

Dan Gonzalez-Ortega Presbytery Greetings

November 19, 2022

Good morning, everyone!

Excuse me that for now I feel more comfortable speaking in the "language of angels": Spanish.

I hope my friend, Pastor Ted Anderson, can have the patience to follow my thoughts in this greeting.

Today I personally join this Milwaukee Presbytery that has kindly accepted the request of San Jose Parroquia in Beloit to call me to pastoral service of evangelization with the Hispanic community, primarily Mexican, in that region of Wisconsin.

Yes, I have come to these frozen lands, leaving the country of an eternal Spring (with sun, beaches with warm seas and beautiful landscapes, with unparalleled meals). I have come with my wife Alma to these lands with a call of "evangelist." But no, I'm not a "Billy Graham 2.0." I came here with the firm purpose of learning -- to learn how to follow the mission of the church (which is God's mission) in a different context than mine. I came with the spirit of discussing different ways of practicing the same faith and different ways of sharing the Gospel where injustice is denounced and where the good news of hope is announced.

I come to bring my voice, trying to interpret the ~~ways of~~ feelings and thoughts of people who in this country are increasingly a more participatory voice. In a few years' time, Spanish will be the second most important language in this nation and, surely, this work of interpretation will be increasingly relevant to the churches of Protestant tradition in this region of the world.

The PC(USA) and ELCA have trusted in the joint ministries and also in intercultural pastorates. I am a testimony of that today. My presence here as an evangelist of this Presbytery is a sign of the breath of the Holy Spirit who, at Pentecost, blessed us with the multiplicity of languages and cultures.

But today we are on the eve of Advent. Jesus keeps coming, and to this nation he comes with Latin faces as well. I come humbly to place my gifts at the service of God, of my Hispanic people in this region and of this Presbytery. As a good evangelist, I come to be evangelized by the people of my country, by my migrant people, by my tireless Latino workers. And I join this Presbytery with the expectation of continuing to proclaim the good news to the poor.

In Chiapas, Mexico, indigenous peoples greet without saying "Hello" or "Good day." They greet by asking, "How is your heart?" So I greet you as my people do: How is your heart? I, for my part, can answer: "my heart is in full bloom because we are together and today I can meet you."