

An Overview of the Multicultural Ministries in the Arlington Diocese

The **Spanish Apostolate** provides a multi-faceted outreach to the many Hispanics living within the Diocese. They supplement Hispanic ministries at the parish level, particularly in religious education and sacramental preparation. “*Retiros de Quinceañeras*,” which are retreats for 15 year old girls ready to celebrate the special tradition of the *Quinceañera*, are offered once a month. Two popular annual events for youth are vocal contests similar to the reality show “American Idol.” *Buscando una Estrella* (Looking for a Star for Jesus) which takes place in the fall is for teens ages 14-17 years old. *Buscando una estrellita para Jesus* (Looking for a Little Star for Jesus) takes place in the spring for children ages 8-13. The Spanish Apostolate also offers Spanish classes for seminarians, clergy, and lay leaders so they can more effectively minister to the Hispanic communities in the diocese.

The **African-American** Catholic community is the oldest, ethnic ministry in the Diocese of Arlington. St. Joseph’s Church, located in Alexandria, was founded in 1915 to serve the African-Americans in northern Virginia. Saint Katharine Drexel – beatified by Pope John Paul II – was a contributor to the parish, which has always been staffed by the Josephite Community of priests. In 1945, Our Lady Queen of Peace, located in Arlington, was founded in response to the growing African-American Catholic population. This ministry promotes diocesan-wide awareness of the African-American Catholics and is a strong advocate for social issues relating to the Black Catholics. They also provide all Catholics the opportunity to participate in year-round celebrations of Black Catholic heritage and those leaders who played an important role.

Two national parishes and one mission have been established in the Diocese of Arlington to serve the needs of two of our Asian Catholic communities. *Holy Martyrs of Vietnam*, founded in 1979, serves the **Vietnamese** Catholic community and is currently staffed by Dominican priests from Vietnam who serve the 6,500-parishioner church. In 2017, *Our Lady of La Vang* was established as a mission. *St. Paul Chung*, founded in 1996, serves the **Korean** Catholic community, with approximately 5,200 parishioners, and is staffed by Korean priests. Both have well formed parish programs that support their respective ethnic communities and are strongly supported by the Diocese. In addition to these national parishes, you will find strong, vibrant Vietnamese and Korean Catholic ministries in many of the diocesan parishes.

The **Filipino** Catholic community is another large and fruitful multicultural ministry within our diocese. The Filipino Catholic community is additionally supported by the Fil-Am NOVA ministry, which arranges monthly Masses (in Tagalog, and with Tagalog choirs), provides outreach programs, supports the many parish Filipino ministries, and runs Paaralang Pinoy (a Filipino catechetical cultural Sunday school). In collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Ministries, the Fil-Am NOVA ministry sponsors the annual *Simbang Gabi*, nine day novena of Masses celebrated before the birth of Christ, which encompasses more than 20 parishes. In addition to Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog, masses are also celebrated in the diocese in French, Tamil Indian, Albanian, and Gaelic. Our diocese is home to many African Catholic communities such as Eritrean (Ge’ez Rite), Cameroonian, Ghanaian, and Togolese, who celebrate Mass and have prayer groups in English, French and Tigrinya.

Ministering alongside the clergy of the Diocese of Arlington are priests from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Columbia, Cuba, El Salvador, Germany, Republic of Ghana, Haiti, India, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Spain and Vietnam.

The Diocese also supports two offices which provide social services and advocacy to immigrants, refugees, and migrants who come through the Diocese: **Hogar Immigrant Services-Legal Services** and the **Migration and Refugee Services**.

Each of these offices would be happy to work with you to find ways to incorporate various cultures into your programs.

Offices and Contacts

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Education and Workforce Development (formerly part of Hogar Immigrant Services)

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*Additional MRS offices in Manassas and Fredericksburg

More information related to the services listed above can be found here:

<https://www.ccda.net/need-help/immigrants-and-refugees/>