

What Black Catholics Have Offered the Church

REV. CYPRIAN DAVIS, OSB

If we ask the question, "What contributions have blacks offered the Church?" we can answer simply that they have helped to make the Catholic Church in the United States authentically "catholic." Their presence revealed the universality of Catholicism. They made the visage of the Church something richer than a monochrome portrait of a one-dimensional world. Without them, the American Church would have lacked the consciousness of justice and the anguish of knowing its absence. Without African American worship, our liturgical practice following the Second Vatican Council would have lacked life and color.

History

Almost a quarter of a century after the end of the Civil War, a young black man offered to his contemporaries his thoughts on the meaning of being black and Catholic. The lynching of black men and even on occasion of black women had become an American pastime by the last decade of the nineteenth century, and in 1896 the subordination of blacks to whites was enshrined in law by

the Supreme Court decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Yet in these times, this young black man, a journalist, challenged the faith and the ideals of his fellow black Catholics. Daniel Rudd (1854-1933) was born a slave in Bardstown, Kentucky, and went on to found a weekly newspaper that, in 1888, became the American Catholic Tribune in Cincinnati. As a journalist, he used his paper to introduce his fellow blacks to the Catholic Church, its mission, its teaching, and its potential to improve the condition of African Americans. Without apology, he expressed his admiration and devotion to the Catholic Church.

"The Negro of this country ostracised, abused, downtrodden and contemned, needs all the forces which may be brought to that plane of equality which would give him the status he needs as 'a man among men.' ...The Roman Catholic Church offers to the oppressed Negro a material as well as the spiritual refuge, superior to all the inducements of other organizations."¹
"The Catholic Church alone can break the color line. Our people should help her to do it."²

At the end of the nineteenth century, Rudd emerged as the unofficial leader of the black Catholic community. In fact, he is truly the first one who envisaged such a community. In addition to his newspaper, he organized a Black Catholic Congress; the first was held in

Washington, D.C. in 1889, followed by four others in the next five years. As a newspaperman he expressed two convictions: that the Catholic Church was the best hope for the progress of African Americans in the United

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From the Office

BRITISH ROBINSON

As we come to the end of 2004, there is much to celebrate and remember: the 50th anniversary of Brown V. Board of Education, the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 25th anniversary of the US Bishops' pastoral *Brothers and Sisters to Us*. These anniversaries remind us of the struggle and the hard-won victories of the past, but also what we are called to in the present and in the future—for Blacks to find their way within society and within the Church. Archbishop Wilton Gregory, the first Black president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, best describes the Black experience in the Church like this:

"With respect to the Church and to the Black community in particular, the historical perspective illuminates the story: it tells us where Black Catholics have been, and to some extent where we seem to remain, as an enigma within Catholicism. Nevertheless, if at times, Black Catholics have been an unnoticed group within

Catholicism, we have nonetheless grown steadily and continue to remain faithful and valuable to the Church. Despite the overwhelming majority of Protestants within the Black community, and now a fast growing number of Black Muslims, Black Catholics have been a solid witness to the essential "catholicity" of the Church in a society still divided by racial differences."¹

As a Black Catholic, I am keenly aware of our current situation. As Blacks increasingly become the *minority* minority group, it is often easy to take for granted, or to forget, the accomplishments and contributions Blacks have made to our country and our Church. It is even difficult to acknowledge that inequality still exists and that race still matters. Are Black schools equal to those in white suburbia? Do Blacks still experience racism when applying for a mortgage? And do Blacks truly

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1 American Catholic Tribune, January 10, 1891.

2 Ibid., January 3, 1891.

1: Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta, past president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics," excerpt from a speech given at the University of Notre Dame, March 2004.

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States, and that in time there would be a massive conversion of blacks to the Church.

Rudd's vision of the African American Catholic community was far different from that proposed for other ethnic groups within the Catholic Church. Concerning the black Catholic lay congress, he spoke of the value in a nationwide reunion of black Catholics and of the vocation that black Catholics possessed in regard to their fellow blacks and in the face of their white Catholic brethren. He wrote: "Colored Catholics ought to unite...let the leading Colored Catholics gather together ...[so that] they may get to know one another and take up the cause of the race."³ Rudd went further, however, than the desire to meet and exchange ideas; he suggested that this community had a mission. He wrote that black Catholics "should be the

leaven, which would raise up their people not only in the eye of God but before men." Rudd also saw that a congress of black Catholics would be an occasion to dialogue with black Protestants, as "prejudice, fear, dislike and kindred

"When we speak of black Catholic spirituality, we use such expressions as ecstatic prayer, joyful music, use of the drum, celebration with dance – the cultural characteristics are clear.

It is in this area that black Catholicism has made a profound impression on American Catholic culture and on contemporary liturgical celebrations."

evils...would be dissipated." Rudd added that the black Catholic community should become for all African Americans "the bearer of their race."

³ American Catholic Tribune, May 4, 1888.

The position of African American Catholics at the end of the nineteenth century was in many respects unique for American Church history. Not far removed from the horrors of slavery, Rudd and the five Black Catholic Congresses helped set a direction to black Catholic history that has continued to this day. As a result, black lay persons took the initiative in defining themselves as black and Catholic and in creating a place for themselves within the U.S. Catholic Church. A good example of this is the document that the Fourth Black Catholic Congress published at the end of the 1893 congress in Chicago:

The Catholic Church, guided by the spirit of truth, must always preserve inviolate the deposit of faith...From the day of Christ it has been her mission to inculcate the doctrine of love, and not of hate; to raise up the downtrodden, and to rebuke the proud. It

From the Office

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feel accepted within the Catholic Church?

The point is, in 2004, how far have Blacks come—within society and within the Church? What remains to be done? How can the Church better serve the Black Catholic community? And what is required of Black Catholics to claim/reclaim our place in the Church, and to take responsibility for what needs to be done? No matter what, I believe Black Catholics are here to stay. We are committed to a

Church that has always been committed to promoting justice for the marginalized; it is the reason many of us call ourselves Catholic today!

With this edition of *In All Things* we explore the issues and challenges that lie ahead for Black Catholic Ministry, describe what constitutes the Black Catholic today, and we offer an historical perspective on Blacks in the Catholic Church. We also discuss the tensions and competing interests between Latino and Black Catholics, and offer possible solutions to co-existence. Finally, we honor two Black Religious Orders, and highlight

the Jesuits' experience and relationship to the Black Catholic Community—now and in the past. We hope this issue offers some insight and guidance to you and your institutions and ministries as you work with, serve and accompany Black Catholics.

Please be sure to see our online supplement for additional articles on this topic at www.inallthings.org ♦

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has been her mission to proclaim to the ends of the earth that we all have stamped on our immortal souls the image of God...⁴

The Fourth Black Catholic Congress looked at the Church as a black Catholic community, defining the Church as a teacher of love and an opponent of pride. It taught that we are all equally bearers of the image of God. It expressed further that the Church had fought against racial prejudice and had taught "that man should be gauged by his moral worth; that virtue alone, springing from grace, truly elevates a man." The document asserts that actions of racial prejudice are immoral and contrary to the teaching of the Church – three years before *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The address ends on an apocalyptic note, predicting that with the Church's rejection of "distinction of races or previous condition" there will be a massive conversion "...when the whole colored race...will be knocking at her doors for admittance, anxious to be of that faith which teaches and practices the sublime essence of human rights in the sight of God and our fellow man."⁵ In an age in which many Catholics assumed the superiority of white people over those of African descent, and in a time when social justice was not the main preoccupation of Catholic theologians, these black lay Catholics displayed a theological knowledge far removed from the common understanding of the time.⁶

Black Catholic Spirituality

In their pastoral Letter, *What We Have Seen and Heard*, the black bishops

wrote: "Black Americans are a people rich with spiritual gifts." They went on to describe four characteristics of black spirituality: contemplative, holistic, joyful, and communitarian.⁷ When

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we speak of black Catholic spirituality, we use such expressions as ecstatic prayer, joyful music, use of the drum, celebration with dance – the cultural characteristics are clear.

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tions. Clarence Rivers, an African American priest of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, journeyed from newly ordained priest who began to jot down the words and the melody for the song *God Is Love*, to his position now as a nationally acclaimed writer on liturgy and

composer of African American liturgical music. His compositions, together with the works of Grayson Brown and many others, have been an original gift to American Catholicism from the heart of the African American people.

Heritage

Finally, there is the breadth and complexity of the African heritage. African American Catholics as a community are a bridge connecting them to all Catholic communities of the African continent and the African Diaspora. In the last quarter century, African American Catholics have reached out to the black communities of Haiti, Brazil, Colombia and other Afro-Latin communities in South America and the Caribbean. The Catholic Church of Africa has planted itself in the heart of American cities, where African priests and sisters – Ethiopians, Nigerians, Tanzanians, Ghanaians, Kenyans and many more – have enriched the black Catholic community in the United States. (See Beverly Carroll's article on page 7) Truly, the Church in the United States is now a world Church and a spiritual home for all peoples. The African American has been the circumstance and the cause. Or as the Jamaican poet Claude McKay (1891-1948), poet of the Harlem Renaissance, ex-Communist and Catholic convert, wrote:

*Oh, One was black of the wise men of the East,
Who came with precious gifts to Jesus' birth.
A symbol all men equal were at least
When Godhead condescended to the earth.*⁹ ♦

African-American spirituality is based on Sacred Scripture. From the dark days of slavery we heard Bible stories repeated in sermons, spirituals and shouts. God will protect his people and preserve his children. For Blacks this Bible promise is a message of liberation and hope. "You will know the truth," Jesus said, "and the truth will set you free" [John 8: 32]. For Black people freedom is a cherished gift from God, never to be abused or taken for granted, but freedom brings responsibility too. We oppose oppression for unless all are free, none are free. We must teach others to value freedom and work to see that none are denied its benefits.

-- From 'What We Have Seen and Heard', a pastoral letter on evangelization from the Black bishops of the United States, 1984.

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4 In "Stamped with the Image of God": African Americans as God's Image in Black. Eds. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. and Jamie Phelps, O.P. "The Fourth Black Catholic Congress, Chicago, 1893." American Catholic Identities. A Documentary History. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003) 81.

5 In "Stamped with the Image of God": African Americans as God's Image in Black. Eds. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. and Jamie Phelps, O.P. "The Fourth Black Catholic Congress, Chicago, 1893." American Catholic Identities. A Documentary History. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003) 82-83.

6 For a discussion of this document in relation to black Catholic theology, see Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., *History of Black Catholics in the United States*. (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 189-99.

7 "What We Have Seen and Heard." A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States. 8.

8 Clarence Rivers, "Freeing the Spirit: Very Personal Reflections on One Man's Search for the Spirit in Worship." *U.S. Catholic Historian*. 19 (2001): 95-143.

9 "The Wise Men of the East" in Selected Poems of Claude McKay. (New York: Bookman Associate, 1953) 48.

Who Are Black Catholics Today?

Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics

MOST REV. WILTON D. GREGORY

Liberation is born in a profound perception of human captivity. We live in an ongoing enslavement by oppressive ... systems. Nor are these systems always impersonal: they are enfleshed in civil and religious persons, usually individuals of good will but too ingenious to perceive that the wickedness all around them is not only outside their precious system but at its heart as well.

-- Leonardo Boff, *Passion of Christ Passion of the World.*

What does it mean to be Black and Catholic? In the 19th century, the work of the National Black Catholic Congresses, primarily the work of lay Catholics in response to the lack of an ordained clergy, tackled issues that included Being Black and Catholic, Leadership, Pastoral Ministry, Education, and Outreach in the Community. At the same time the Church's leadership was called upon to live up to its teaching on racial justice and to practice what it preached.

Black Catholics have been a solid witness to the essential "catholicity" of the Church in a society still divided by racial differences. Scripture says.... "Surely there is a future and your hope shall not be cut off" [Proverbs 23:18]. The historical perspective illuminates where Black Catholics have been -- and to some extent where we seem to remain -- as an enigma within Catholicism. Nevertheless, we have grown steadily and continue to remain faithful and valuable to the Church.

Data from *Plenty Good Room: Efforts to Include African Americans in the Life and Liturgy of the U.S. Catholic Church* provide one set of national trends that significantly impact the cultural and demographic configurations of parishes and communities that serve Black Catholic Ministry today. Among the data:

1. Americans of African ancestry represent 4% of the total U.S. Catholic population of 62 million (2.4 million). This does not include many Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters from South and Central America welcomed within Black parishes

because of their appearance. Added to this number, is the growing number of African sisters and brothers now living in America.

2. There are approximately 250 African-American priests. The number of theological students increased from 2% in 1993 to 4 percent in 1999, but this may be due to a trend of recruiting more Black seminarians from Africa. Last academic year we ordained 3 African Americans for priesthood.

3. There are 500 Black Catholic sisters and 400 Black Catholic deacons. Black deacons represent 3% of permanent deacons.

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4. African Americans represent only 1.29% of lay ministers and 3% of students in lay ecclesial ministry formation out of more than 35,000 students.

5. Although minorities in Catholic elementary and secondary schools have more than doubled since 1970, Black enrollment has diminished somewhat since 1989, and is currently under 8% of the Catholic school. There is a significant under-representation of minorities among Catholic school faculty.

Three overarching issues challenge us.

Leadership

Black people hold offices in their parishes and institutional roles as religious, deacons, priests and bishops. Leadership in the Church, be it the ordained or the laity, must reference our baptismal legacy and obligation. Yet diocesan efforts to encourage Black People to assume important leadership positions are, at best, inconsistent. Data pertaining to leadership and Black Catholics indicate that dioceses value the presence of Black Catholics. But fewer respondents than we would hope for agree that dioceses value the input of Black Catholics. A majority do NOT believe that their diocese is losing Blacks in large numbers.

In the 19th century, Daniel Rudd, a man of great vision, rallied and organized Blacks to talk about membership in the Church. Mother Elizabeth Lange, a free woman of color from Belize, never turned back when the City and municipalities refused her assistance in aiding poor children, widows and orphans sustain a decent living. Mother Heneriette Delille snubbed the authorities in her day when they refused to assist the sick and infirmed with medicines and home care.

The vision that the first wave of immigrant pastors employed in their development of parish ministry established a system based on English values and practices. It focused on membership -- increasing the number of Catholics from disparate communities. What were the consequences of such leadership? The Church grew, education was given a high priority, schools were built. The growth and devel-

Wilton Gregory is the Archbishop of Atlanta and the past president of the USCCB. He was the bishop of Belleville, Illinois, at the time this speech was made on March 12, 2004, at the University of Notre Dame. This is an abbreviated version, edited for space considerations. Reprinted with author's permission.

opment of the parish was the almost exclusive responsibility of the European staff. All of this changed in the 80's when many religious left as their numbers dwindled. No training was provided the next generation of leaders. Parishioners had a sense of ownership regarding the collection, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Sodality, but not for the administration of the parish. Unfortunately, this model frequently led to a sense of dependency, a position of fragility, and an immature relationship with the diocese. Black Bishops alluded to this reality in 1984 when they wrote, "Now is the time for those of us who are Black Americans and Black Catholics to reclaim our roots and to shoulder the responsibilities of being both Black and Catholics." (*What We Have Seen and Heard*).

No diocese in the United States has an African American Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and education is an area in which we excel. How can we be "fully functioning people of faith" as Sister Thea Bowman called us in her challenge to the U.S. Bishops in 1989 and not be enrolled in adult education programs which ready us to assume responsibility for the future of our parishes, schools, and programs? What prevents us from assuming responsibility for our pastoral and educational ministries? Why do we not have more African American pastors? Why are many African Americans leaving the Church or perhaps not attending the Church? Are we preparing ourselves for leadership as the numbers of priests and religious who work with us continue to dwindle? Do we encourage our youngsters to aspire to service as priests, deacons, and religious? Programs that deserve our support and participation to help vitalize our parishes and prepare leadership include the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University, the Tolton Program in the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Thea Bowman Institute in the Archdiocese of Louisville, and the Naimah Ministry, which produces the Keep on Teaching Resource Manual from the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

What's needed particularly now is broad-based leadership with a common vision. Without a shared vision our parishes and schools will be poorly managed; we will lose membership, especially youth and young adults, and we will be ignorant of many Black Catholic community needs. After we have identified and prepared our leaders, we must support them and the vision they put forward. We are called to be Sunday school teachers, Master Catechists, to run soup kitchens, advocacy groups to address political issues, HIV and AIDS ministry, self help programs like NA, AA, and programs which affirm life.

Youth and Young Adults

As a community, we must give significant time and consideration to our youth (those ages 13-17) and young adults (those ages 18 to 35). The future of our community is directly dependent upon their well being. They contribute to the strength of the community, both in the present and definitely, in the future.

In 2002, 33 percent of all Blacks were under 18 compared with 23 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. Only 8 percent of Blacks were 65 and older, compared with 14 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, March 2002). Approximately 20 percent of African Americans are between the ages of 10 and 19 compared with 13 percent of non-Hispanic Whites in the non-Hispanic White population. This age group includes those in middle school, those in high school, those who have dropped out of the school system, single teen mothers and fathers, and those who are in the penal system, among others.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate among African Americans under the age of 18 is 30 percent. This rate is three times that of the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, March 2002). Poverty is vicious and the poverty that our youth experience threatens their education, health care and future. Growing up in poverty often causes depression, low self-

esteem, a feeling of abandonment, and destroys hope for the future. Poverty impacts the effectiveness of participation in the parish and the Church.

In our call to evangelize and our call to mission, we must become proactive with Catholic and public education systems. Are we leading the charge for vouchers? Are we challenging African-American legislators who themselves often benefited from Catholic education but are unwilling to help make that same resource available to disadvantaged youngsters in today's poorer communities? Are we speaking out for public education? Our Catholic schools often represent one of the few opportunities for urban youth to receive a quality education.

Our young adult demographic, consisting of college age young men and women, young college graduates who have entered into the workforce, non-college attendees in the workforce, married couples with young families, young men and women in the penal system, professionals, military personnel, and political and community leaders, is a very diverse group with different needs and aspirations, oftentimes a conflicted generation.

Our young adults have goals and dreams and like other young adults, issues and concerns.

■ HIV/AIDS remains as one of the top three causes of death of our young men between the ages of 25 and 44. We must work quickly and definitively to increase awareness of this pandemic, get people tested and support systems for treatment, and reduce the rate of new infections.

■ Unemployment in the Black community is double that of the national average. It affects one's dignity and self esteem. Unemployment means that many are forced to consider multiple very low paying jobs. This situation hurts Black parish life because the income base for the parish is negatively impacted and young people do not have the time to engage in parish activities.

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Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society.

-- From "Brothers and Sisters to Us," US Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979.

Who Are Black Catholics Today?

We must have a vision as a community for our young people: a vision to help and not hinder, to strengthen and not weaken, the natural optimism and hope of the young, and we must identify resources and support vigorously the plan of action for youth and young adults approved at the National Black Catholic Congress.

Racism

The issue of racism seems never to go away. The Church's concern stems from a conviction that Christians must confront racism if our claim to preach the Gospel is credible. Racism tarnishes the Gospel. There is no other way to view it.

Much has changed since Daniel Rudd and his comrades in the Black Catholic Congress challenged the Catholic Church to speak out for justice in society and justice in the Church for Black people. Credit must be given to the National Office for Black Catholics. Other early Black Catholic pioneers worked tirelessly to affirm Black Catholic culture and to make Black Catholic parish life look alive.

Since the publication 25 years ago of *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, some progress has been made in the struggle to overcome the sin of racism. African Americans have been elected to public office and raised to leadership positions in the Church and in the private sector. The number of African

American youth who are attending college is steadily increasing, and the gap between the median income of African Americans and other Americans is slowly shrinking. There are real changes in the growth of a sense of fairness and in levels of attainment by African Americans.

Where are we today? In his apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (On the Coming of the Third Millennium), Pope John Paul II invites us to "broaden our horizons" and so "see things from the perspective of Christ." We need further reflection and development on issues such as these:

- Open wide the door for qualified laity to serve in leadership roles where already permitted in Church law
- Improve the leadership and Faith focus in our Catholic Schools
- More creative use of the great gifts that women bring to the Church
- Aggressive vocations program
- Improve our proclamation of Gospel based teaching on human sexuality
- Intentional work of racial reconciliation with the broader Catholic communities

We are Black Catholics in an institution that too regularly considers us as out of the mainstream. As a result Daniel Rudd convened the Black Congresses, a culture and worship department was created in NOBC, and the National

Black Catholic Pastoral Plan was developed. How do we achieve a more profound sense of belonging? How do we overcome the apathy on our part and the fears that others might have? Pope John Paul II challenged us on January 26, 1999, in St. Louis to "put an end to every form of racism, a plague which your bishops have called one of the most persistent and destructive evils of the nation."

We must include concrete ways of demonstrating how systemic racism continues to exist. We all need one another – white and black people to understand how racism destroys us all. As committed Catholics who desire more than anyone that one day we may truly be free, we have a responsibility to be in partnership with all of our honest, committed, colleagues and parishioners of every race and language.

Being Black Catholic pastoral leaders, scholars, and academics is not about being comfortable and self-congratulatory. All too often we are distracted by our own efforts and overlook what God is doing in our midst. God's Word says, wait on the Lord, and be of good courage. "Prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers" (James 1:22). This advice was given to an earlier group of Christians who faced daunting trials and yet managed to succeed beyond even their wildest aspirations. So shall it be with us! ♦

In 2004 we celebrate the:

- 50th Anniversary of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*
- 40th Anniversary of the *Civil Rights Act*
- 25th Anniversary of the US Bishops' pastoral "*Brothers and Sisters to Us*"

A Snapshot of Black Catholics

How many Blacks are there in the US?

- 34,658,190
- The 2000 US Census determined that Blacks made up 12.3% of the total population of 281,421,906.

Black Catholics in the United States

- There are 62.7 million Roman Catholics in the United States, according to the 2003 Official Catholic Directory.
- According to Archbishop Wilton Gregory,* past president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops:
 - Americans of African ancestry now constitute the second largest identifiable group within the United States.
 - Black Catholics are projected to be 2.4 million of the total US Catholic population. However, he states that:
 - "Without the benefit of a formal census, [the exact number of] African American Catholics is uncertain due to the increase of [blacks] from South and Central America who have been

welcomed within Black parishes because of their appearance yet who could thus be counted among the Hispanic communities because their primary language is Spanish. Added to this number is the growing number of Africans now living in America."

*From: *Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics*, presented at the University of Notre Dame, March 2004.

Black Catholic parishes in the United States

Of the 6,841 parishes that reported racial/ethnic composition on the 2000 *CARA National Parish Inventory*, 547 parishes (8%) are more than 40% Black.

Some Jesuit parishes with a significant Black congregation:

- Holy Cross Parish: Durham, NC
- Holy Rosary and St. John Parish: Columbus, OH
- St. Matthew the Apostle Parish: St. Louis, MO
- Immaculate Conception Parish: Baton Rouge, LA
- St. Patrick Parish: Oakland, CA
- St. Aloysius Gonzaga Parish: New York, NY
- St. Anne Parish: Buffalo, NY
- St. Benedict the Moor Parish: Omaha, NE
- St. Aloysius Gonzaga Parish: Washington, DC

The Black Catholic Population Today

BEVERLY CARROLL AND JAMES CAVENDISH

Perhaps one of the most distinguishing features of the Black Catholic population today is its ethnic diversity. According to the data gathered from the *US Congregational Life Survey*, 35 percent of Black Catholic parishioners today were born outside of the US, and only about half of this group of first-generation immigrants came from another English-speaking country. This means that the current portrait of Black Catholics is tremendously multicultural. In fact, several Diocesan Offices of Black Ministry recently reported that, as a result of immigration from Africa and the Caribbean, there has been a swelling in the population of Haitian, Nigerian, Sudanese, Congolese, Ethiopian, Liberian, and Trinidadian communities (among others) in their dioceses. As a result, the Church's efforts to reach out to the Black Catholic community today must demonstrate understanding of and respect for these various cultures.

Another distinguishing feature of the Black Catholic population today is its regional and municipal concentration. The largest and most visible clusters of Black Catholics are in the states of their original settlement and recent migration, which include Louisiana, Maryland,

“Many Black Catholics, like middle-class Blacks in general, have been leaving their historic communities in center-city areas and migrating to the suburbs.”

Illinois, and New York. The presence of Black Catholics in the United States has its roots in people of French-Caribbean descent living along the Louisiana gulf coast and in the African slaves brought to Maryland as early as the 17th century. As a result, a large population of Black Catholics of French-Caribbean descent can be found today in Louisiana,

Maryland and Washington, D.C., are home to many Black Catholics who are descendants of Maryland slaves, and Chicago is home to a large population of Black Catholics who migrated north during the 20th century in search of jobs in the industrial sector. Black Catholic inhabitants of New York and Brooklyn represent an interesting mix of African American descendants of slaves and more recent immigrants from Haiti and various islands of the Caribbean, including St. Lucia, Trinidad, and Antigua.

Besides this regional clustering of Black Catholics, the recent migration of Blacks within metropolitan areas has led to different patterns of municipal concentrations. Many Black Catholics, like middle-class Blacks in general, have been leaving their historic communities in center-city areas and migrating to the suburbs. This appears to be having some influ-

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U.S. Black Catholic religious

Black Catholic bishops: 14
 Black Catholic sisters: 500 (est.)
 Black Catholic priests: 250 (est.)
 Black Catholic deacons: 400 (est.)

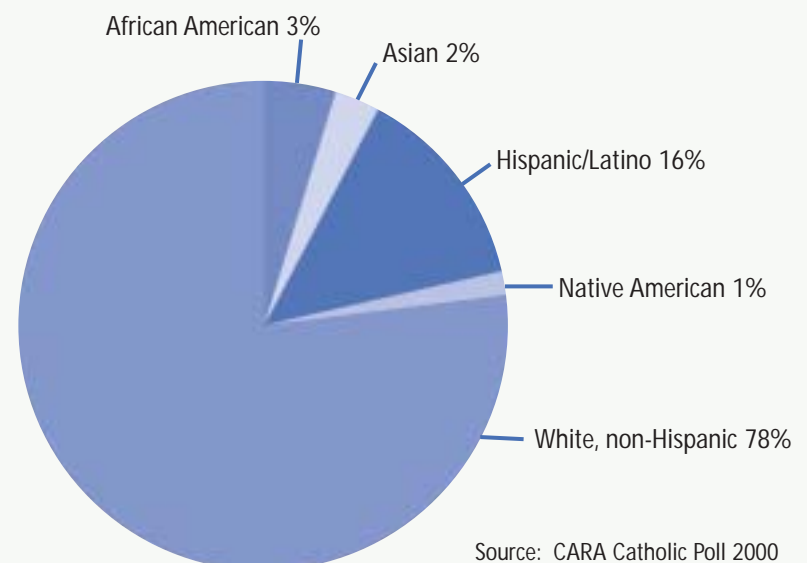
Sources: USCCB Office of African American Ministry; and Archbishop Wilton Gregory, Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics, presented at the University of Notre Dame, March 2004.

Black Catholics comprise approximately:

- 15 percent of Catholics in Louisiana
- 13 percent of Catholics in Maryland
- 7 percent of Catholics in New York

Source: Catholicism USA: A Portrait of the Catholic Church in the United States, by Bryan Froehle and Mary Gautier. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University: Orbis Books (Maryknoll, NY), 2000.

Growing Catholic Population: Ethnic Diversity
 Estimated ethnic composition of U.S. Catholics



Who Are Black Catholics Today?

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

-- Nelson Mandela, 1994
Inaugural Speech

ence on the programs of ministry to the Black Catholic population because the out-migration of Blacks means that, first, Blacks are no longer always geographically concentrated in a cluster of inner-city parishes, and second, Blacks are increasingly finding themselves in suburban parishes in which they are a minority. Some pastors in these settings find it difficult to fully include Black Catholics who are a minority in their predominantly white congregations.

Despite some modest fluctuations over the past few decades, Blacks' share of the US Catholic population has remained fairly stable at approximately three percent. Because the percentage of Blacks identifying themselves as "Catholic" has remained fairly stable across time, any suggestion that Blacks may be leaving the Catholic Church in order to join Protestant Evangelical churches appears to be unfounded. If anything, the statistical evidence supports the conclusion that Catholicism retains its appeal among Blacks in the US.

Experience of Disenfranchisement

Although the percentage of Blacks who identify as "Catholic" has remained fairly stable over the last several decades, this doesn't mean that

Blacks' experience of Catholicism has been all positive. Historically, the US Catholic Church has disenfranchised its African American members by embracing the oppressive and discriminatory practices that

"Blacks are increasingly finding themselves in suburban parishes in which they are a minority. Some pastors in these settings find it difficult to fully include Black Catholics who are a minority in their predominantly white congregations."

plagued the entire country. During the 19th century, for instance, the Church participated in slavery, forced Blacks to remain in the back of churches during Mass, and did not provide Blacks with a proportional amount of human and financial resources.

Today's challenges include ensuring full inclusion and equal representation of Black Catholics

in the life and leadership of the Church. These challenges were acknowledged in the US Bishops' pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (1979), which called upon the U.S. Catholic Church at every level to confront racism in all of its forms and work toward full inclusion. Although our recent survey of directors of diocesan Offices of Black Ministry revealed that most directors agree that their "diocese values the presence of Black Catholics" and that their "diocese is sensitive to the needs of the Black community," the same survey revealed that more work needed to be done to foster vocations in the Black community, to reach out more effectively to Black youth, to recruit and train more lay pastoral ministers in the Black community, and to provide better education to non-Black priests, seminarians, and ministers who work in the Black community. For more information on how the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is addressing these concerns, contact the USCCB's Secretariat for African American Catholics (www.usccb.org).

The challenge to the Church today is to become familiar with the rich diversity of Black Catholic communities in the United States. There is a vitality and an enthusiasm in these communities which if properly tended to will bear rich fruit. ♦

What are some of the characteristics of Blacks who attend Catholic parishes today?

The US Congregational Life Survey was designed to provide the most representative profile of worshipers ever developed in the US. It collected information on the religious beliefs, values, and practices of various worshippers from different religious congregations across the country, including 831 Black Catholic respondents.

Examining these data reveals an interesting portrait of churchgoing Black Catholics today:

- 62% are female and 38% are male.
- Average age is 40 years old. Those in their 20s are least represented.
- Over 75% have completed high school; 51% percent have pursued higher education; and 34% have bachelors, masters, or other graduate degrees.
- 47% report being married or re-married, and 12% are in single-parent households.

Source: Beverly Carroll and John Cavendish, USCCB Office of African American Catholics

Do We Really Want to Do This? Jesuits and Black Catholic Ministry

REV. JOHN LIBENS, S.J.

The phone rang early on a Sunday morning. On the other end, the provincial said he was inclined to assign me as principal of our high school in Detroit. I babbled reasons for why I was not a good candidate, ending with “and I don’t know anything about racial division and racial problems in a school.” Another man took the job, but it was not the last time I would plead ignorance about racial problems.

I had been part of the Civil Rights marches of the 1960s; I asked to go to Selma; I participated in “house packing” as the Contract Buyers League attempted to stave off evictions in Chicago’s Lawndale section while black home owners faced redlining and other discriminatory practices. I was in Chicago when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and visited neighbors of slum landlords the next day to acquaint them with the implications of their actions. I had taught about racism in my social problems classes in Cleveland and Chicago. I knew lots of theory, had some experiences, knew some black people, but I did not fully appreciate the distinctiveness of black liturgies or understand the depth of inter-racial relations and problems.

In all of these experiences, I have been a helper or observer from the outside rather than a collaborator who is part of a lived experience of community. My Detroit Province was asked by the Church to minister to African Americans when some of us would have preferred to minister to Hispanics who were, after all, probably Catholic in greater numbers and closer to our tradition. However, my brothers and their colleagues in the province have made genuine commitments to respond to the needs of African Americans. But we do it as helpers and not as collaborators within the community. This is not a criticism of those men and women – far from it. They are doing what I

cannot do. It is apparent that many very fine Jesuits do not think they can do it either as I have heard them say “I’m not comfortable with inner city work,” or “I’m not comfortable with that population.” No malice, no lack of generosity, but possibly fear and a genuine sense of inadequacy.

“...until we have more than a “dialogue with African-American culture” and more than “experiences” and theoretical knowledge, we will continue to falter and fail in this important mission. Perhaps it is because of ignorance and perhaps it is, more fundamentally, a fear seeded by a deep, basic, and unrecognized prejudice which is hard to admit.”

The late Archbishop James Lyke, O.F.M., in addressing a gathering of Jesuits in the Detroit Province, said that if we wanted to be of assistance to African Americans in the United States we should concentrate on making our educational opportunities available to them. We would do better, he said, to concentrate our energies there than to spend our time on other direct service to African Americans, which his community could do better than the Jesuits! Perhaps Archbishop Lyke’s wisdom has penetrated, for we are doing just that, not only in the Detroit Province but throughout the Assistancy, from Roxbury in Boston to Watts in Los Angeles and many places in between.

The development of Nativity schools and Cristo Rey model schools in African American neighborhoods testifies to the Society’s continued interest and hopes in this ministry. And yet, despite our ministries and the many fine young men whom we encounter, we have been singularly unsuccessful in my province in attracting African Americans to the Society of Jesus.

In my own mind, the Society’s goals in African-American ministry are simple: (1) to be a presence of Jesus Christ and Christ’s Church in the community; (2) to learn and absorb the richness of Black Catholic tradition in worship, bible study, and endurance; (3) to provide educational opportunities in the African American community to address the needs both of those who cannot afford a quality education and those who are not ready, because of poor educational backgrounds, to profit from such an educational experience; (4) to attempt to assist members of the community in addressing the needs they have in an array of social issues; and (5) to learn that we have much to learn. I think this comes from our mission and inspiration of faith and justice.

We are faithfully attempting to do this with the help of our lay colleagues, without whom this would be impossible. But until we have more than a “dialogue with African-American culture” and more than “experiences” and theoretical knowledge, we will continue to falter and fail in this important mission. Perhaps it is because of ignorance and perhaps it is, more fundamentally, a fear seeded by a deep, basic, and unrecognized prejudice which is hard to admit. We do not have all the answers. We do need help if we are to serve our African American brothers and sisters well. But do we have the humility to ask for the help? Down deep, do we really want to do this? ✧

The celebration of the Sacred Mysteries is that moment when the Church is most fully actualized and most clearly revealed. In the African-American tradition communal worship has always been an experience of God’s power and love. From the standpoint of evangelization, the liturgy of the Catholic Church has always drawn the Black community to the Faith. In recent years talented Black experts have adapted the liturgy to the needs of the African-American community without compromising the essential qualities of the liturgical celebration. The Mystery of Christ transcends all cultures; the way the Mystery is expressed is mediated by culture and tradition. In this way we can speak of an African-American style in music, preaching, bodily expression, vestment and tempo. There is a splendid opportunity for the vast richness of African-American culture to be expressed in our Catholic liturgy.

-- From ‘What We Have Seen and Heard’, a pastoral letter on evangelization from the Black bishops of the United States, 1984.

Fr. John Libens (Detroit Province) serves as superior of the Jesuit First Studies Program at Loyola University, Chicago. He has been provincial of the Detroit Province, a high school principal and president, assistant for formation and secondary education for the Detroit Province, and rector of the Weston Jesuit Community in Cambridge.

Building Bridges in Black and Brown: People of the Pyramids

REV. CLARENCE WILLIAMS, CPPS

Mission Statement of *Bridge Builders in Black and Brown*:

“We, the participants in the Building Bridges in Black and Brown conferences, convene as ethnically, religiously, politically and socially diverse persons united by a commitment to bring the African-American and the Hispanic/Latino communities into an ongoing national dialogue.”

The title of “Building Bridges in Black and Brown: People of the Pyramids” is an effort to provide a new paradigm for the future of dialogue between African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos. “People of the Pyramids” is a vision of Blacks and Browns appreciating our communities’ continuous relationship in history for over two thousand years. In Ivan Van Sertima’s book, *They Came Before Columbus*, he writes of the research surrounding the contributions of ancient Africans from Egypt that are present today in Mexico. These African explorers arrived in Mesoamerica, present day Central and North America, and shared their cultural genius from the Nile Valley of Egypt. This sharing of African genius, along with the culture of the native people of that time, became the foundation of the Olmec culture, which is the mother culture of the Aztecs, the Incas and others.

Just as the Great Pyramids of Egypt speaks to the greatness of African genius four millennia ago, the Pyramids of Mesoamerica attest to the great interchange of cultural dialogue between African people and the peoples of ancient America. The paradigm of “people of the pyramids” can excite a new and powerful sharing between these two communities. Both communities’ histories forever changed with the war waged on the indigenous populations of the Americas, and the enslavement of millions of Africans and their transport to the Americas. A new lens is needed to put the ancient exchange between the continents and the genocidal horrors of these people into a perspective to assist the present generation with a rationale as well as a vision for a mutual struggle to overcome the intergenerational effects of 500 years of oppression.

“People of the pyramids” suggests the building of a relationship that is symbolized by the lasting testimony to the great achievements of Blacks and Browns before the advent of European domination and exploitation. To the paradigmatic images of the Pyramids of Egypt and the Pyramids of Mesoamerica, add the pyramid on the reverse side of the American One Dollar bill. This pyramid speaks to the American enterprise of the founding fathers, in which the Native American and the African in Diaspora were the laborers for this new civilization at the expense of their freedom, their culture, and their lives for generations upon generations. The American Pyramid of Oppression is another face of the experience of Blacks and Hispanics.

In the paradigm of “people of the pyramids,” consider a pyramid’s four faces. In this paradigm, the three faces cited are the African/Egyptian face, the Olmec face, and the American face. The fourth face of the “people of the pyramid” paradigm is the face of opportunity to build a just world order in our time. The African American and the Hispanic/Latino communities are at a crucial moment in history. The communities can share in the greatness of the collaborative building of a new pyramid that elevates the society in which we live, and share or pass on the burden of this task to future generations. The fourth face of the “people of the pyramids” paradigm is the opportunity to make a difference, a difference in the American pyramid of oppression that is crushing the life of the African American and Hispanic/Latino communities under its construction.

To begin our work on the new face of the pyramid in our time, the “bridge building” process serves our two communities

well. Our movement of dialogue, “Building Bridges in Black and Brown,” encourages leaders in both communities to pursue five powerful acts of social engagement that “builds bridges.” The five acts of social engagement are: Conversation, Connections, Considerations, Construction and Crossing. Just as massive stones were used in the Pyramids of Gizeh in Egypt, small stones in Teotihuacan, Mexico and the labor of millions of Hispanic/Latinos and African Americans in the American pyramid, these five acts of social engagement are the materials of the fourth face of the “people of the pyramids” paradigm.

1) Conversations: We need to talk with one another. Whether it is in Detroit, Los Angeles, Mexico City, San Juan in Puerto Rico, or the Cuban community of Miami, we need to talk. There are several conversations that are going on in this country. In July of 1995, Black and Hispanic/Latino journalists met in Atlanta. Professional groups in the government have also met in this regard. In the Catholic Church, Hispanic and Black theologians have met, and our Black and Hispanic/Latino bishops have met regularly in the last two years and have plans for issuing a pastoral letter on Blacks and Browns working together in the Church and in the community. So the conversation between the two communities has moved from a small group at the edge of both communities to the center of discussion for both communities in society and in the Church.

Building bridges begins with a dialogue between both communities. Leaders of the two communities need to encounter one another. It is a process that involves questions and the ability to listen not only to words but to their meaning and context. A dialogue leads to revising what we think that we know. A dialogue

Fr. Williams is a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. He served in the Archdiocese of Detroit for 26 years, as Pastor of St. Anthony Church for 15 years, and is presently the director of the Office of Black Catholic Ministries. In the area of cultural communication, Fr. Williams is the co-founder of Building Bridges, a program that presents workshops on how to “bridge” between racial and cultural groups.

speaks of discovering a reality together with one another and because of one another. Dialogue is shared discovery, a discovery of my reality as it interacts with another's. One of the opportunities of the Black and Brown dialogue is that we hear the stories from our own mouths, not from the media representing or re-presenting our stories, perspectives, concerns and struggles. We observe the workings of our reasoning patterns, our blind spots, our convictions and our doubts. In the dialogue fear can be eliminated, along with ignorance.

2) Connections: Building Bridges is establishing connections between the two communities so as to focus on what both share. The African American and the Hispanic/Latino communities share history, culture and social concerns.

The efforts at making connections between and parallels to the mutual experience of Blacks and Browns in this country will develop a new history of this civilization, a history that tells the sojourn of two peoples in a land of oppression. This is not a new effort. In Ted Vincent's great work *Black Mexico: An Anthology*, we see the wealth of the history of the ties between African American and the Hispanic/Latino communities. Vincent cites an interesting parallel between the present day United States and Mexico. At the time of their independence both countries had a Black population of 10 percent. The difference in the Black communities in both countries is a conversation waiting to be held. This is also true of the Black experience throughout Central and South America. The most common language for the African diaspora in the Americas is Portuguese, followed by Spanish, English and French. A conversation concerning the historical relationship between African slaves and the indigenous population would redefine the national identity of many of the nations in the Americas. These connections are long overdue.

3) Considerations There are some immediate considerations in the effort to build bridges. One key issue is the constituency of this enterprise. Building in Black and Brown communities presumes the participation of African-Americans who have a sense of "Black consciousness" in their social and political identity. The members of

the African-American community who are "not into their Blackness" probably would not find this conference appealing. In the Black community, there are considerations of Black identity and multi-identities. This is also true in the Hispanic/Latino community. The term "Brown" speaks to the Chicano movement of the Western states. Some Hispanics who do not consider themselves "Brown" might take offense at this term agreed on by the national coordinators of this conference. As we seek to open this dialogue to the entire Hispanic/Latino experience, we are still feeling our way, but considerations are an important part of building the bridges. We maintain the title, *Building Bridges in Black and Brown*, and now use the subtitle, *A National Dialogue between the African American and Hispanic/Latino Communities*.

"One of the opportunities of the Black and Brown dialogue is that we hear the stories from our own mouths, not from the media representing or re-presenting our stories, perspectives, concerns and struggles. We observe the workings of our reasoning patterns, our blind spots, our convictions and our doubts. In the dialogue fear can be eliminated, along with ignorance."

Leaders of both communities bring their considerations to the table for discussion, the lenses of race, multiculturalism, bilingual education, economic development, political enfranchisement, immigration, segregation, discrimination, affirmative action, etc. African American leaders are cautioned by the Hispanic/Latino community about framing strategies for both communities from a perspective of Civil Rights; while leaders of the African American community are hesitant to embrace the call from the Hispanic/Latinos to put language and cultural discrimination as an issue to gather around.

An aspect that appears to be a great obstacle to dialogue between the African American and Hispanic/Latino community is the established leadership in each of the respective communities. In our national organizing, there have been many established leaders in both communities, pastors and politicians who inform those

seeking this dialogue to wait, to delay. Those seeking a dialogue between the two communities will hear, "we have a long way to go before we are ready for a dialogue like this."

4) Construction: Bridge building construction is needed throughout the country, in states such as Florida, New York, California and Texas. As the Hispanic/Mexican populations have grown in the heartlands of Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Indianapolis, St. Louis and other large cities, more bridging effort needs to be done. This awareness must be educated and enlightened. One needed element for the construction of bridges is to equip our emerging leadership with the skills to cross-culturally communicate. This need for "cultural intelligence" is crucial to our appreciation of both communities. Our construction of a shared

future can then be built on empathy and the need for both communities to experience and exercise empowerment.

The Hispanic/Latino community is as diverse as the African American community. Today, we realize in the United States that Puerto Ricans have a poverty rate greater than the African American community, while the Cuban community's income is the highest in the Hispanic/Latino community and exceeds that of many African Americans. Each region of the country will have its own particular demographic dynamics on which the dialogue is constructed. In the movement of building bridges, national conferences moved from San Antonio, Texas in the southwest to Detroit, Michigan in the Midwest to Rochester, New York in the east to Los Angeles, California in the west.

5) Crossing: By crossing, we mean the ability to relate to another community in an ongoing

mutually communicative and beneficial way. Crossing is what 'building bridges' is all about: the ability to journey from one community to another where there was a chasm, river, valley or other insurmountable obstacle. A bridge helps us to overcome the impasse and to cross over. Crossing from the Black community into the Brown Community and vice-versa is what building bridges is all about.

Crossing the bridge requires strategies that inform both communities of proposals for ending poverty and criminal activity, and fostering quality education, housing and community development. Crossing into one another's community is needed for both Blacks and Browns to evolve socially through broadening our network of agencies and the power of our activism. Our crossing must take us into a future of *togetherness* or we face a future of being *together in madness*. In the face of the American Pyramid of Oppression, the federal and state reorganization of services directed towards our communities has pitted the poor against the underclass and both against the working class and the middle class, all of whom are afraid of their status as the possible poor of the future.

Conclusion

Despite the uneasiness and anxiety of collaboration between these communities, each side will have to produce the leaders that the 21st century will demand, leaders who have moved beyond imitating the status quo of American politics and culture. Leaders who are pioneers and prophets in guiding their respective communities into a greater vision and are able to work in solidarity with a broader sense of struggle. Leadership initiates the "crossing" aspect of building bridges. Let us commit ourselves as community leaders to seizing the present opportunity to build a pyramid for all people based on justice and peace for everyone. A pyramid of justice that will stand and give witness to our commitment to see each person as brother and sister. May the emerging architects of a shared future commit themselves to building a pyramid of peace and prosperity within and outside of our communities that will stand and endure as long as the edifices of our African and our Native American ancestors' pyramids-. ♦

Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in Louisiana.

<http://www.xula.edu/IBCS/>

Tolton Program in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

<http://www.ctu.edu/WhatWeDo/toltonprogram.htm>

Thea Bowman Institute, Archdiocese of Louisville, Office of Multicultural Ministry.

<http://www.archlou.org>

Naimah Ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

<http://www.archbalt.org/ministries-offices/african-american-catholic-ministries/index.cfm>

Fr. Deck (California Province), is president of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, California.

Ignatian and African American Spiritualities: Shifting Paradigms

REV. ALLAN FIGUEROA DECK, S.J.

The Need for a New Paradigm

There is a need for a *paradigm shift* if Ignatian spirituality is to thrive outside the narrow white, middle-class milieu. Exchanges with Ignatian spirituality promoters in Latin America, Asia and Africa confirm the sea change now underway in our approach to Spiritual Exercises.

How would I describe the prevailing paradigm that needs revision? First, the world of spirituality in the United States and Europe is decidedly middle class. By that I mean that spirituality is pursued by individuals, often outside the context of family, community or church.

Those who know African American, Latino or other non-Western cultures or have worked with the poor know that an approach to spirituality that gives pride of place to individualistic spiritual practices is doomed to failure. To attempt moving most of the Blacks or Latinos/as whom we wish to serve with spiritual ministries in that direction is really to do them a disservice.

The unspoken emphasis is on isolated people pursuing their ends, not communities of faith building on their collective passions. There is little doubt, for instance, that the greatest spiritual force in the life of African Americans is the revival, with its strong preaching and emotions, music and irrepressible conviviality. Similarly, the charismatic renewal has been hugely successful among many Latinos/as. Pulling these groups back from their spontaneous and strongly affective style of spirituality may actually be doing violence to

them. Where is *silence* in all of this? With these communities, when is the right time to open them up to the important role of silence? How can that happen? Certainly, one wouldn't want to *start* there.

The Strong Residue of Clerical and Celibate Culture

The strong historic tendency to make European and North American male religious and clerical life the prototype for the spiritual life has perhaps led to a reluctance or

“There is little doubt, for instance, that the greatest spiritual force in the life of African Americans is the revival, with its strong preaching and emotions, music and irrepressible conviviality.”

inability to root that life in the reality of working people, new races, cultures, married couples and families. Many years after the Second Vatican Council, our approach to vocation as well as spirituality betrays a clerical and religious order elitism. This contributes to the strangeness, the lack of proper adaptation, of our spirituality ministries to significant groups like the Blacks and Hispanics.

It has been well noted that the most formative period in the elaboration of Spiritual Exercises took place while Ignatius was a layman. The implications of that fact are only now dawning on us. Historians like Fr. John O'Malley,

S.J., have pointed out the apostolic creativity and adaptability of the first Jesuits. Jesuit Superior General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach has coined the expression “evangelizing exercises” to refer to new approaches that take the Ignatian charism to ordinary people in a manner more consistent with a Church that claims to have evangelization as its primordial mission. That means applying the Ignatian heritage with new expressions and methods.

Those involved in the world of spirituality in the United States today, however, have been influenced by the important changes, the revolution, that took place in the giving of Spiritual Exercises 40 years ago, after Vatican II. Their emphasis is on personally-directed, one-on-one retreat experiences. The preached forms of giving Spiritual Exercises that dominated the Jesuit imagination for centuries fell into disrepute. Yet one might argue that there is no inherent reason why preached retreats might not remain in our Ignatian toolbox, especially in the case of cultures whose hearts can be moved by powerful preaching. The directed retreat is, to be sure, a particularly authentic modality for Spiritual Exercises, but it does not exhaust the approaches that also can and should be used *tantum quantum*.

New Paradigm In Gestation

What is the new paradigm toward which I believe we are slowly lurching? This one takes people where they are. It begins with opening up the subject of prayer and its many forms in the lives of

ordinary Christians. The first step consists of making Ignatian experiences and insights accessible. People are not removed from their environments but rather come to encounter God *within* them. The key for this is prayer.

Ignatian spiritual formation must be *ecclesial*. If it is to be truly Christian, that formation must take people back to their roots in family, community, parish. Strange as it may sound, sometimes the pursuit of spirituality in the U.S. has the opposite effect: it contributes to a basically therapeutic ethos of individual fulfillment that bears little resemblance to real Christian discipleship.

Blacks and Hispanics already have a kind of innate community sense and profound spiritual orientation nurtured on centuries of resistance to oppression. In a grossly secular world, a much-forgotten but not insignificant spiritual practice called "spiritual conversation" is still pursued with certain naturalness by Blacks and Latino/as. For example, it is not so difficult or awkward for many Blacks and Hispanics to bring God into their everyday affairs and talk about it. With ease, they invoke God's presence and blessing for meals and special occasions. God's name is explicitly mentioned within the context of struggle, sickness and pain as well as joys. There is vulnerability in a people who have greatly suffered that permits them to get down more easily to the level of the heart. This is the level of spirituality. Over the years I have per-

ceived the strong affective, spiritual quality of conversion and expressiveness in many Blacks and Hispanics I have known and their relative ease in sharing it. Any spiritual director will tell you that this affectivity is grist for the spiritual life.

The resistance to oppression takes shape in stunning aesthetic forms such as the Black Spirituals and in stirring oratory of great

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preachers like Martin Luther King, Jr. There is a sense of God's loving presence in history, in time, one that bears an affinity to Ignatius' emphasis on memory's big role in the spiritual journey. Those who want to introduce African Americans to the Ignatian Exercises accordingly need to build on this collective memory, these affinities, and raise them up, rather than ignore or, worse, deny them.

If one is working with African Americans or Hispanics, effective application of Ignatian insights into the relationship with God requires more attention to the tendency to seek strong images and spiritual affinities from both the Bible itself and from a rich Christian tradition.

Sooner or later, of course, the dynamics of Ignatian Exercises take a person to that point of freedom that is a profoundly personal encounter with the Lord, that moment of *suscipe*. "Take, Lord, receive..." In this, no doubt, Ignatian exercises take us beyond a comfortable cultural fit, our comfort zones or our natural spiritual affinities.

The new paradigm is emerging in the developing world and now in the United States, the home of significant numbers of non-European, non-white Christians. In that process, bridge-builders are needed. For only African Americans and Latinos/as themselves can provide the legitimate basis for the ongoing task of giving birth to a paradigm of spirituality suitable for themselves and for new times and situations. These bridge-builders need to know the Ignatian heritage well and be practitioners of it, but they also need to know in a reflective and critical way their own histories of struggle, their cultural values and deep spiritual and religious orientations. The development of an appropriate paradigm is an urgent task if we are to find a fit between Ignatian spirituality and the deepest longings and desires of African Americans. ✧

Did you know that.....

At the dawn of the Third Millennium, the year 2000, there were 200 million Catholics of African descent throughout the world.

Source: The Catholic African World Network

"Black Spirituality" has four major characteristics.

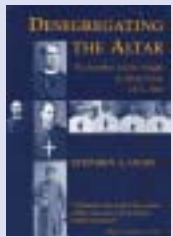
- 1) Black Spirituality is contemplative. Prayer is spontaneous and pervasive in the Black tradition. Our ancestors taught that we cannot run from God, we must lean on him and surrender to his love.
- 2) Black Spirituality is holistic. The religious experience is one of the whole human being - feelings, intellect, heart and head.
- 3) Black Spirituality is joyful, a celebration in movement, song, rhythm, feeling and thanksgiving. This joy is a sign of our faith.

- 4) Black Spirituality is communal. In African culture individual identity is found within the context of the community. The good of the community must come before personal profit and advancement. In the same way worship is a celebration of community with no one being left out or forgotten. Community also means social concern and social justice. Our spiritual heritage always embraces the total human person.

-- From 'What We Have Seen and Heard', a pastoral letter on evangelization from the Black bishops of the United States, 1984.

Profiles: Two Black Religious Orders

The Josephites and the Black Catholic Ministry Today



Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960

Stephen J. Ochs
(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

A broad examination of African-American, southern and Church history to explain the paucity of black clergy in the Catholic Church.

Stephen Ochs teaches at Georgetown Prep, a Jesuit high school in Bethesda, Maryland.

Since the Society of St. Joseph came into existence in 1871, its mission has been the same: to be a community of priests and brothers dedicated to working in and with the African American community in the United States. The Josephites, as they are commonly called, have as their sole responsibility evangelization in and with the African American community. Over the years, this apostolate has taken on many and varied programs and ministries, including parishes, schools, hospital chaplaincies and more.

Serving in more than 13 states, particularly in the South, the Josephites at one time staffed 173 parishes with more than 150 parishioners in small towns as well as large cities. There were often schools associated with these parishes, and the Josephites continue to staff 18, although some have had to close or merge with others. At St. Augustine High School in New Orleans, which opened in 1950, more than 800 African American young men are receiving an education.

The school apostolate allowed the Josephites to work with many different communities of sisters, including the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, the Oblate Sisters of Providence (*see article on p. 15*) and the Holy Family Sisters.

Realizing from the very beginning that lay leadership was important for growth, the Josephites spearheaded the re-institution of the permanent diaconate in the United States.

In 1909, they were co-founders of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver. The vast number of parishioners continues to give leadership in the wider Church throughout the country.

Three Josephite priests have become bishops: the late Archbishop Eugene Marino of Atlanta, the late Bishop Carl A. Fisher of Los Angeles and Bishop Jon Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee. Under these and other African American leaders, the National Black Catholic Congress movement has grown since 1987. New voices and ideas continue to be heard as Josephite-trained men and women have taken roles as mayors, judges,

politicians and members of parish councils. From coast to coast, doctors, dentists, lawyers and successful businessmen and women trace their education and development to Josephite schools or churches. The Josephites continue to be credible witnesses and voices in the African American community.

The call of change has prompted the Josephites to begin a House of Formation in Nigeria, inviting young men from that country to join the apostolate.

The challenges are ever evolving in the African American community as well as the Catholic Church. The Josephites strive to meet these ever changing realities. Racism still plagues our society. Disregard for life still threatens our future. The Josephites continue to pursue their mission to evangelize their own members and institutions with the same enthusiasm they have always exhibited, remaining faithful to the Gospel they proclaim. ♦

Compiled from "The Josephites. A Century of Evangelization in African American Community." 1993.

A tradition of Evangelization

REV. CYPRIAN DAVIS, OSB

The African American Catholic approach to evangelization has traditionally been twofold: work for the conversion of black Catholics and work for the elimination of racism within the Catholic Church in the United States. If blacks have offered to the Catholic Church their artistry, their spirituality, and their sense of grace-filled liturgical celebration, they have also contributed holiness as portrayed in men and women whose lives mirrored the holiness of Jesus and upon whose backs his cross was laid. They include, among the many:

■ Lincoln Vallé, contemporary of Daniel Rudd, began his career as a journalist in St Louis and later acted as a correspondent for Rudd's *American Catholic Tribune*. A member of all of

the black lay Catholic congresses, by 1911 Vallé was working as a lay apostle in the black neighborhood of Milwaukee. He organized the St. Benedict the Moor Mission, and with the approval of Archbishop Messmer, opened a school and constructed a chapel. In 1911, the Capuchins established the parish of St. Benedict the Moor, after which relations between Vallé, his wife, and the Capuchin friars deteriorated. While the records clearly show that the initial work among Milwaukee's black population began with Vallé, the friars were unable to accept the ministry of a layman, especially a black layman, once the parish had been recognized. Vallé and his wife returned to Chicago. The date of his death is uncertain.¹ *For further reading, see L.C. Valle's 1924 piece "The Catholic Church and the Negro" in the online edition of In All Things.*

■ Lay leadership and lay ministry characterized the contributions of black Catholics. Black determination for a rightful place in the Church was a battle led by leaders such as Thomas Wyatt Turner (1877-1978), who began the Federated Colored Catholics in 1925. Writing to the bishops in 1932, he stated: "...the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States have prepared a statement of the things that colored Catholics wish to have done to advance the true religion in their own lives to present our holy faith to all non-Catholic colored people that the Church may win them for Christ."² In the mind of black Catholics, evangelization must be permeated with the teaching on justice.

■ The Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853) was brought to this country from Haiti

Oblate Sisters of Providence - 175 Years Young

SR. M. REGINALD GERDES, OSP

2004 marks the 175th anniversary of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Founded in Baltimore in 1829, this congregation holds the distinction of being the oldest African American community of Sisters in the United States. Two refugees from Saint Dominique (now Haiti) started the order: James Joubert was a tax collector and Elizabeth Lange a free woman of color.

In time, James Joubert answered the call to become a Sulpician priest. After ordination, he was given the duty of teaching catechism to the children of color. He needed help in instructing the children and Elizabeth came to his aid. She confided to Joubert her desire to consecrate herself to God as a religious but in 1828, that option was not available to women of color, so they decided to start an order to educate black children in a Catholic environment. The archbishop gave his approval for the new community,

stating that "The finger of God is here."

In 1828, four black women began their formation by opening a school with both day students and boarders, some of whom were orphans and called

"Founded in Baltimore in 1829, this congregation holds the distinction of being the oldest African American community of Sisters in the United States."

children of the house. As such, St. Frances Academy, located in Baltimore, was born and is today the oldest Black Catholic School in the U.S.

After the death of the founders, the sisters faced many

hardships including the absence of a priest to minister to them. Over the years, the sisters have been aided by the Redemptorists, the Jesuits and the Josephites.

Today, in addition to instructing youth from preschool to twelfth grade, the Oblate Sisters of Providence run a home for young girls, serve as CCD coordinators and teachers, do social work, serve in senior centers and perform a variety of outreach programs.

In the United States, the sisters minister in Maryland, Florida and New York; abroad, they serve in Costa Rica, where a formation house trains sisters for ministry in developing countries.

To learn more, see the most recent study on Mary Elizabeth Lange and the Oblate Sisters of Providence: Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time. The Oblate Sisters of Providence. 1828-1860.* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). ♦

The Oblate Sisters of Providence declaration of mission:

"We, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, faithful to our Charism and to the Spirituality of our Founders and trusting in Divine Providence, do declare our mission is to embrace others with the same compassion with which Christ embraces us, sharing with all the unconditional love of the Suffering Jesus."

Sr. Reginald Gerdes, OSP is the archivist and historian for the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

as a slave in the Bérard family. As a hairdresser in New York, he quietly supported his penniless owner until her death. Liberated at last, he moved freely from the homes of the great ladies of New York where he was hairdresser, confidante, and saintly example back to the neighborhoods of the poor and the sick, the abandoned and the needy, both black and white, young and old, whom he aided and nursed, ministered to and served through a lifetime. At his funeral, he was generally acknowledged a saint.

■ In the 1840s, a community of black sisters was founded in New Orleans, begun as a sodality or confraternity who cared for the elderly and for abandoned former slaves. The Sisters of the Holy Family reached out to the needs of other blacks, teaching catechism and acting as witnesses, sponsors and educators for slaves and other black children. Henriette Delille (c. 1812-1862), a free woman of color, began the ministry along with two

other free women of color, playing a central role in the Church in New Orleans and southern Louisiana. Their work was the evangelization of black Catholics in the Gulf States, and in the beginning they were little known and appreciated. At the end of the nineteenth century their work spread to Belize and other parts of the United States. They were responsible for the foundation of what is now a thriving community of African sisters in the archdiocese of Benin City in Nigeria.³

■ A third community of black sisters, the Handmaids of Mary, was established in 1916 in Savannah, Georgia. Under the leadership of yet another extraordinary woman, Mother Theodore Williams (1868-1931), and with the aid of Ignatius Lissner of the Society of the African Missions, the sisters were to replace the white religious in the black Catholic schools of Georgia. Instead, Mother Theodore Williams heeded the call of

Cardinal Patrick Hayes and moved the community to Harlem, into the heart of New York's African American life and culture. Here the fledgling community, affiliated with the Franciscan friars, began a singular ministry of service to the poor and the hungry and to the care of the children of working mothers.⁴

1 Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., *History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 210-12.; 310-11.

2 "Thomas Wyatt Turner, Black Catholic Lay Leader of the Twentieth Century" in Davis and Phelps, *Stamped with the Image of God*, 92.

3 See Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., *Henriette Delille. Servant of Slaves. Witness to the Poor.* (New Orleans: Archdiocese of New Orleans/Sisters of the Holy Family, 2004) and Virginia Meacham Gould and Charles E. Nolan, eds., *Sister Mary Bernard Deggs. No Cross, No Crown. Black Nuns in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans.* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

4 "Permission Granted to Found the Franciscan Handmaids of Mary, Savannah, 1916" in Davis and Phelps, 'Stamped With the Image of God.' 94.

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The Catholic Church and the Negro

L.C. VALLE

Reprinted from America Magazine, January, 1924



WEB SITES

■ National Black Catholic Congress

<http://www.nbccongress.org/>

Committed to establishing an agenda for the evangelization of African Americans, to improving the spiritual, mental, and physical conditions of African Americans and to the freedom and growth of African Americans as full participants in church and society.

■ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of African American Catholics

<http://www.usccb.org/saac/index.htm>

Provides support for the Bishops' Committee for African American Catholics and is a resource for the all the Bishops and the entire Catholic Church in the U.S. It aims to articulate the socio-cultural dimension of the African American Catholic community and identify or create resources that would allow for an authentic integration of the richness of the African American Catholic culture and the Catholic Church in the United States.

■ Catholic African World Network/Black Catholic Information Mall

<http://www.bcimall.org/>

A project of the Catholic African World Network to establish a constant flow of communications among the 200 million Catholics of African descent in the world today. The BCIMall Home Page is a "Virtual Global Parish Bulletin" for Black Catholic populations throughout the world.

■ "In a Word": A Monthly Publication for and about African-American Catholics

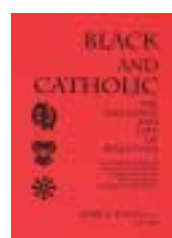
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BOOKS



■ **Black and Catholic: The Challenge and Gift of Black Folk: Contributions of African American Experience and Thought to Catholic**

Theology.

Jamie T. Phelps, O.P., ed. (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1997).

A collection of essays by African American scholars in which they voice their concerns about the state of Catholic higher education.



■ **Theological Studies: The Catholic Reception of Black Theology**

(Milwaukee: Theological Studies, Inc., Marquette University, 2000).
See in particular arti-

cles by James Cone, Diana L. Hayes, and M. Shawn Copeland (Volume 61, No. 4 December 2000).

After years of silence on the evils of racism, Theological Studies publishes an exploration of the fertility and proposals of Black theology in relation to the Catholic tradition.



■ **Stamped with the Image of God: African Americans as God's Image in Black**

Cyprian Davis, OSB and Jamie Phelps, OP, ed. (Maryknoll, New

York: Orbis Books, 2003).

Significant documents attest to the integral role African Americans have played in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.



■ **The History of Black Catholics in the United States**

Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990).

The first full-length treatment of the Black Catholic experience in America.

A substantial bibliography of journal articles and books about the Black Catholic Community can be found at:

<http://www.usccb.org/saac/bblgrphy.pdf>

Publications and videotapes about Black Catholic ministry can also be found at:

<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/multicultural/african.htm>