Researching Latinos

Setting the media framework and some pointers

To speak of the significant Hispanic presence in this country is to speak of something almost obvious.
The National Census Bureau estimates that there are fifty three million Hispanics (foreign born and native), as of July 1st of 2012, residing in this Nation in addition to the three million people residing on the Island of Puerto Rico.

So, there is a significant market both in terms of culture ("The Way" and other movies), language (Univision and other cable TV) and news relevance...

If you go to Wikipedia and search

Countries with Spanish as the official language and countries where Spanish is a commonly used language...

You find that of the countries with Spanish as official language there are: Spain with 46.7 million, Colombia with 44.7 million, and then Peru with 29.2 million and Venezuela with 27.6 million.

The United States is listed as having almost 37.6 million people who use Spanish as their commonly used language. So, if you considered the U.S. as a Spanish-speaking nation...
But let’s back track a bit…

In the Church the situation is more contrasting:

In an August 2013 Race and Ethnicity of U.S. Adult Catholics, CARA Catholic Poll (CCP)
Estimates that of those polled:

- Non-Hispanic white: 58%
- Hispanic/Latino: 34%
- Black/African American: 3%

In the U.S. society, Hispanic/Latinos are 16.3 of the population

Still in the Church

- Catholics are 21.6 of the total population
- Of the total Hispanic/Latino population almost 60% are identify themselves as Catholics (and more if you mix in the foreign born Latinos).
- Some estimates state that among youth and young adults the Hispanic Catholic population increases to almost 45% of total Catholics.
The Hispanic presence in the life of this Nation is not a recent phenomenon. Since 1550, men like Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, together with other explorers, traveled and explored the width and length of the territories which today constitutes the American Union. For some, the border crossed them.

Hispanics have made a mark in the history of this Nation since the beginning. We have participated in many of the heroic deeds during its formation and have greatly contributed to the overall development of the United States. And many authors are now recovering that history and those stories.
Hispanic or Latino?

- Of course, much of how we understand each other and ourselves is about language. So perhaps some distinctions to help us get a hold on the language.
- Latinos: How Latin Americans identify themselves.
- Hispanic: A term coined in the United States (But of Spanish Roots, “Hispano America”) to identify Latino immigrants mostly that has also evolved into how foreign-born and U.S.-born persons of Latino and Spanish descent identify themselves. Let me explain ...

Where to look for stories

- Ecclesial movements: Parish-Based or Community Based
  - For older ethnic communities, the parish was the center of their life (if not ghetto). For most Latinos, basic ecclesial communities and other types of communities are what keeps them in community and then to the parish (The parish as “community of communities”).
- Religious Communities/Congregations: Many communities had Hispanics earlier on but have been ethnically based.
Where to look for stories

- Those already here before the big wave:
  - Chicanos: “Only Cesar Chavez?” Mary Jane Cortez or Joe Flores?
  - “New Mexico pride”
  - “Californios”
  - “Tejanos” (In San Antonio, this is big!)
- Some media examples: “Mi familia,” “Machete”

Illegal or Undocumented?

- Illegal: The term as used by Immigration and Customs enforcement. However, entry without documentation is the illegality of it.
- Undocumented: More focused on the human dignity of the person and the fact that entry without documentation is what the issue is.