OFFICE FOR BLACK CATHOLIC MINISTRY

Parish Connection

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A quarterly newsletter for sharing information concerning Black Catholic Ministry

Ecumenical Choir Festival Draws Twelve Hundred Attendees: *Let the Church Sing Amen!*

By Charles O. Prejean, Sr.
Director, Office for Black Catholic Ministry

The James P. Lyke Memorial Mass Choir proclaimed mightily at the Ecumenical Choir Festival held June 30, 2002 in the beautiful sanctuary of Ebenezer Baptist Church

Let the Church Sing Amen! was the title given to the ecumenical worship service, held at the magnificent Horizon Sanctuary of Ebenezer Baptist Church, on Sunday, June 30. The church did sing amen, just ask any one of the 1,200 plus attendees and as the words of the opening song by the James Patterson Lyke Memorial Mass Choir proclaimed:

"We have not come to entertain; We have only come to lift up Jesus' name. Pray for us, pray with us that the Lord might have His way — We come to have church in Jesus' name."

The ecumenical worship service was true to the words of this song. The five Protestant choirs, the three Roman Catholic choirs, the African and Caribbean Catholic drummers, Our Lady Of Lourdes dancers, and Fr. Tim Hepburn gave praise in song and dance.

God Gave the Gift of Song and Dance to Roman Catholics Too!

Can Roman Catholics sing? Not only can we sing, but we can also sing in so many culturally distinct ways. Our Lady of Vietnam Catholic Church Choir, and St. Phillip Benizi's Attebeira (Mother of God) Choir received standing ovations for their outstanding performances.

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Two Converts Receive Rousing Ovation at Eucharistic Congress

By Martin Omosola
Newsletter Editorial Staff

They have many things in common: beliefs in one God, married with children, and have been pastors in non-Catholic churches. But having discovered "the treasures of the Catholic Church," they converted to Catholicism. Two distinguished men, Alex C. Jones and Scott Hahn, Ph.D., revealed their stories to 4,000 of the 10,000 Roman Catholic worshippers celebrating the Eucharistic Congress in Atlanta, Georgia on June 1, 2002.

For 25 years, Alex Jones was pastor of two Protestant congregations: the Pentecostal and later, the Evangelical, in his hometown of Detroit, Michigan. Then in 1998, an idea came to him. He put it into action and his Christian Method of worship changed forever.

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Alex Jones, Pentecostal Pastor
Convert to Catholicism

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Twelve Hundred attended the Ecumenical Choir Festival held in the magnificent Horizon Sanctuary of Ebenezer Baptist Church

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The James P. Lyke Memorial Mass Choir, representing the African American majority Catholic Churches, as well as representatives from other Catholic Churches, demonstrated the considerable range of its qualitative versatility. After its opening rendition, it sang the beautiful selection from Johannes Brahms, "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place", and concluded with the very lively upbeat hymn "He's Been Good to Me".

The Goal of the Choir Festival

The Office for Black Catholic Ministry's Ecumenical Choir Festival was intended to join in a more active and collaborative way, our brothers and sisters of other cultural traditions within our own Roman Catholic Church, and those of other faith traditions in the work of evangelization. We ask our readers to pray with us so that we may be true to our good intentions.

All Honor and Praise to Our Heavenly Father

We thank God for His many Blessings, as well as for His Servant-Leaders who so selflessly and so wonderfully engaged their God given gifts. We call by name and thank Ms. Darice Gamble and Ms. Janis Griffin, co-chair persons, and the members of the *"Let the Church Sing Amen!"* Ecumenical Choir Festival Committee: Bryan Alli, Katherine Woodyard, Marian Willingham,

Fr. Tim Hepburn, Chaplain, Blessed Trinity Catholic High engaged attendees in a sing-a-long.

Jennie Rakestraw, James Gaskin, Lithangia Murry, Bernadette Sybil Scott, Sandy Jordan, Susan Jordan, and Waner Joseph. We extend special thanks to the co-hosts, Monica Kaufman and Fr. Roy Lee, for their extraordinary contribution, and to Rev. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr., Ms. Benita Gaskin and the staff of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Gratitude and Well Wishes Go to All Participants

Our gratitude and well wishes go to all the participants: the J. L. Roberts Men's Chorus, the First Presbyterian Church Choir; the Attebeira (Mother of God) Choir; Central Holiness, Bishop John T. Barnett Choir; the L. S. Macon Gospel Choir; the Cung Viet Choir, Our Lady of Vietnam Catholic Choir; the God's Promised Youth Choir; the Amazing Grace Liturgical Dancers; Fr. Tim Hepburn; Fr. Edward Branch; the Lyke House Drummers; and the James P. Lyke Memorial Mass Choir; and especially its Director Kevin Johnson and its pianist, Val Parker. The Office for Black Catholic Ministry also extends its gratitude to its many supporters and to all the attendees. May God continue his abundant blessings.

Ms. Ophelia Rivera, Attebeira (Mother of God) Choir – St. Phillip Benezi Catholic Church sings solo in Spanish.

Ecumenical Festival Collaborators (l–r). Charles O. Prejean, Sr., Director of the Office for Black Catholic Ministry; Janis Griffin, Co-Chairperson with Darice Gamble (not shown); Fr. Roy Lee, Co-Host; Monica Kaufman, Co-Host; and Rev. Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr., Senior Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church

Where Is Our Presence?

Black Catholics and Young Adult Ministry

By Will Thomas
Newsletter Editorial Staff

Like a wild, starving hyena, Black young adults hunger for intimacy, community, and spirituality from the Catholic Church. They look to engage themselves in social justice activities and programs that promote their spiritual maturity in a way that is relevant to their culture.

Yet Young Adult Ministries have been scarce when it comes to the predominantly Black Catholic Churches in Atlanta. Why is this? Well, some say that Black Catholics are not taking any initiative when it comes to Young Adult Ministry, while others say that the Archdiocese of Atlanta is not making a conscious effort to include Black Catholics.

"Most of the events take place on the Northside of town in Buckhead. Also, I think that the events are not attractive to our young parishioners. We don't have a lot of them, but they are hungry for spiritual dialogue," said Aaron Wetherington, a pastoral assistant at Saints Peter and Paul.

Young White Adults versus Young Black Adults

Father Bruce Wilkerson, pastor at Most of Blessed Sacrament, is a strong supporter in the efforts to expand Young Adult Ministry. He feels that one reason why the events sponsored by the Archdiocese are not attractive to Black Catholics is because of the different issues that White and Black Catholics face.

"I think there is a major difference between young White adults, and young Black adults," said Father Wilkerson. "Young White adults are in this constant defense of their religion while young Black adults are looking for some sort of identity as well as defense."

Although Ann Blasick, Atlanta Archdiocesan program coordinator of Young Adult Ministry, says they have tried to include Black Catholics as well as other ethnic backgrounds in their ministry, participation has not been there.

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The Diaconate

By Deacon Alfred Mitchell
Director of Deacon Personnel

History

In the years that followed the Apostolic Age, the Diaconate became a recognized and important office in the Church, a full part of the threefold hierarchy of orders: bishops, priests and deacons. Underlying all of their functions, the Diaconate emerged as a ministry that freed the bishops and presbyters of their more secular and temporal duties. More specifically, deacons worked in three major areas: liturgical, doctrinal and charitable.

Historical testimony shows that the deacon at all times had a special link with the bishop, reporting the needs of the community to the bishop and bringing his response and assistance to those in need and want. Signs of decay gradually appeared as the Diaconate began to fall into decline in the Western Church. Rivalry and rank contributed to the decline. At the same time, the ministry of service of the deacon began to be taken over by priests and laity. As the special role was lost sight of, the need for the office became less clear. During the Middle Ages, the Diaconate had been reduced to a preparation stage for the priesthood where it remained until the Second Vatican Council.

On June 18, 1967, Pope Paul VI issued "Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem," a document, which reestablished the permanent Diaconate for the Western Church. Formal approval of restoration for the Diaconate in the United States came from Rome in August 1968.

The Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta

In collaboration with the priests and laity of the archdiocese, deacons have been almost from the very beginning, partners in mission and co-workers in the proclamation of the Good News. From the first ordination in March, 1977 to the most recent one in February, 2002, about 150 men and their families have committed themselves on a permanent basis and have been officially sent to attend to the needs of the people, often at great sacrifice.

Deacons give of their time and talents generously. Most of them do so without financial compensation. The presence of the deacons signify, in a powerful way, the commitment of the archdiocese to the service of its people, and a desire to bring to the secular society living signs of the Gospel values preached to all by Jesus himself.

Call to be a Deacon

A man who feels he is being called to the Diaconate should obviously spend sometime in prayer about this call. The next steps would be to discuss it with the family and then with his pastor. The pastor's recommendation and if married, the wife's consent, are absolutely necessary.

Those recommended for the program, and who meet the basic requirements, spend the first year discerning the call to the Diaconate. At the end of the discernment year, further screening is conducted and those accepted into the program then begin a four-year period of formation that usually culminates in ordination to the Diaconate.

Currently, there are 127 active deacons distributed among 61 parishes and missions in the archdiocese. In addition to their parish assignments deacons serve as airport chaplains, masters of ceremony to the Archbishop, and in various other ministries to the sick and needy.

The Atlanta Office of the Diaconate is staffed by Deacon Alfred Mitchell, Director of Deacon Personnel, Deacon Loris Sinanian, Director of Formation, and Ms. Gracie Mulero, administrative assistant. Further Information about the Diaconate can be obtained by calling 404-885-7407 or via e-mail at amitchell@archatl.com (Mitchell) or 1-706-781-3671, peglor@alltel.net (Sinanian).

African American Men in the Atlanta Archdiocesan Diaconate Program (l–r): Levi Jelks, St. Anthony; Bill McKenzie, Christ Our Hope; Milton Lincoln, Sts. Peter & Paul; Bill Simmons, St. Anthony; Chestor Griffin, Our Lady of Lourdes

National Black Catholic Congress – Congress IX

Pre-Congress Seminars

For the first time ever in the history of the Congress Movement, the National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) will convene five (5) very important seminars prior to the regularly scheduled program for Congress IX at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel on the Riverwalk in Chicago, Illinois. The seminars will be conducted on Thursday, August 29, 2002 from 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM. These five seminars included in the theme of Congress IX: "Black Catholic Leadership in the 21st century: Solidarity in Action," are designed to provide additional insights and concrete methods to assist leaders in their service to persons of African descent in the community.

The NBCC encourages those who plan to register for Congress IX to attend the following Pre-Congress Seminars. Plan to schedule your travel reservations so that you will arrive at the hotel early on Thursday.

The schedule for the Pre-Congress Seminars and their location at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel are as follows:

Seminar #1 – Leadership in Forming Partnerships

This session would be presented by the Focolare Movement and would focus on Intercultural Exchange based on living the Gospel Law of Love, "Love one another as I have loved you." The Focolare is a Catholic Movement that began in 1943 and now includes more than four million members in 182 countries, with people of all races, religions and social backgrounds. The goal of this movement is to work for the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus, "Father, May they all be one" by living the words of the Gospel in everyday life, reaching out in love to every person during the day. The Church has recognized the charisma of the Focolare Movement for building unity in diversity modeled on the Trinity. This life-style has resulted in breaking down barriers and uniting people of the most diverse backgrounds in many countries all over the world.

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How an African American Catholic Man Strives to Better Serve God — A Personal Story

By Chester Griffin, Parishioner
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church

Chester Griffin, Parishioner
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church

I am a converted Catholic who was a non-practicing Methodist from a practicing Methodist family. My parents introduced me to the church early. Growing up, they surrounded my two brothers and me with all the important environmental needs to insure our proper moral development. One of my earliest role models was the preacher at our church, Rev. Loud. Then after graduating from college, my wife, Janis Erwin, and I settled in Washington, D.C. and then in Georgia and started a family. We soon realized that our family was incomplete without God and the church. Our solution was to choose Our Lady of Lourdes as our church. After joining Our Lady of Lourdes I was introduced to the Catholic Church, the role of African American men in the church and the diaconate program.

After joining the church, I saw the diaconate program as a form of personal discipleship and a solution to church problems. I decided to apply to the diaconate program and was accepted after the psychological testing and a background investigation. No real bad skeletons I guess. I thank God for Monsignor Frank Guista and Fr. Bruce Wilkinson for preparing me for life as a Roman Catholic. I also extend special gratitude to my role models Charles Bowen, Tyrone Maddox, Jake Benjamin, Charles Mize, Deacon Homer Woods and many other parishioners. Through faith, heed to God's will and support from my pastor, parishioners, my wife and children, Kenya and Khary, who figured that it was just another "Dad thing," I started the four-year training program to become a deacon with enthusiasm and joy.

The first year included learning about the Catholic faith and the structure of the church. The second year consisted of growth in faith and learning. That year was marked with the death of my father and the loss of my mentor and friend, Deacon Homer Woods. My third year was the year that convinced me that being a deacon was the most important calling in my service to the church. This fourth year has consisted of greater church responsibility, spiritual development and commitment to living a more Christian life. My diaconate training class reminds me of the Body of Christ. We each make our contributions to the church, but we make those contributions through our individual gifts that God has so graciously allowed us to have. We are one in the Lord.

As I look back on the years, I see my growth in faith, growth in knowledge of the church and the need for African American male involvement in the church.

African American Catholic men are disproportionately represented in the church's decisions, planning, and financing. What can we do as men in the church to change this situation? We need more African American men to commit to the diaconate program of the church. Deacons in the church hold a unique position of being close to the clergy and the laity. We have a responsibility to serve our people and serve our church as unique spokesmen for our people, our church and our communities. We must support each other by becoming more proactive in our church and less reactive. That is why we need more good men in the service of the church in the diaconate program. The squeaky wheel will not squeak if proper vigilance is taken to keep it maintained.

"Here I am Lord, It is I Lord, I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart."

Continued from page 2 (Where is Our Presence?)

"We have tried to make events more multicultural. We have even tried to hold a bilingual First Friday Mass, but it fell through. We held an event at the Lyke House, but not many showed up. The fact is that the crowd we would get on the northside would be half of that on the southside," said Blasick.

Black Catholics Taking the Initiative

However, the Archdiocese is not totally to blame for the lack of Young Adult Ministry in the Black Catholic community. Many, including Black Catholics, believe that the Black Catholic community is also to blame. Out of six predominantly Black Catholic Parishes, only three have active Young Adult Ministries. One of the parishes is Our Lady of Lourdes, whose Young Adult Ministry is led by Bryan Alli.

Alli has established a strong core of young adults at Our Lady of Lourdes where he says the ministry is "simply an extension of their parish culture." Nevertheless, Alli feels that there are certain things you need to have an effective Young Adult Ministry.

"If you want a strong Young Adult Ministry, there are two main components that are essential for success. First you have to have leaders that are going to be committed and enthusiastic about Young Adult Ministry. Second of all you need a solid structure where everyone involved knows their role, and knows how things are supposed to go," said Alli.

A "Black Young Adult Ministry"?

Regardless of the finger pointing, Black young Adults are a powerful potential for the Church. While the Archdiocese is putting on events such as "Theology on Tap" and "Spin Dating," Black Catholics need to take the initiative in addressing the issues that affect them. Black young Adults would like to see the Catholic Church address and become more involved in such activities as curbing gang violence, addressing unstable home situations, drug prevention, hunger, better schools, and ministry to youth and adults in jail.

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Voices from Most Blessed Sacrament Parish

Charles O. Prejean, Sr.

Since it is the *Parish Connection's* practice to feature a parish in each of its editions, we have chosen to bring attention to Most Blessed Sacrament Parish. For this quarterly edition, we have asked two of its members to allow their gifts to speak as representational voices of the parish.

Jim Lemon, who heads the Quality Life Management Program speaks to us about becoming more fit, both physically and spiritually. He implies that physical fitness is a condition for which to strive to realize and sustain good health and one that can serve, beneficially, the pursuit of spiritual enhancement. Valencia White speaks of her personal experience as a primary caregiver to her ailing mother. She speaks of the mysterious circularity of life, as the child and parent sometimes reverse roles. In each case our attention is called to a witness of the Greatness of Our God and to our smallness.

Yes we are gifted, but God is Giftedness beyond human comprehension. Yet His Love is so great for us, He is willing to give us more than human gifts. He offers to give us a sharing in His very Divine Nature. If we are happy with our human gifts, then just think how greater that happiness is and will be as we share His Divine Gift, and do so more fully at the end of our earthly journey. Jim and Valencia are willing to share their gifts that God has given them and we thank them for this and for reminding us of God's Love for us.

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Quality Life Management Program

By Jim Lemon, Parishioner
Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

Because Most Blessed Sacrament Church is concerned about the holistic health of its parishioners, it has launched a program to address their physical well being. The program is called *"Quality of Life Management"* (QLM) which was coordinated by Jim Lemon, a parishioner with the guidance and spiritual leadership of Fr. Bruce Wilkerson, pastor of Most Blessed Sacrament Church.

Health Statistics

The program was based on the following cultural characteristics of African Americans:

- Most African American adults settle into a sedentary life-style in their 40's.
- The shifting of the body and mind to a slower pace.
- The tendency to overeat and exert little energy.

Jim Lemon, Parishioner
Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

This type of life-style could easily result in a variety of physical and emotional disorders such as *obesity, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, stress and low self-esteem*. Obesity is a serious health problem in the African American community.

Long-Term Exercise and Proper Nutrition Produce Greater Well Being

QLM is for people who are inactive and/or overweight. It is designed to gradually incorporate long-term exercise and proper nutrition in a positive and supportive environment. Two rewards from the program are the physiological improvement of the body and greater psychological or emotional well being.

Studies have shown that a significant percent of people who score positively on indexes of psychological well being are highly active compared to those who are inactive. The active participants reported the following: increased self-confidence, better self-image, improved coordination, increased stamina and strength and fewer illnesses. They felt less tense; more disciplined, less tired and more productive.

QLM Requires Commitment to Life-style Change

QLM is divided into two phases: (1) Nutritional Management and (2) Exercise Management. The QLM philosophy requires a commitment to life-style change. This commitment must be incorporated into the psyche as a necessary function in maintaining a quality exercise program.

The initial program is designed for eight weeks and started on May 20, 2002. Parishioners participate in low impact aerobic exercises two nights per week and execute a power walk one night per week. Each exercise period is followed by discussions on nutrition, weight, diet and behavior modification.

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The Ultimate Role Reversal

A Caregiver Tells Her Story

By Valencia White, Parishioner
Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

Our mothers are perfect caregivers. They have developed this ability after raising us and nursing us through different illnesses. For those of us who decide to give them back this care in their later years, sacrifices have to be made. We have to face the difficulties of physically attending to our aging mothers, or those who are declining in health. But the most complicated part is living with the emotional weight that our dying loved one bears and the inevitable role reversal that is caring for our care givers.

Valencia White, Author
Parishioner, Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

Good Grief: A Bereavement Handbook is a celebration of the heartwarming moments a family shares during such times of difficulty. Valencia White shares with us her family's experience with cancer

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Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province of St. Augustine, Builds New Retreat Facility in the African American Community

By Fr. Bill Kelley, S.V.D

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) Missionaries began working in the African American community in 1905. By 1920, they had established a half a dozen parishes in Mississippi and Arkansas. That same year the SVD's opened a seminary for the formation of Negro vocations to the Priesthood. In 1923, because of difficulties, mainly associated with racism, St. Augustine Seminary was moved to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. In 1934, the first Black SVD priests were ordained. They were *Fathers Anthony Bourges, Maurice Rousseve, Vincent Smith, and Francis Wade*.

New Chapel, one of five new buildings under construction on the campus of the Society of the Divine Word

Since then, approximately one hundred and eight men received all or most of their formation at St. Augustine and were ordained SVD priests. St. Augustine Seminary produced sixty SVD Professed Brothers and nine Bishops. Over ninety percent of those ordained and professed were Black. Today there are approximately six thousand Divine Word Missionaries, reflecting the cultural diversity of the universal church, ministering in sixty-five countries.

The Old Makes Way for the New

The seminary itself underwent many changes over the years: a minor seminary, a major seminary, novitiate, and today, a retreat center and a retirement residence for Divine Word Missionaries.

Two years ago we looked at the possibility of renovating the old major seminary, which had become a retreat center. Remodeling the two-story brick structure was cost-prohibitive to remodel with the new codes in effect and the end result would be an old building with a face-lift. Fortunately, a generous gift from a benefactor of the Divine Word Missionaries, who was interested in our retreat apostolate, offered to build us a new retreat center. In the first week of January 2002, the demolition of the old retreat center began.

The New Retreat Center

The new center will be made of red brick and all on one level. It is composed of two individual *Accommodation Buildings* each containing 15 single rooms complete with bathroom, shower facilities, air-conditioning, etc. The total capacity is for sixty (two to a room) or 30 individuals (single). The *Administration Building* will house a Registration area, a Conference Area, a reading room and two private bedroom/bathrooms and sitting rooms for the Retreat Director and the Assistant Director.

There will be a separate *Chapel* and a separate *Dinning Facility*, for a total of five buildings situated on the beautiful grounds of large live oaks and located within walking distance of the scenic Bay of St. Louis … an ideal setting for a prayerful, peaceful retreat. Dedication is tentatively set for December and we will open for business in January of 2003. We hope to be of great service to the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

S – *Societas (Society)*
V – *Verbum (Word)*
D – *Divinitas (Divine)*

St. Augustine Seminary Highlights

Charles O. Prejean, Sr.

Congratulations to Very Rev. Joseph Simon, SVD, newly elected Provincial Superior of the Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province. He succeeds Rev. Clifton Labbe, SVD.

Very Reverend Joseph Simon, Newly elected Provincial for SVD Southern Province

Fr. Simon's priestly career has included parish assignments, seminary high school and college teaching and administration; and public municipal service in Iowa, Louisiana, and Illinois. He is a native of Natchitoches, Louisiana and an alumnus of St. Augustine Seminary. Fr. Simon was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. He will serve a three-year term as Provincial Superior.

Congratulation also to Very Rev. Joseph Guidry, SVD, who was appointed Rector of St. Augustine Seminary in June of this year. Fr. Guidry is a native of Abbeville, Louisiana, and of course, he is a St. Augustine Seminary Alumnus. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1957 and immediately began his priestly ministry as Prefect of St. Augustine Seminary. Subsequently, he distinguished his ministry as pastor in parishes in Louisiana and Mississippi. He was prominently involved in the Contemporary Civil Rights Movement, particularly during his pastorate in the Mississippi Delta County of Bolivar, Mississippi, the township of Mound Bayou.

Very Reverend Joseph Guidry Newly appointed Rector of St. Augustine Seminary

May God bless you abundantly in your very important ministries Frs. Simon and Guidry!

Fifty Years of Ministry in the Lord's Vineyard

By Charles O. Prejean, Sr.
Director, Office for Black Catholic Ministry

Fr. Thaddeus Boucree, 50 years of priestly ministry

The Rev. Thaddeus C. Boucree, SVD, took his first vows on September 16, 1945 and was ordained to the priesthood on June 24, 1952. On July 7, 2002, both his biological and his Society of Divine Word families, along with a host of friends, joined Fr. Boucree in celebrating his Golden Jubilee as a Roman Catholic Priest. St. Phillip the Apostle Catholic Church, true to the New Orleans celebratory tradition, and under the pastorate of Fr. Rodney Anthony Ricard, provided a magnificent ambience for the Mass of Thanksgiving. Giving Glory and Praise to the Holy Trinity, the Celebration was truly a Song of Joy.

One runs the risk of understating the true nature of Fr. Boucree's fifty-year labor of love as a priest, given his unassuming personality. In our secular society, the person of a genuinely humble nature and practice of life, yet ever so strong and the principled person, the one whose devotion is to God, is not usually given celebrated status. Perhaps that's the way it should be when the prize that is being sought is not an earthly one. However, those he served in parishes and seminary can certainly attest to his unassuming nature and the quality of his ministerial practice as Servant Leader.

He willingly and proudly washed our feet, as he guided our journey on course to the Great God of Love and of all Creation. He was there when we lost sight of God, as we grieved in great pain and sorrow, as well as when we experienced joy. He would blush to see words of praise of him in print or to hear talk of it. But, it is God's Gifts to him that we praise, and it is our acknowledgment of Fr. Boucree's good and effective use of those gifts of which we speak. Well-done good and faithful role model. Thank you so much.

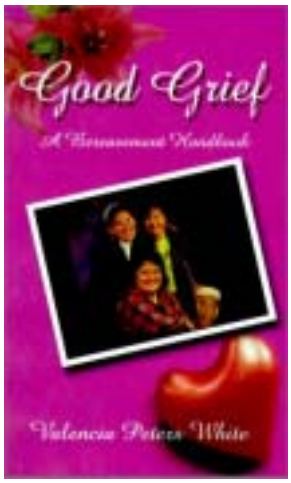
Continued from page 5 (The Ultimate Role Reversal)

as it slowly ravaged her mother's health. They all had to face the idea of sudden death.

Valencia tells of her reactions to her mother needing a mother's care that only her mother could have provided. At times, Valencia was confused. Although her mother was dying from the inside, she looked healthier than Valencia herself. It made it more difficult to empathize with her mother and accept her disease.

For those who may be taking care of a sick or dying loved-one, *Good Grief* is a 'must-read.' Other friends and family may also appreciate it, even the terminally ill. Valencia White hopes that her story becomes a companion through such troubling times that extend until after the loved-ones' death.

After authoring several articles, manuals, and a screenplay, Valencia White writes from the heart in the first novel. She has 25 years of experience in the communications/training industry and has served in managerial and senior level positions in several major corporations. On two occasions she was selected as an Outstanding Young Woman and elected to Who's Who in the South and Southeast. She has a degree in English/Mass Communications from Spleman College and completed the Management Development Program at the Emory University School of Business.



St. Anthony's Annual Golf Tournament

2002 Prize Winners

St. Anthony's Second Annual Golf Tournament was, again, a big success, thanks to chairman, George Gilbert, and supporting cast. Attendance was excellent, the course (Stone Mountain's Stonemont) was in great condition, and the weather was beautiful. Although no golfer won the hole-in-one grand prize (a BMW Z3 Convertible sponsored by Hank Aaron BMW), several golfers won others contests:

Longest Drive: Vince Rizzi

Straightest Drive: Manuel Montiel

Closest to the Pin:
Leroy Gates

1st Place Team:
Shown in the photo below:

St. Anthony's Golf Tournament
First Place Team Winners (l–r):
Sam Reid
George Gilbert (Tournament Chairman)
Andy Moore
Ronnie Hazelwig

St. Anthony Parishioner Is Award-Winning Artist

By Chuck Douglas
Parishioner, St. Anthony of Padua

Chuck Douglas, award winning visual artist, designer, and arts educator, is a member of St. Anthony of Padua. For the past 23 years, he regularly contributed his time and talent in creating art work and innovative displays for the liturgical seasons in his church and other African-American parishes in the Atlanta Archdiocese.

Although his primary art medium is relief printmaking (woodcut and linocut), he is also a mixed media painter. His visual arts awards include: First Place in the printmaking category of the "Southern Roots" juried exhibition in 1999, 2000, and 2001. His initial print entitled, "***Catfish Row II***" was purchased by the *Lifetime* Cable TV Channel's head writer and producer, Nancy Miller. An edition of this print was recently purchased and added to the distinguished collection of the King and Spalding law firm of Atlanta.

Recently, Douglas was honored for his award winning artwork entitled, "***The Checker Players,"*** in a national juried exhibition in Chicago, Illinois, sponsored by The Museum of Science and Industry. His works are in corporate and individual collections throughout the United States.

Chuck Douglas, Award-Winning Artist
Parishioner, St. Anthony of Padua

Douglas is also a designer and spaceplanner. His designs include custom designed cabinetry and multi-purpose African inspired furniture and accessories. His design awards included the prestigious Perrilliat-Rickey Design Award.

As a part-time instructor, Douglas organized the first Archdiocese Student Art Exhibition 1998. Douglas received numerous awards in Art Education while teaching in the Atlanta and Fulton County School System. His educational awards include: Two Teacher-of-the-Year Awards, an Academic Achievement Award, and awards of Recognition and Leadership. In 1990 Douglas became the first African-American male recipient of a summer fellowship to the National Arts Education Research Center (N.E.A.R.C.) of New York University.

In addition to teaching in Atlanta, Douglas was an Artist-in-Residence in the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts where he taught drawing, painting and relief printmaking. While residing in his hometown (New Orleans), he was an artist-in-residence and coordinator of the children's program for the New Orleans Museum of Arts.

This past summer, Douglas was commissioned to create an ethnically designed processional cross to *reflect the people of Our Lady of Lourdes church*.

Douglas is the creator and current chairperson of the St. Anthony African-American Cultural Celebration.

Appeal for Financial Support

Charles O. Prejean, Sr.
Director, OBCM

Since the appearance of the *Parish Connection*, the Office for Black Catholic Ministry has received numerous calls and personal notes to congratulate us on the content and quality of the publication. Needless to say, we are pleased with the expressions of affirmation. We are encouraged to strive even harder to make it an even more relevant instrument of evangelization.

Becoming Self-sufficient

So far, we have been able to rely on the generosity of a few good friends to underwrite the cost of the first three editions. This start-up assistance gift, however, is not and was never intended to be permanent. The long term financing of the newsletter is dependent upon our being able to spread the cost of the newsletter throughout the parishes that receive them. In becoming self-sufficient, we ask you, our readers, to support us.

Parish Subscriptions

The *Parish Connection* Advisory Board & Editorial Staff has been able to produce and distribute the quarterly newsletter at a minimal cost of $2,200. The newsletter has a circulation of 2,500 copies distributed to the six predominantly African American parishes: St. Anthony, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. John the Evangelist, St. Paul of the Cross, Saints Peter and Paul, and Most Blessed Sacrament. The newsletter is also distributed to the Lyke House at AUC, Corpus Christi, and Christ Our Hope. At $2,200 for a circulation of 2,500, the cost per newsletter is $0.88 (round to $0.90).

Spread Over Eight Parishes

We would encourage each parish to work with the other parishes to budget an amount of money sufficient to cover the cost. In the simplest division, the subscription for each of the eight parishes would be $275 ($2,200 / 8) per quarter, or only $92 per month. Alternatively, the division could be a pro rata subscription based upon the size of the parish.

Supplemented by Advertising

The *Parish Connection* will also supplement parish subscriptions by selling a limited amount of advertising space in the newsletter (not more than two pages). Advertising rates are shown in the box in the bottom, right-hand corner of the last page. You, our readers, can participate in this plan. For any ad placed in the *Parish Connection*, the person making the referral will receive a check for 15% of the ad each time the ad appears in successive issues. Simply obtain an advertiser's agreement to consider purchasing an ad. Then call us with the advertiser's name, contact person, phone number, and other pertinent information about the potential ad, and we'll do the rest. Please direct all calls to Benjamin Davie, Editor, at (404) 349-2665.

The *Parish Connection* Advisory Board & Editorial Staff appreciates your encouragement and support.

Continued from page 3 (NBCC – Congress IX)

In the United States, the Focolare groups include people from African Countries as well as Asians, South American Europeans and, of course, native-born Americans. Together these groups give a powerful witness of unity. The Focolare Movement has been greatly supported by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II and by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This session, including actual personal experiences, will focus on how this spirituality of unity can be lived by individuals and groups in the midst of modern society, and how this can truly contribute to building a "new world," a world of mutual understanding and love based on the Gospel.

Presenters: Paola Santostefano and the Leadership Team of the Chicago based organization of the Focolare Movement

Target Audience: Representative of the NBCC Sponsoring Organizations; Diocesan Representatives and Parish Council Representatives

Seminar #2 – Leadership in Program Development For Youth

This session is proposed as an opportunity for persons involved in youth and young adult ministry to dialogue in the area of Leadership to expand program development through partnership among groups and organizations with successful models of ministry and training. This dialogue would be planned around a demonstration of the work being done by the Youth Rites of Passage Foundation, The National African American Catholic Youth Ministry Network (NAACYMN), Youth Ministers, and youth and those persons interested in expanding programming for youth and young adults.

Assuming the limited number of youth who may be attending Congress IX since in many cases schools will be opening, the inclusion of a model of this type is essential. The Rites of Passage program, which we have included in our Pastoral Ministry in African American Parishes gatherings, has been highly successful and this type of dialogue would provide a valuable opportunity to develop and expand programs for youth and young adults.

Presenters: Emily Gunter, Cary Graham of the Rites of Passage Foundation Team; Michael Youngblood of the National African American Catholic Youth Ministry Network (NAACYMN).

Target Audience: Youth Ministers, Youth and Young Adults

Seminar #3 – Combating Racism, Poverty and Militarism: Rebuilding a Movement Around Dr. King's Dream

This seminar will center on a quote from Dr. King - "I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. When machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplet of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

Presenters: Leadership Team from the National Staffs of Pax Christi, USA, Mr. Tom Cordaro, Ms. Beatrice Parwatikar; and Dr. William Thompson, Catholic Charities USA.

Target Audience: Diocesan and Parish level persons who minister in the area of Social Justice, especially in the area of Criminal Justice.

Seminar #4 – Leadership and Collaboration in the Areas of Music and Liturgy

"Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord"- The empowering aesthetic of Black music within the academy and in worship. The presentation of models, which demonstrate the collaboration between musicians, liturgists and celebrants, will be the principle focus of this seminar. Music for occasions other than liturgies will also be discussed.

Presenters: Kenneth Louis, Meyer Chambers, and Marcia Berry, and Fr. Fernand Cheri, OFM.

Target Audience: Parish Ministers of Music and Liturgy, Priests, Deacons Religious Sisters and Brothers, Eucharistic Ministers; other persons with special interest in worship

Seminar #5 – Leadership and Collaboration in the Area of Building Relationships Between Persons of African Descent in America

This seminar session will focus on introducing participants to The Ge'ez Christian Tradition. The session will serve to introduce this Rite as a means of connecting the bridge between African American Catholics and those who participate in this ancient African Christian tradition. This experience will open the door for participants to be reminded that our church is more than our own parish, our own diocese, but rather it is worldwide with strong roots on the African Continent.

The focus will be to present the true history of our Catholic religion with its spirituality link. The Rite has special devotion to Our Mother of Africa and while it is very similar to the Roman Rite there are some differences in the order of the Liturgy. There will be a Saturday morning Liturgy, August 31, 2002, 6:30- 7:30 a.m. in the Crystal Ballroom at which time The Ge'ez Rite Christian Tradition will be demonstrated.

Source: National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) Monthly On-line Newsletter, Vol. 2, May 2002 http://www.nbccongress.org

National Black Catholic Congress
Congress IX

Black Catholic Leadership in the 21st Century: Solidarity in Action

August 29 — September 1, 2002

Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel

www.nbccongress.org

Parish Calendar Announcements

Corpus Christi

September 26 - 29 – Parish Volunteers: Assisting the work of the Missionaries of the Poor Ministry in Jamaica, headed by Fr. Ho Lung.

October 24 - 27 –The Theater Ministry will be staging the musical South Pacific. All are invited. Contact the parish office for further information, (770) 469-0395.

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Most Blessed Sacrament

August 1 – Blessed Sacrament Night at the Ball Park. Tickets are $10.00. Departure time from parish is 6:00 p.m.

August 24 – Sharing and Sisterhood-Reflections, the Book of Ruth

August 24 – Parish Council Retreat

September 8 – Homecoming Sunday

September – Blessed Sacrament will begin the Elijah Cup Prayers for Vocation.

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Our Lady of Lourdes

Fredrick McCray and Ashley S. Chapman were selected by the Knights of Peter Claver, Gulf Coast Junior Division to be its representative to the World Youth Day Convention, July 22 - 28, 2002. McCray is the President, and Chapman is the Secretary of the Gulf Coast Junior Division of the Knights of Peter Claver.

August 4 – Our Lady of Lourdes AIDS Ministry is sponsoring an Ice Cream Sunday after both Masses.

August 16-17 – Rafting Trip, sponsored by Our Lady of Lourdes Young Adults Group. Young adults from our sister parishes are welcomed. For more information, call Minka Marsh at minkmama@yahoo.com.

August 18 – KPC Bake Sale in Cafeteria after both Masses.

August 24 – KPC Bar-B-Cue in Cafeteria, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

September 20 – Our Lady of Lourdes Young Adults Happy Hour. "Come join us". For more information, contact Liberty Jones at libertyjj@hotmail.com.

October – Trip to New Orleans for the Falcons/Saints Game. Contact Grand Knight Quentin Hutchins at (404) 966-7664 or Brother Wayne Whittle at (770) 638-5865.

October 4 – Young Adult First Friday Mass. Contact Bryan Alli at bryanalli@yahoo.com.

October 5 – Habitat for Humanity-Build Day. Our Lady of Lourdes Young Adults will provide the volunteers for the Lourdes Habitat for Humanity House. Contact Anthony Hylton at pahylton@alum.mit.edu.

October 18 – Our lady of Lourdes Young Adults Happy Hour. Contact Liberty Jones at libertyjj@hotmail.com.

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St. Anthony of Padua

August 2 - 8 – Parish office will be closed.

August 17 – Sunday School Teachers' Orientation.

September 8 – St. Peter Claver Day-Dress Out for Knights/Ladies/Juniors.

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Saint John the Evangelist

August 17 – Knights of Columbus Installation after the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

August 25, September 22, October 27 – KPC Breakfast after the 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Masses.

September 7 – Anointing of the Sick will be offered at the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

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St. Paul of the Cross

Position Vacancy – St. Paul of the Cross is looking for an Organist and/or Choir Director. Salary is negotiable. It's conceivable that the Organist can be the Choir Director. If not, then the Parish would have to hire two people. The Parish is willing to help with relocation cost, if needed. Please send resume to:

Very Reverend Melvin A Shorter, Pastor
St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church
551 Harwell Road, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30318
Phone (404) 696-6704, Fax (404) 696-4735
E-mail: Mshorter@CPPROV.org

The Editorial Board of the Parish Connection would like to congratulate Rev. Mr. Hilliard Lee who received a Special Commendation from the Atlanta City Council, at its July meeting, for his outstanding contributions to the City's Zoning Board. Deacon Lee served a four year term on the City's Zoning Board and was recognized for the quality of his public service. He was also honored for his many other contributions to the City of Atlanta, as a former employee, and as a volunteer. Congratulations *good brother* and *good role model!*

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Saints Peter and Paul

August 2 - 7 – Knights of Peter Claver and the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary Trip to Washington, D.C.

September 7 – Old School Block Party: 7:30 p.m. – 11:30 p.m., sponsored by the Parish Stewardship Committee.

September 14 – KPCLA Exemplification 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

September 20 - 22 – The Religious Education Department of Saints Peter and Paul is sponsoring a retreat for women at Camp Calvin in Hampton, Georgia. The theme of the retreat is, "From the Wisdom of Sisters." Father Charles Smith, SVD, will serve as the Retreat Master. For additional information, call Ms. Gloria Patrick at (404) 243-8333.

The Education Department of Sts. Peter and Paul extends an invitation to all women of the Archdiocese.

September 28 – Hungry Folks Feast sponsored by the Knights of Peter Claver.

September 28 – Lectors and Commentators Workshop: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

September 30 – Atlanta Braves Fan Appreciation Day, Atlanta Braves vs. N.Y. Mets. See any member of the parish Men's Club for tickets. Cost: $16.00 includes tailgating before the game.

October 12 - Steak & Chicken Dinner – 7:30 p.m., sponsored by the Men's Club. Tickets are $12.50 in advance, $15.00 at the door. For tickets, see any member of the Parish Men's Club or at the Religious Shop after Mass.

November 9 - 10 – The Men's Club of Saints Peter and Paul will hold its Annual Retreat at Carmel Retreat Center in Hoschton. The Cost of the weekend retreat is $75.00. All men of the Archdiocesan parishes are invited to attend. For additional information, please call Deacon Alfred Mitchell at (404) 885-7407 or Mr. Val Dorsey at (404) 241-7535.

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THE ATLANTA ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE FOR BLACK CATHOLIC MINISTRY

Twenty parish delegates, and nine observer-participants will be representing the Atlanta Archdiocese at the IX National Black Catholic Congress, August 29 - September 1, in Chicago Illinois. We ask that you remember them in your prayers. They are:

Corpus Christi:
Ms. Carolyn Rhodes.

Most Blessed Sacrament:
Ms. Carmen Prejean.

Our Lady of Lourdes:
Mr. Bryan Alli, Ms. Juanesta Chapman, Ms. Janis Griffin, Mr. Chester Griffin, Ms. Mary Margaret Jordan, Mr. Wilfred Van Ness and Ms. Gwendolyn Young.

St. Anthony:
Fr. Craig David, Ms. Adrienne Alexander, Ms.Tramell Alexander, Ms. Faith Cola, Mr. Rudolph Cadney.

St. John the Evangelist:
Fr. Glenn Parker, Ms. Jennie Rakestraw, Ms. Katherine Woodyard.

St. Paul of the Cross:
Ms. Jeanette Barker, Mr. Donald Jeanne, Ms. Joyce McBee, Ms. Ave Murry, Ms. Lithangia Murry.

Saints Peter and Paul:
Fr. Kevin Peek, Deacon Jerry Lett, Mr. Aaron Wetherington, Ms. Gloria Patrick, Ms. Cheryl Page.

Archdiocesan Office of Vocations:
Deacon Ricardo Bailey.

Office for Black Catholic Ministry:
Mr. Charles O. Prejean, Sr.

Upon returning from Congress IX, a Day of Reflection is scheduled for the first week of November, to ask for God's guidance in the crafting of an inter-parish strategic evangelization plan and in discerning how best to implement this plan.

January 18, 2003 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Celebration.

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The National Black Catholic Scene

October 6 – Black Catholic Life Sunday-Domestic Violence Awareness in the Black Community.

August 30 - September 1 – St. Augustine Seminary First Annual "Summer's End Festival. Contact phone number, (228) 467-4322

August 27 - 29 – The National Black Clergy Caucus and the Pan African Roman Catholic Clergy Caucus will take place at the Techny Center in Techny, Illinois.

October 11 - 13 – The John Bowman-Joseph Francis-SVD Ministry Team will sponsor The First Annual Harambee Bakijana, Young Adult Retreat. The theme is "You Have Heard the Call…Now What are You Going to Do"? Registration is $75.00 (before 9/15/02). Late registration fee is $85.00. For further information call (317) 917-8538.

October 14 - 23 – Bishop Leonard Olivier, SVD, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, DC, will lead a pilgrimage to Rome, Milan Venice, Florence, and Assisi. The cost, from a New York departure, is $2,198, plus $79.00 for taxes and Tips, and $70:00 for incidentals. The price includes double room hotel occupancy. There is an extra cost for single room occupancy.

This Pilgrimage is designed to strengthen one's faith and to provide a memorable visit to the Center of Roman Catholicism. It is also a fund-raisers to provide maintenance support for St. Augustine Seminary, a keystone in the education of Blacks to the Roman Catholic priesthood in the United States. For more information, contact Dr. Bill Baudendistel at (863) 644-6261, Ext. 4.

October 11 - 13 – St. Augustine Seminary Alumni Association Annual Meeting in Bay St. Louis, MS.

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National Black Catholic Congress

Our Mother of Africa Statues are on sale at the following address:

National Black Catholic Congress Office
320 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(natblkcathcong@aol.com).

The 10-inch replica is designed in brass with a bronze patina and is priced at $75.00, including shipping and handling costs.

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Cathedral of Christ the King

Reason to Believe: Apologetics 2002 at the Cathedral of Christ the King begins August 2nd and continues for six Fridays, skipping August 30th for the Labor Day holiday.

Alex Jones will be the featured national speaker this year. He was widely considered a highlight of this year's Eucharistic Congress, when he told the story of his conversion from pastor of a Pentecostal Holiness Church to becoming Catholic. On August 16th, Mr. Jones will speak on *Reasons to Believe in Jesus. Reasons to Be Catholic.*

For 25 years Alex C. Jones pastored consecutively two congregations, the first Pentecostal and the second Evangelical. In 1998 he uncovered the treasures of the Church Fathers while preparing for a bible lesson on 1 Timothy 2:1-15. He found the Catholic Church has both biblical and historical support for its claim of originality and apostolicity. He shared this knowledge with his congregation and as a result, most members of his church voted to enter the Catholic Church with him. Alex speaks on apologetics, scripture, and the Church Fathers.

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 1 (Two Converts)

"I have a hunger to know the truth, not just to feel good," Jones told the mammoth audience at the Georgia International Convention Center, Atlanta, celebrating the Corpus Christi (Eucharistic Congress). " The truth is that Catholics truly believe in the Holy Eucharist, confessions to priests, and supremacy of the Pope when dealing with religious matters in the Catholic Church."

Pursuing this truth, Jones substituted his church's Wednesday Bible studies for the study of the early Catholic Church fathers. Then his negative feelings toward Catholic doctrines started to change. "I began to connect the dots," stated Jones amidst loud applause, "got the basic information… and found that the center of worship (in the Catholic Church) was not the preacher, but the Eucharist as the actual body and blood of Christ."

Aged 59, Alex Jones finally made up his mind and joined the Catholic Church with his wife, Donna, children and sister on April 4, 2001. "The Catholic Church has a gift of perpetuity," he concluded. "The more you persecute it the more it grows."

Academic curiosity brought Scott Hahn to the Catholic Church; then taught him to stay. Hahn grew up as a Protestant, and was ordained a pastor in 1982 at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Fairfax, Virginia. A professor, author and public speaker, Hahn had studied the Greek version of the Bible and compared it with the Old and New Testaments of the Catholic Bible.

One day when a priest celebrated Mass, Hahn noticed how the priest brought together the contents of the three holy documents, as did the early Catholic Church. The professor, his wife Kimberly, with their six children became Catholics at the Easter Vigil of 1986.

Continued from page 4 (Where is Our Presence?)

Alli suggests that Black Catholics look for events that directly benefit their community. He also says one way the Archdiocese can possibly get more participation is by getting speakers at these events that might attract Black Catholics. Coming together as a Black Catholic community and discussing these issues is an important step. Some parishes have stronger Young Adult Ministries than others, yet if Black Catholics came together as one strong group, the issues might get addressed.

"We need to create a reason for the Archdiocese to look for us when it comes to spreading this ministry. However ultimately both groups are responsible for addressing the issues, yet we do hold the key to getting a diverse group," said Alli.

Continued from page 11 (Announcements)

He will also be speaking on Saturday, August 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of Christ the King.

This year's speakers from around the Archdiocese include Fr. Kevin Peek, Fr. Joe Peek, Fr. Jack Durkin, Fr. Brian Higgins, and Dave Sloan. The remaining topics are:

1. Freedom in Submission/Bondage in Rebellion.
2. Islam & Jihad. What Does the Koran Say, and What Do Muslims Believe About Christianity & Religious War.
3. The Gospel of Life vs. The Culture of Death
4. New Age, Buddhism and Yoga.
5. Catholic Heroes, Saints, and Martyrs.

Each Friday will begin with Mass at 6:15 p.m.. The sessions follow at 7:00 p.m. All sessions are free. For more information, call (404) 233-2145.

Celebrating Juneteenth

Fr. Craig David (New Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua) and Carmen Prejean

Ethel Graham and Charles Prejean

The 2002 Juneteenth Committee
Pictured (l– r) Carmen Prejean, Katherine Woodyard, Nina Payne, Pam Simmons (Co-Chair), Bill Simmons (Co-Chair), Beverly Maxwell, and Charles Prejean, Sr.

Parish Connection

A quarterly newsletter for connecting parishes through Black Catholic Ministry

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