



**EDITORIAL**

Por Carmen M. Cervantes

Escribo después de unas magníficas vacaciones en México con mis tres hijos, mi nuera y mi yerno, cuatro nietos, mi mamá, y oportunidades de convivir con la familia extensa. El bautismo de Andrés Alejandro, el más pequeño de mis nietos, fue una experiencia muy significativa; Sarita, la más grande de ellos, una pildorita de casi seis años, leyó con gran aplomo desde el micrófono la primera petición, para que Jesús fuera siempre el mejor amigo de Andy.

Recordar esos días me lleva a dar gracias a Dios por las muchas bendiciones que son cada uno de mis hijos y nietos, al vivir el Evangelio con alegría por la vida y tenacidad ante los desafíos. También me lleva a redoblar esfuerzos para ayudar a crear en este país, ambientes comunitarios donde nuestro pueblo pueda vivir y fortalecer su fe.

Y de ese paraíso que viví por 15 días... llegué directo a la reunión de la mesa directiva del Instituto Fe y Vida: otra manera de vivir la fe. De diversas formas cada miembro expresó una vez más su compromiso con la misión del Instituto Fe y Vida. De manera especial resaltó la presentación que hizo el P. Ted Keating, SM, quien deja la mesa directiva después de seis años de servicio, cuatro de ellos como presidente.

El P. Ted enfatizó la importancia vital de la misión de Fe y Vida, no sólo con la juventud latina, sino para la Iglesia católica en este país, debido al número y proporción de la iglesia joven hispana. Nos motivó a seguir adelante con el espíritu fuerte, lleno de fe y esperanza, que nos ha llevado hasta hoy. ¡Mil gracias, Ted, por tu dirección y apoyo, y por tu disposición a continuar colaborando con el Instituto Fe y Vida en el futuro!

No cabe duda que la problemática económica, migratoria y eclesial que atraviesa el país presenta serios desafíos a la labor pastoral, tanto desde nuestra perspectiva como desde la situación que se vive en las oficinas diocesanas, las parroquias y los hogares. En este contexto; los proyectos que tenemos planeados —grandes y pequeños, antiguos y nuevos— son fuente de vida, entusiasmo y esperanza, y a ellos nos abocamos con redobrado vigor.

Gery Short, nuevo presidente de la mesa directiva, subrayó que la labor del Instituto Fe y Vida, confiada a la Divina Providencia y cimentada en un trabajo profesional sólido y arduo, es realmente una vivencia del Evangelio. Al evocar sus palabras, vino a mi memoria el Credo que articulamos al fundar el Instituto Fe y Vida como "Profetas de Esperanza", nombre dado por los jóvenes líderes que acompañábamos y formábamos en aquella época al modelo de pastoral que fuimos estructurando juntos. Lo comparto en la p. 12 invitando a los colaboradores, alumnos y amigos de Fe y Vida a renovar su compromiso profético en esta época difícil para nuestro país, nuestra iglesia y nuestro pueblo.

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# CONSTRUYENDO NUESTRA ESPERANZA

## BUILDING OUR HOPE

Invierno 2011  
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By Carmen M. Cervantes

I am writing after a wonderful vacation in Mexico with my family and extended family. The baptism of my newest grandson, Andrés Alejandro, was a very significant experience.

Bringing to mind this short time of recreation leads me to give thanks to God for each and every member of my family. They are a blessing to me in many ways, especially because I see how they live the Gospel with joy, and also because of the tenacity they show when faced with challenges. This attitude of thanksgiving impels me to reinforce my efforts in helping to foster communities where our people may share and deepen their faith.

After 15 days of living in paradise with my family, I went straight to Instituto Fe y Vida board meeting: another opportunity for living the faith. In their own way, each member of the board expressed his or her commitment to Fe y Vida's mission. Of particular relevance was the introduction of Fr. Ted Keating, SM, whose six-year term on the board—four of which he served as president—came to an end.

Fr. Ted emphasized the vital importance of Fe y Vida's mission not only among the Latino young people, but for the whole Catholic Church in this country, given the influx and proportion of the young Hispanic church. He encouraged us to keep moving forward with the same strong spirit of faith and hope that has brought us to this day. *We are deeply thankful, Ted, for your leadership and support, and also for your willingness to continue collaborating with Fe y Vida in the future!*

The present economic, immigration, and ecclesial situations in the country bring serious challenges to pastoral work in general, not only to our own, but also to dioceses, parishes and homes. Notwithstanding these circumstances, we are resolved to work twice as hard on all our projects—large and small; old and new—with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and hope.

Gery Short, the new president of our board of directors, pointed out that the mission of Fe y Vida, under the Divine Providence and built on the solid ground of professionalism and arduous work, is, in effect, a way of living out the Gospel. As I recall his words, the Creed formulated at Fe y Vida's very beginnings came to my mind. It is presented on p. 12 with the invitation to renew your own prophetic commitment during these hard times.

**Cont'd on p. 12**



# THE BIBLICAL MISSION AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS ARRIVES IN SAVANNAH

By Leonardo Monguí Casas

After traveling by air from Stockton, CA to Savannah, GA, I took the road, heading for where the training of trainers for the Biblical Mission (MBJ, Spanish acronym) was to take place. It was a seven-hour trip, almost to the Alabama border. This experience helped me to understand the meaning of being a missionary in such a large country as the United States.

It was a gathering of 30 young people from the Diocese of Savannah on the weekend of October 28 – 30, 2011 with the sole purpose of receiving the necessary training in order to bring the MBJ to the young people in their respective parishes. Some of them traveled 45 minutes to arrive at our gathering place, but for others the journey took up to seven hours. It was their vigor and enthusiasm, and desire to evangelize the younger generation that gave them the stamina to endure 10 continuous hours of daily training in an environment of companionship, aware of their own discipleship and mission which is shared by all the baptized.

Through this MBJ project launched a year ago, Instituto Fe y Vida is pervading many areas of the United States and Puerto Rico, and beyond to other countries in the American Continent, such as Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru,



Photo by Juan Carlos Gaytán

and it is becoming very clear that the endeavor we launched with the theme of the Mission—"God's Word Comes Alive in Young People"—is indeed alive. Favorable conditions are being created so that young people may see the presence of Christ in their midst through understanding the "I AM" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Hundreds and hundreds of young people in our continent are realizing that it is Christ himself who calls them to be "missionaries among their peers."

I take this opportunity to invite our priests, religious, and committed lay ministers to work together with our young people, realizing that, even at an early age, the young can also be protagonists in the New Evangelization. May the Word of God reach, through more and more channels, to the ends of the earth!

## DR. CARMEN M. CERVANTES RECEIVES SADLIER AWARD

Last October 22nd, during The National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry's (NCCHM) annual meeting, the renowned publisher William H. Sadlier, Inc. honored our executive director, Carmen María Cervantes, EdD, with their **William Sadlier Dinger Award**. The award has been given annually for the last three years to recognize a person for his or her outstanding work in Hispanic Ministry. "Carmen has spent her whole life working for Hispanic ministry in the United States," said Sadlier's director of Spanish programs, Dulce M. Jiménez, who presented Carmen with the commemorative plaque. "This award is well deserved and overdue," she added.



Carmen saying a few words after receiving the Sadlier Award.

## A WONDERFUL TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR HISPANIC LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

In view of the publication of the *National Certification Standards and Certification Procedures for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*, recently approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Instituto Fe y Vida, which worked diligently in the process of creating the new standards, will be offering a Lay Ecclesial Formation Program for Hispanic Ministry in 2012-2013. This program, grounded on a successful leadership program developed by the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry (NCCHM), takes into consideration the U.S. Bishops' document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, and is being updated and expanded to meet the present realities.

The program consists of two weeks of intensive sessions and will be offered in the summer of two consecutive years. The first session will take place at the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota on July 15-21, 2012.

The program is designed for those ministers working in dioceses or parishes as coordinators of catechesis and ecclesial leadership, whether with the adult community or with the *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*. Dioceses or pastoral institutes wishing to put an educational team together to offer the program locally may obtain the necessary license to do so as long as the stipulated requirements are met. For more detailed information, you may download the *Description of the Training Program for Hispanic Lay Ecclesial Ministers* at [www.feyvida.org](http://www.feyvida.org).

Please reserve the dates and spread the news about this great opportunity among those that may qualify for this level of formation.

For more information, you may also contact Walter F. Mena, Director of Programs at 978-455-2531, or at 209-598-5145, or by email at: [wmena@feyvida.org](mailto:wmena@feyvida.org).



# INSTITUTO FE Y VIDA'S BIBLICAL PASTORAL MINISTRY TRAVELS TO COSTA RICA

By Nadia Jara

What a great opportunity it was to share with our "ticos" (friendly nickname for Costa Ricans) brothers and sisters of the Diocese of Tilarán-Liberia during the Training of Trainers for Biblical Pastoral Ministry this past September in Costa Rica!

There were two days of intensive work with 62 participants, among whom were priests, religious, and lay pastoral ministers from every corner of Costa Rica. We were all in high spirits, engaged in every process or activity, and sharing faith and life during a weekend that was filled with blessings, as we were guided by the key facilitator, Walter Mena, Programs Director, who was his usual self with plenty of zing and enthusiasm.

The hospitality was incredible thanks to Fr. Matías Jozefczuk, whose display of kindness made us feel at home. The warm welcoming by Bishop Vittorino Gerardi, the local ordinary, was very motivating. Equally important was the presence among us of Fr. Reynaldo Román with his ever-pleasant personality. Of course, we cannot forget that it was Verbo Divino which organized this training together with Instituto Fe y Vida.

A warmhearted thanks to all of you for an unforgettable experience. We hope to go back many more times and offer more training in that beautiful country.



# THE 2011 COLLEGEVILLE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY

By Ken Johnson-Mondragón

The 2011 Collegeville National Symposium on Lay Ecclesial Ministry, held at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN, gathered about 200 leaders from more than 40 national ministry organizations to reflect on the theology and practice of vocation and authorization for lay ecclesial ministry in the Catholic Church. As one of the co-sponsoring organizations, Instituto Fe y Vida was represented by staff members Dr. Carmen Cervantes, Ken Johnson-Mondragón, and Walter F. Mena, and Roberto Navarro, the secretary of the National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La Red) by special invitation.

The 2011 Symposium was a follow-up to a similar gathering held in Collegeville in the summer of 2007. Instituto Fe y Vida played a pivotal role on the steering committee for the first symposium by advocating for a greater participation of leaders from Hispanic ministry and other ethnic ministries. Lay ecclesial ministry as a field had been developing independently in the Hispanic community and mainstream U.S. Catholic ministry for more than 30 years; the 2007 Symposium was the first time that leaders of mainstream and Hispanic ministry organizations gathered at the same table to discuss the theological and pastoral issues.

While the first conversations were sometimes marked by frustration and misunderstandings, the dialogue has advanced significantly in the last four years. One of the major fruits of that dialogue can be found in the new *National Certification Standards and Certification Procedures for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*, which were approved by five national ministry organizations and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Certification and Accreditation this year. The new standards are a vast improvement over the 2003 standards with respect to the knowledge and skills required for ministry across cultures and ministry with particular cultural groups in the Church; they also recognize *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* as a specialization whose leaders should be certified as those in youth ministry.

The 2011 Symposium built on the good work of the prior symposium and the efforts of the intervening years to extend the national conversation regarding lay ecclesial ministry in four ways:



1. Amplify the voice and strengthen the national will to promote effective ecclesial leadership practices identified within "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord."
2. Advance the theological understanding and pastoral practice of the vocation and authorization of lay ecclesial ministers.
3. Publish recommendations and organizational commitments that will advance excellence in lay ecclesial ministry.
4. Fund research and projects advancing the symposium recommendations and organizational commitments.

Although fewer Hispanics participated this year than in 2007, the sense of tension and frustration that at times marked the first gathering was greatly diminished, replaced by a spirit of openness and humility among leaders of all cultures. There was a palpable desire on all sides to fully understand the experience and perspective of the others and to develop structures and systems that encompass the diverse reality of lay ecclesial ministry in the United States, across ethnic and ministerial boundaries. To do so will no doubt be challenging, yet most symposium participants left with a hopeful attitude that it is possible and that it is a worthy goal to work towards. Perhaps most importantly, collaborative relationships across cultures and ministries were strengthened and expanded in this gathering, which is an encouraging sign of the growing sense of *pastoral de conjunto* with respect to lay ecclesial ministry at the national level.

For its part, Instituto Fe y Vida has made a commitment to be actively engaged in the continuing national dialogue on lay ecclesial ministry, with a particular focus on formation for leadership in Hispanic youth and young adult ministry. For more information about the 2011 Symposium and Fe y Vida's participation, take a look at the four-part bilingual video interview of our team, posted online at: <http://lemsymposium.wordpress.com>



# DOCTORATE HONORIS CAUSA

In the Editorial of our last *Building Our Hope*, Bishop Sevilla broke the great news to you about our Executive Director, Carmen M. Cervantes, being honored with two doctorate degrees Honoris Causa. In this winter issue, we want to dedicate this column to making a *memoria histórica* (historical remembrance) and share with you Carmen's long life journey in her evangelization and missionary work with young Latino adults.

“We share with Jesus the great mission of building the kingdom of God on earth. The values of the Kingdom—love, justice, peace, freedom, and truth—are the cornerstones that afford a person, a particular social group, or an entire society to live with dignity and to achieve their greatest potential.”

Those were Carmen's words in her speech of acceptance for the honorary doctorate degrees she was awarded in May of this year, one of them from The Catholic University of America for a doctorate in theology, and the other one from the University of San Francisco for a doctorate in humane letters. Both degrees were bestowed in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the empowerment of young Latinos for leadership in Church and society. Carmen's words reflect not only her own personal and family life, but also the values she brought with her seventeen years ago when she co-founded Instituto Fe y Vida.

**“ We share with Jesus the great mission of building the kingdom of God on earth. ”**

Although she emphatically extends these recognitions “to Fe y Vida's staff and pastoral team as well as to the board of directors,” these honorary degrees mark another milestone yet in Carmen's long career devoted to ministry among Hispanic young people in the United States. Her contributions and achievements extend to Latin America as well, especially with *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes*, a project that she directed and edited permeating it with her strong faith, passionate love and ever present hope.



Carmen M. Cervantes, EdD, in her keynote speech at the University of San Francisco, the day she was awarded a doctorate in Humane Letters Honoris Causa.

Fe y Vida's launching of the First Biblical Mission among Youth and Young Adults in the Americas and its Facebook page last year also amplify the impact of her work.

Thirty-two years ago, Carmen arrived to the United States from Mexico City with her three young children after having to commit her husband to a psychiatric institution due to a serious mental health condition. She also arrived with a Master's degree in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from Universidad Iberoamericana and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City in addition to advanced education in the fields of biblical pastoral ministry and catechesis. Those who have gone through college while raising a family know well the sacrifices that entails, not to mention pursuing your graduate studies in a new country as an immigrant. But with persistence and determination, with the grace of God, and the support of a cousin who helped her with the children, Carmen earned her doctorate in Education from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

Today, the children are grown and are very supportive of her work at Fe y Vida. Indeed, and as many of you know, José María, the oldest—aka Joe—is the Administrative Director of Fe y Vida; he's married with two

small daughters. Carmelita followed closely her mother's steps in earning a doctorate in the field of Education, and works in Mali with Catholic Relief Services. Isabel, the youngest, lives in Mexico with her husband and two children, and is presently dedicated to her children and a small business of her own.

Carmen's productive career and missionary work is also long, certainly too long to be contained in a bulletin column. Coming from a Catholic family committed to social, educational, and religious causes, she started her apostolic work as a child and has continued non-stop until today. She has authored and co-authored a number of books on *Pastoral Juvenil* and multiple articles on national publications. Under her editorship, Instituto Fe y Vida's study bible, *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes*, was published in 2005, which has now reached nearly 500,000 young people in the United States and Latin America. She is the recipient of numerous awards and has cofounded three other national Catholic organizations, National Organization of Catechesis for Hispanics (NOCH), The National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry (NCCMH), and National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La Red).

**Thirty-two years ago, Carmen arrived to the United States from Mexico City with her three young children**

Some of you, friends and readers, who have known Carmen for a long time, are likely to be familiar with many of her accomplishments mentioned here. Thus, this brief *memoria histórica* is more of an opportunity to offer thanks to our God for Carmen's commitment and tenacity, even when the going has gotten tough.

And so, we at Fe y Vida want to echo the words of Scripture in telling Carmen: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” May you always remain faithful to your call and to the values of God's Kingdom.



# WITNESSING FROM BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA



By Adriana Guerra

As catechist and adviser of a youth group, I find greatly helpful the programs that Instituto Fe y Vida offers, both for personal enrichment and also for carrying on

ministerial work among young people. The only extra ingredients you would need are initiative, determination, and willingness to serve.

Something that I particularly admire of Fe y Vida is the organization and professionalism displayed in each course without detriment to humility and spirituality. You get to meet people of all ages, with different gifts and a great desire to offer optimal service to others.

Every time I participate in a Fe y Vida program, I go back to my community with lots of energy and eager to pass on to other people the learning, experiences and tools that I gained. This year in Houston, Texas, was just as awesome. The University of Houston is nice, big and comfy, and everyone was amicable.

This time, I took the Training of Trainers on Biblical Pastoral Ministry and once again I benefitted from the expertise of the faculty, always willing and able to answer our questions and listen to our ideas. Their style of teaching is more an invitation than an imposition, and that makes it all the more enjoyable and interesting. Thank you all for your hospitality and teachings!

# Sr. Verónica Méndez, RCD's GOLDEN JUBILEE



Sr. Verónica dancing with Fr. Alejandro López-Cardinale during fiesta time at the NCCHM's last meeting.

We wholeheartedly congratulate Sister Verónica Méndez, RCD, on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in the community of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine, where she made her vows to the consecrated life on September 15, 1961. Sister Verónica was born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York City. Her religious life during the last 50 years has been keenly dedicated to missionary work through a variety of ministries, such as religious education, girls' camping ministry, religious and priestly vocations, and seminary formation, the latter at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois. For the past eight years she has been a member of the Pastoral Team at RENEW International. As a former president of *Las Hermanas* and former vice president of The National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry (NCCHM), Sister is well-known among Hispanic ministers in the United States.

Sr. Verónica, may God continue to bless your cheerful disposition and your good sense of humor.



By Nadia Jara

The World Youth Days that Pope John Paul II started in 1984 are attracting more and more countries. Young people come together from all around the world to share and celebrate what it means to be a young person with faith, ready to continue the mission of Jesus.

Preparing for this trip is a process in itself, leaving behind your tight agenda and your country, and then finding yourself in another country, immersed in a different culture, getting to know the people and their traditions; all in all, it's an experience that drastically changes you and the way you think. For me, visiting the beautiful city of Madrid was a unique opportunity and an incredible experience. The city tours were quite interesting, and they gave us an opportunity to know more about Madrid's remarkable culture and wonderful architecture, all succeeding in bringing our history books to life.

Nevertheless, the greatest experience was seeing so many young people from all over the globe, sharing with them and knowing that we are together celebrating our youth, our one faith, and our common mission. The absence of any conflicts was really impressive.

The catechesis and the cultural events with their own religious traditions were spectacular; there were so many to choose from, you could only hope to participate in some of them. But the most powerful for me personally was the Way of the Cross, with its lifesize statues that made me feel as if I were living in Jesus' times.

It is hard to convey in words all that took place during those days, but something that will forever stay with me is that, as young people, we are the present and the future of the universal church. The message of Pope Benedict XVI invites us all to stay firm in the faith, to be compassionate towards others' afflictions, to live without fear, imitating Jesus while we create the right environment for other young people to have this same experience.

I hope to have the opportunity to share again with the young people of the world in the next 2013 World Youth Day in Brazil.

## ATTENTION!

Save the date!

Instituto Fe y Vida's next  
**Summer Program**

will take place at  
**University of St. Thomas**  
in St. Paul, Minnesota

on **July 15 – 21, 2012**

Save the date!





## Continúa Editorial

### CREDO DE LOS PROFETAS DE ESPERANZA

Somos personas apasionadas que creemos en la fuerza profética de los jóvenes hispanos, seguidores de Cristo que construyen el reino de Dios.

Somos personas que ofrecemos nuestros dones al servicio de la Iglesia y su misión evangelizadora.

Somos personas de fe.

Creemos en la utopía de que este grupo pequeño es semilla de esperanza y constructor de una nueva sociedad.

Creemos en la fuerza de la comunidad, y en compartir nuestra vida y nuestro amor.

Creemos que con la gracia de Dios, podemos transformar la esperanza en realidad.

Creemos que el Espíritu Santo ilumina y fortalece a los jóvenes hispanos para ser coprotagonistas con Dios de su propia historia, conforme enfrentan los desafíos y dificultades de la vida.

*Amén*



## Cont'd from Editorial

### PROPHETS OF HOPE CREED

We are a passionate people who believe in the prophetic strength of la *Juventud Hispana*, followers of Christ committed to extend the Reign of God.

We are a people who offer our different gifts at the service of our church and its evangelizing mission.

We are a people of faith.

We believe in the utopia that this small prophetic group is a seed of hope and a builder of a new society.

We believe in the strength of the community, and in sharing our lives and our love.

We believe that with God's grace, we can transform hope into reality.

We believe that the Holy Spirit enlightens and strengthens Hispanic *jóvenes* to be collaborators with God in their own history as they face the challenges and burdens of life.

*Amen*



## DECLARACIÓN DE LA MISIÓN DEL INSTITUTO FE Y VIDA

El Instituto Fe y Vida prepara a: agentes de pastoral, jóvenes y padres de familia para evangelizar y formar en la fe a la juventud hispana, al propiciar su propio desarrollo personal y su misión como miembros de la Iglesia y la sociedad, particularmente en Estados Unidos. Realiza esta labor a través de su trabajo profesional en seis áreas complementarias:

- Sistema de Formación de Liderazgo en Pastoral Juvenil
- Pastoral bíblica juvenil
- Publicaciones pastorales
- Centro Nacional de Investigación y Recursos
- Proyecto para Adolescentes y Padres de Familia
- Colaboración y concientización institucional

## MISSION STATEMENT OF INSTITUTO FE Y VIDA

Instituto Fe y Vida equips ministers, young adult leaders, and parents to promote evangelization and faith formation among young Latinos, particularly in the United States, by fostering their own development and their mission in the church and in the world. Fe y Vida fulfills its mission through professional work in six complementary areas:

- Leadership Formation System for *Pastoral Juvenil*
- Biblical ministry for young people
- Pastoral publications
- National Research and Resource Center
- Latino Youth and Parents Project
- Institutional collaboration and advocacy