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Mercy Sr. Ana Maria Pineda speaks to a group gathered Nov. 13 in Baltimore to honor recipients of the Encuentros Awards by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs. (GSR photo/Rhina Guidos)



by Rhina Guidos

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Mercy Sr. Ana María Pineda, a theologian, writer and professor, received an Encuentros Award in Baltimore from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs Nov. 13 for her lifelong contributions to the Catholic Church in the United States.

Committee Chairman Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California, cited her scholarly work, including a [book on St. Óscar Romero and Blessed Rutilio Grande](#), of her native El Salvador, and praised her as someone who "accompanies el pueblo de Dios" — the people of God.

"It's hard to be recognized for something you love," said Pineda, accepting the award in the company of her brother Ernesto and other Mercy sisters.

Latinos don't walk alone but always in community, through joys but also sorrows as they find themselves in a new land, one "that marks us and marks us forever. And we can't turn our back on Latinos and others suffering the same experiences," she said.

Pineda spoke with love of her work and attendance at the gathering of Latino Catholics in the U.S. called [Encuentros](#). Since 1972, there have been five Encuentros that gather participants to discuss topics of importance to Latino Catholics. Pineda has been at all of them.

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"I am a daughter of the Encuentros," she said. "Latinos were committed to advancing their [spiritual] future in this country. I'm reminded that my work isn't finished. Our work isn't finished."

Jesuit Fr. Luis Calero, rector of the Santa Clara Jesuit Community at Santa Clara University, where Pineda is an associate professor, said in a [statement](#), "Sr. Pineda's presence at the Encuentros has been very significant and has contributed to the strength of the movement to welcome the growing number of Hispanic Catholics to the Church in the U.S."

## Catholic Theological Union president to step down

Dominican Sr. [Barbara Reid](#), president of Chicago's Catholic Theological Union, announced Oct. 29 she will step down from her post at the end of June of next year.



Dominican Sr. Barbara Reid, president of Chicago's Catholic Theological Union  
(Courtesy of Barbara Reid)

"When I was asked to lead CTU as President in the summer of 2020, I had my reservations. To state the obvious: I was a Biblical scholar and a religious Sister beyond retirement age — while the spirit may have been willing, the flesh does not always cooperate," she wrote in a statement.

"Nevertheless, I so passionately believed in CTU — a belief that has only strengthened during my time as President. The Church needs CTU to thrive and continue preparing ministers, ready to witness to Christ's good news of justice, love, and peace."

During her time, she said CTU "retired all institutional debt"; had the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and McCormick Theological Seminary move to its campus, being "faithful to Pope Francis' calls for responsible stewardship" and deepening ecumenical commitments; and made investments in technology and diversity.

"It is important to note that I am not retiring — I will retain my faculty appointment at CTU. I wish to once again return my attention to the life of a Biblical scholar," she wrote.

## **Pope addresses floods at meeting with sisters from Spain**

Pope Francis spoke to a group of sisters from Spain at a Nov. 7 audience, expressing his closeness as the country deals with destructive floods.

"You come from Spain. ... These days I am very close to Spain, because of the tragedy of Valencia," he [told](#) the Augustinian Sisters of Talavera de la Reina who were at the Vatican to mark the 450th anniversary of the founding of their convent. "Yesterday, in the General Audience, we showed the Virgen de los Desamparados [Our Lady of the Abandoned]. They are suffering a great deal there."

More than [200](#) people have been reported dead since flooding began Oct. 29 in Valencia, and tens of thousands turned out Nov. 9 to protest the government response. But the pope mostly focused on the sisters' convent and conveying his wishes for a life of joy inside that convent and with those with whom sisters come into contact.



Pope Francis greets a group of Augustinian nuns from San Ildefonso Monastery in Talavera de la Reina, Spain, during a meeting at the Vatican Nov. 7. (OSV News/CNS)

"In this regard, I would like you to convey my blessing to the Augustinian Mothers, and the invitation not only to pray for me, as I always ask everyone, but also to be an example of inner life, to be teachers of the art of prayer, so that, from school, among all the knowledge that they can pass on to children, the ability to speak with God, the ability to listen to Him, to feel Him present in every moment of life and to accept His inspirations with docility, may stand out," he said.

He also told the sisters to maintain their joy and sense of humor.

"Do not lose it. When a Christian, even more so a man or woman religious, loses their sense of humor, they turn sour," he said. "And it is so sad to see a priest, a religious, a nun, turn sour. They are preserved in vinegar. Always have a smile and good humor."

This story appears in the **USCCB Fall Assembly 2024** feature series. [View the full series.](#)