



## Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church

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July 5, 2011

Most Reverend John M. Quinn  
Bishop of Winona  
55 W. Sanborn Street  
Winona, MN 55987

Dear Bishop Quinn,

I am writing you on behalf of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church to express the support of our Committee for the recently completed draft of *National Certification Standards and Certification Procedures for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* submitted for approval to the USCCB Commission on Accreditation and Certification on which you serve as Episcopal Advisor.

Our Committee's mandate is to advance the participation and ecclesial integration of diverse cultural groups whose presence is growing so dramatically in the life and mission of the Church.

There are three features of the proposed standards and certification procedures that I wish to commend:

- 1) The concept and importance of intercultural competence has been clearly recognized in the proposed standards. This responds to the priority on recognition of cultural diversity adopted by the Bishops Conference in 2008.
- 2) While respecting the importance of formal academic preparation, alternative pathways to certification are provided by offering the method of portfolios by which the candidate can demonstrate his or her competencies. This flexibility is crucial for many of our lay ecclesial ministers from diverse communities who may lack formal educational backgrounds but have attained considerable competence through experience and skills learned outside an academic setting.
- 3) The inclusion of *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* as a legitimate, distinct category of youth and young adult ministry is necessary and appropriate in light of the fact that the majority of our Catholic youth and young adults in the United States today are of Hispanic origin. It is well known that due to several social and cultural factors the approach to youth and

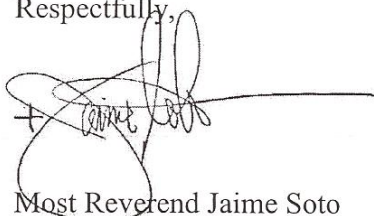
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young adult ministry in Hispanic/Latino contexts must be distinguished from the prevailing understanding of this ministry in European American contexts.

The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM) deserves our thanks for its diligence in reaching out to diverse cultural groups in the process of drafting these standards and procedures.

Please express our appreciation and best wishes to the Commission as it ends its service to the USCCB.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaime Soto", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Most Reverend Jaime Soto  
Bishop of Sacramento  
Chairman

Cc: [Chris Anderson \(NALM\)](#)  
Fr. Richard Hilgartner  
Dr. Rick McCord  
Peter Murphy