



Deaconess Teresita Rodriguez

Deaconess Teresita Rodriguez was born in Cuba and was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. In Cuba, she prepared for the teaching profession.

She came to the United States in 1967. In 1982, under the instruction of a Lutheran pastor in Miami, she embraced the Lutheran faith and was confirmed.

From 1985-91, she played a leading role in initiating the new mission congregation *Iglesia Luterana San Pablo* in Miami, Florida. She was also influential in the start of the publication *El Testimonio Luterano* (*Lutheran Witness* in Spanish). During this time, she studied through the Hispanic Institute of Theology and Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois.

From 1992-93 she served at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Miami. During her time at Mount Olive, in conjunction with Lutheran Disaster Response, she aided victims of Hurricane Andrew serving as a case manager and deaconess intern.

From 1994-95, she received her deaconess certification and was installed at Concordia Lutheran Church, Miami. She was commissioned to work with the 33,000 immigrants being held at the military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and had the opportunity to share God's love and His Word with her Cuban brothers and sisters.

In 1995, she was called by Lutheran City Ministries in Michigan to reach out to the Hispanic community in Southwest Detroit. She established a Hispanic ministry, attending to the many spiritual and physical needs of the Hispanic population there.

In 1999, she was called by the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as a Missionary-At-Large to Hispanic people. She played a leading role in the formation of the new mission congregation *Iglesia Luterana Pan de Vida* (Bread of Life Lutheran Church).

In June 2002, Deaconess Rodriguez, together with Pastor Gregory Lorenz and an action team of mission-minded individuals, and with the cooperation of the Michigan District, began the Hispanic Latino Mission Society of Michigan. It is also known as **LATINO** ("**L**utheran **A**ction **T**eam **I**mproving **N**ative [**H**ispanic/**L**atino] **O**utreach"). She has served as the Mission Director of the LATINO since its inception.

She has also served on various boards and committees of the LCMS including: Two years as a member of the Synod's *Planning Council of Mission and Ministry*; two years as a member of the *Urban Ministry Task Force*; *Pentecost 2000 Cross-Cultural Ministries* effort; Secretary for the 10th Annual National Hispanic Conference; and as a member of the *Mission 21st Century Task Force* appointed by President Kieschnick of the LCMS.



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