

Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States

Conferral of the Virgilio Elizondo Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology on

Dr. Miguel H. Díaz

Miami, Florida, June 4, 2013

“Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres.” Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are. This popular Spanish saying, for our recipient tonight, reflects an affirmation of radical communion—rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity--as foundational for understanding the human person. This son of Cuba and of Miami is the first theologian and Latino to serve the United States as Ambassador to the Holy See. During his more than three years of service as ambassador, Dr. Miguel Díaz launched initiatives that advanced equitable and ethical development, care for the environment and conflict prevention. As a bridge-builder between government and civil society, Ambassador Díaz was also a key leader in the State Department’s development of the Working Group on Religion and Foreign Policy, the first systematic and comprehensive effort on the part of the State Department to take seriously the role of religion and religious actors in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

While it may have puzzled many that President Obama appointed a theologian to this high-visibility post rather than a career diplomat or a politician, those who know the work of Dr. Díaz as a Latino theologian can readily understand how much sense this decision made. A specialist in the work of Karl Rahner, Díaz is a public theologian who brings his wisdom to matters from the Trinity to migrations from Christian anthropology to racial and social justice. He strives to live *teología y pastoral en conjunto en su cotidianidad* as a self-described “bridge-builder.” This dimension has long been evident in his scholarship, his leadership in the academy and in his distinguished teaching career. He is a Past-President of ACHTUS and a long time active member whose publications include the classic *On Being Human: U. S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives* as well as the edited volume *From the Heart of Our People: Explorations in Latino/a Systematic Theology* (with Orlando Espín). Currently he is the University Professor of Faith and Culture at the University of Dayton in Ohio.

The spouse of Marian, also a theologian in her own right, the father of Josh, Ana, Mani and Miguel David, and the son of Felix and Sylvia, it seems appropriate to honor this son of Miami in his "home town.”

We can tell you who Miguel Díaz walks with: we are proud to say he walks with us! Therefore the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States bestows on Miguel H. Díaz the Virgilio Elizondo Award for “for distinguished achievement in theology, in keeping with the mission of the Academy.” Welcome home Miguel!