

COPIM and the USCCB Guidelines

The *Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States*, published by the USCCB (Revised Edition, 2003) offer suggestions on the screening and orientation of missionary pastoral ministers who have left their homelands to take up pastoral ministry in the United States. The Cultural Orientation Program for International Ministers (COPIM), based at Loyola Marymount University, concerns itself almost exclusively with the orientation process of these ministers.

All of the in-depth follow-up orientation topics listed in the *Guidelines* (p. 30) are taken up in COPIM, but it should be kept in mind that COPIM is not a study program but a participative workshop; the purpose is not the transmission of information but rather the cultivation of intercultural skills for accessing cultural information and getting comfortable with cultural dynamics.

- Ecclesiology of the Church in the U.S.
- Missiology: biblical and theological foundations for mission
- History of the Church in the U.S.
- Ministry in a multicultural Church
- Religious pluralism
- Surveys of U.S. history, politics, political structure, and economy
- National ecclesial structures
- Lay ministry in the Church in the U.S.
- Systematic understanding of culture, race relations, cross-cultural communication
- Biblical and theological foundations of ministry with immigrants, refugees, and people on the move
- Communication skills

Additional topics not mentioned in the Guidelines but included in COPIM are:

- What is culture? Getting acquainted with a vocabulary for thinking about cultural issues and about what is going on as they experience the intercultural encounter
- Culture and the Bible
- The mainstream culture of the United States and other cultures here
- Homosexuality – what the Church teaches
- Ethnic tensions and diversity
- Liturgy in parishes with many ministries and many ministers
- Addiction
- Theology and context (African Theology, Asian Theology, women and theology, etc.)
- How do you do theology? How do the people in the pews do theology? The process of theological reflection for various people in different roles--lay people hearing the Word, the priest preparing a sermon
- Learning to listen as a way of doing theology
- Change and grief--always part of life, always a challenge, always fearful
- How have they changed, and what are the changes ahead?

The Cultural Orientation Program for International Ministers (COPIM) is a series of three 3-day workshops designed to support the ministry of priests and religious sisters and brothers who have come from other countries to work in the United States.

For more information or to register: 310.338.2799
<http://extension.lmu.edu/copim>

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