholicism has shaped one another, and how culture and actions have contributed to the faith and that of our families. These dialogues can build community in the parish.

Learn Catholicism has been greatly affected by the social and cultural influence of Hispanic Heritage. Host a seminar at your parish to discuss the history, diversity, and complexity of Hispanic culture. Please contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org for resources and dialogue recommendations. We suggest creating a small book display in a high-traffic parish area featuring works by Hispanic Catholic authors—poetry, novels, theology, and spiritual reflections. Let their voices inspire deeper faith and cultural appreciation.

Celebrate Plan liturgies that celebrate the cultural expressions and devotions of Hispanic Americans within the Church and our nation. Consider hosting Masses during National Hispanic Heritage Month or organizing bilingual (English/Spanish) services specifically honor the community's faith practices and their traditions. Engage your parish intercultural committee or other ministry groups in the planning and participation of these celebrations. For liturgical resources including a [bilingual Mass guide](#), [Prayers of the Faithful](#), prayer cards, [English/Español](#), Hispanic spirituality or devotions in [English/Español](#) and other resources, contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org.

Share The Hispanic community has been blessed with multiple saints and many more are on the path to sainthood. We are joyful to have our pope, bishops, clergy, and religious as Hispanic representatives. Let us share the stories.

Our Bishops:

The Most Rev. Juan R. Esposito-Garcia, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington

Bishop Esposito is believed to be the first native of Argentina named to be a bishop in the United States. Bishop Esposito is Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia; he holds both a licentiate and doctorate in Canon Law. Click [here](#) to read more.

Our Saints:

St. Carmen Rendiles (August 11, 1903 – May 9, 1977):

St. Carmen was born in Venezuela, devoted her life to Christ through prayer, Eucharistic devotion, and service to others. Despite being born without her right arm, she founded the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus in Venezuela and remains an inspiring example of faith, humility, and trust in God. To learn more, click [here](#).

St. José Gregorio Hernández (October 26, 1864 – June 29, 1919)

St. José Gregorio Hernández was a Venezuelan physician and Secular Franciscan known as the “doctor of the poor.” He dedicated his life to serving the sick with compassion, faith, and generosity, often treating those in need without charge. His life remains a powerful witness of Christian charity and service. To learn more, see [here](#).

Saint José Sanchez Del Río (March 28, 1913 – Feb. 10, 1928)

Saint José was born in Mexico and was an adamant defender of the Catholic faith from an incredibly early age. At only 13 years old, he fought with rebel forces to preserve the Catholic faith against the Mexican government. After capture, Del Río was martyred for refusing to renounce Catholicism. To learn more, see [here](#) or a younger people visit [here](#).

Saint Martín de Porres (Dec. 9, 1579 – Nov. 3, 1639)

Saint Martín was born in Peru and is best known for his strong values of kindness, alongside his acts of charity and nursing the sick. He is the patron saint of social justice, racial harmony, and mixed-race people. To learn more, see [here](#).

Saint Óscar A. Romero (Aug. 16, 1917 – March 24, 1980)

Saint Oscar was born in El Salvador and is known for advocating for the poor and speaking out against the oppression of the Salvadoran government. He was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his actions and died as a “Martyr for the Faith.” To learn more, see [here](#).

Our Beatified:

Ana Julia Duque Heckner (Aug. 14, 1898 – July 25, 1993)

Sister Julia was born in Colombia and founded the Little Sisters of the Annunciation, along with multiple schools and nurseries that helped abandoned girls and women. She taught the poor and minorities and used her writing to further social causes. To learn more, see [here](#).

Carlos Manuel Cecilio Rodríguez Santiago (Nov. 22, 1918 – July 13, 1963)

Rodríguez was born in Puerto Rico. Also known as “Blessed Charlie,” he was a catechist and liturgist, dedicated to preserving and restoring the liturgy. Rodríguez is the first Puerto Rican layperson to be beatified. To learn more, see [here](#).

Maria Vicenta Rosal (Oct. 26, 1815 – Aug. 24, 1886)

Sister Maria was born in Guatemala and was a member of the Bethlehemite sisters. She spent her life advocating for education and protection against the machismo culture. Rosal is the first Guatemalan to be beatified. To learn more, see [here](#) (Spanish).

Learn

Those featured above are just a few examples of our history's many inspiring Hispanic Catholics. Click [here](#) to read about other Hispanic saints, beatified people, and martyrs.

Celebrate

Plan event(s) with parishioners to discuss their favorite Hispanic saints. This can be an opportunity to talk about their lives, miracles, and their impact on the Catholic Church. This activity can include screening a movie featuring historical Hispanic Catholic luminaries. Host these events at your RCIA, religious education, or parent education programs. For movie recommendations, see the resource list included in this document. or contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org for more assistance.

Share

Your parish is home to a vibrant and diverse Hispanic American community, with rich traditions worth celebrating. Consider hosting a Hispanic heritage *Fiesta* or festival, bring the community together to enjoy each other's presence highlighting the arts, music, and cuisine. Invite them to create exhibits with their Catholic traditions to further showcase their cultural influence in the community. Take the opportunity to highlight prominent Hispanic leaders, innovators, and influencers from our nation as seen [here](#).

Learn

Consider hosting a panel discussion virtually or in-person to get to know Hispanic religious who serve in our region and learn about their origins and vocations. You can find a list of religious organizations in the ADW directory by clicking [here](#) to see the women's and [here](#) for the men.

Lay movements and Catholic organizations' charisms are crucial in spreading the Gospel to our communities. If you would like to learn more about these movements, click [here](#). If you have any questions, contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org.

Celebrate

Let us celebrate this month and throughout the year by joining the *Walk with Mary*, a pilgrimage in celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe that will take place on Saturday, December 12, 2026, at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This is a special celebration for Hispanics and all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Washington. Learn more about this event click [here](#), and to discover other Catholic celebrations happening throughout the year, please visit the [ADW website](#).

Share

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington has created a commemorative 2026 National Hispanic Heritage Month prayer card for your parishioners. Download the card in [English/Español](#) or click [here](#) submit your request. You can also download the prayer card for [Migrants and Refugees](#) or click [here](#) to submit your request.

Learn

Consider sponsoring a parish field trip or encourage families to visit some of the historical and educational sites within our region. See the list below:

1. The Smithsonian [Virtual National Museum of the American Latino](#) has a collection of resources to educate on Hispanic History, feature stories of Hispanic Achievement, and advertise future events related to the education and celebration of Hispanic Heritage. - <https://latino.si.edu/>
2. The [Saint John Paul II Shrine](#), Washington, DC, depicts the travels of Saint Pope John Paul II throughout Latin America. - <https://www.jp2shrine.org/en/index.html>
3. [Mexican Cultural Institute](#), Washington D.C. - [Welcome - Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington DC/](#)
4. National Museum of American History, [Molina Family Latino Gallery](#), Washington D.C. - <https://latino.si.edu/support/molina-family-latino-gallery>
5. The [U.S. Department of the Interior](#)'s online gallery displays many historic sites of significance.
6. Hispanic Heritage.- <https://www.doi.gov/photos/discover-hispanic-heritage-these-historic-sites>

Catholic Schools and Religious Education

- Share** We invite you to share Archdiocesan Hispanic Heritage historical facts in school newsletters, announcements, and social media to promote awareness about the culture. You can find a list by clicking [here](#).
- Learn** Encourage students to learn about the Catholic traditions of Hispanic culture. Consider creating a curriculum that teaches about the origin and mysteries of the tilma/cloak with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. You can also host the Archdiocese of Washington's hand-embroidered tilma replica and organize a prayer service to contemplate Our Lady as Patroness of the Americas. This tilma is used annually for the Feast of Our Lady during the Walk with Mary festivity in December, and it is currently making rounds across the archdiocese. To make a reservation for a visit, please click [here](#).
- You can have students create their tilma through an affordable art project. For the instructions on the project, click [here](#). Moreover, invite them to join the pilgrimage and worship as we [Walk with Mary](#) on Saturday, December 12, 2026, to witness the reenactment [of Saint Juan Diego presenting the Tilma](#) to Cardinal Wilton Gregory before the Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. If you need more information, please send an email to culturaldiversity@adw.org
- Celebrate** Develop art projects for students to celebrate Hispanic Heritage and display their work throughout the school building. Consider turning this into a contest, with the winner's works published on the ADW website and in the Archdiocesan newspapers, the [Catholic Standard](#) and [El Pregonero](#). You may also host a festival featuring the art, music, and gastronomy of the nations with Hispanic heritage. For more details or recommendations, please send an email to culturaldiversity@adw.org.
- Share** Celebrate a special Mass to commemorate National Hispanic Heritage Month. Engage the parish and faculty staff, students, and parents to plan and participate in the liturgy. For resources, please contact the OCDO, and to order copies of the 2026 Hispanic Heritage Month prayer card, click the link provided [here](#).

Additional Resources

Use the curated resources below to explore and celebrate Hispanic Heritage through a Catholic lens.

- **Educational Websites**
 - o [National Hispanic Heritage Month Smithsonian resources](#)
 - o [Statistical portrait of U.S. Hispanics - Pew Research](#)
- **Hispanic Heritage Literature**
 - o [Palabra Archive at the Library of Congress](#)
- **Movies**
 - o [PBS - Documentaries and Programs to celebrate Hispanic cultures](#)
 - o Catholic Streaming options:
 - [Formed – Catholic Faith Content](#) & [YouTube](#)
 - o [List of recommended movies](#)
- **Mass Resources**
 - o [ADW Parishes celebrating Mass in Spanish](#)
 - o [Bilingual Mass Guide](#)
 - o [Prayers of the Faithful](#)
 - o [Prayer Card English/Español](#)
 - o [Prayer For Migrants and Refugees](#)
 - o [Latino Saints at the BNSIC](#)
 - o [Ecclesial Movements, New Communities and Organizations](#)

Let us celebrate Hispanic Heritage with our words and actions, forging faith communities that embody inclusion, respect, and shared values, while honoring the trailblazers who paved the way for future generations.