



Parish Connection

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A quarterly newsletter for sharing information concerning Black Catholic Ministry

February: Black History Month – Marching Over To Zion

Charles O. Prejean, Sr. – Director, OBCM

Why do we celebrate **Black History Month**? In a speech delivered at the January 2003 Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA) Convention in Florida, Fr. Branch, Catholic Chaplain of the Atlanta University Center, defines culture as a “system of evolved habits for the purpose of group preservation, group self-preservation.” In deference to this definition of culture, I would then answer the opening question by saying that we celebrate Black History Month for the purpose of group self-preservation.

Gifts in Earthen Vessels

We carry our gifts that our God gives to us in our fragile human vessels, gifts molded by common experiences, from which artistic, intellectual, and physical abilities are articulated over time and in spatial settings. We are who we are because of those inherited and shared experiences, experiences conditioned by ever evolving forms of oppression. They were experiences that necessitated struggle. But, it was a struggle filled with Hope in the Salvation and Freedom of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This edition’s focus is to remind our readers, that we too have a system of evolved habits. They, at their best, reflect God’s Greatness. We take this opportunity to express our sense of pride in the outstanding achievements of our ancestors and contemporaries who continue to add to and preserve our cultural heritage.

Let the March Begin

We highlight the celebration of our modern day peacemaker, Dr. King, the dreamer, the drum major for justice, the one who gave us a vision of the Beloved Community. We hear Martin’s voice in Kyleah Starling, seventh grader from St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School, as she speaks to us of Dr. King’s life and legacy. Can we not see the actualizing of Martin’s Beloved Community when we look upon the photograph of the students from St. Thomas More, standing hand-in-hand, and hear in the silence of their photographed eyes and faces, the words and melody of the Negro Spiritual, We Shall Overcome, Some Day? Let them lead the way, let them

lead the March to Zion, and let us follow!

Will Thomas, junior at Morehouse College, joins the March to the Beautiful City of Zion and tells in his voice the story of Struggle and Freedom, as do the young voices from Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church. We are further enlightened by the notably esteemed Catholic theologian, Dr. Diana Hayes, Ph.D., as she tells us of the role of the Black Family in the self-preservation of our race. Dr. Mack Jones, Ph.D., distinguished and highly published Professor of Political Science, cautions us

about the contemporary machinations of racism and its dangers to us and to our nation. He peels off the many disingenuous layers of affected egalitarianism from the face of Senator Trent Lott. He warns us that we need even greater clarity today to understand and combat the sophisticated nuances of racism.

Immerse yourself in the memories of the lives of those on the march, and envision your kinship with our ancestors, preserving our heritage and Marching On to Zion, That Beautiful, Beautiful City of Zion. ¶ ¶ ¶



Photo by Michael Alexander

St. Thomas More Catholic School Students: singing “We Shall Overcome” in the spirit of Dr. King, the dreamer. Dr. King dreamed that “One day, right here in our Atlanta community, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.” As this photo reveals, his dream is becoming a reality.

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The Black Family

*The strong and weak threads
within our family tapestry*

Dr. Diana L. Hayes



Dr. Diana L. Hayes, Professor of Systematic Theology, Georgetown University, Womanist Scholar, Currently Visiting Professor at the Interdenominational Theological Center

The African Roots of the Black Family

The family has been the foundation of the Black Christian community from its earliest beginnings in slavery. Brought unwillingly in chains, often forcibly separated from loved ones and kin, African slaves knew that in order to survive, they must forge connections with those in similar situations. Thus, as Wrestler affirmed aboard ship in *Roots*, “*We will become one village*” by disregarding tribal, language and even religious differences.

In the traditional African understanding, a person was known and accepted not for his/her achievements alone, but for the kinship ties that had fostered and nurtured him or her. Neither individualism nor the individual is at the center of attention; the community is. “I am because we are.” It was understood that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Ironically, this proverb has become very popular in the United States yet we continue

to ignore its meaning. It requires self-sacrifice and self-commitment to create a community that nurtures and sustains both young and old and everyone in between.

Catholicism and the Role of Family

As Catholics, we see the family as the Church in miniature. It is the “domestic church,” for the love and care, the nurturing and educating that goes on in the Church as a whole is mirrored in the family. It is an extended family where all are connected, not by blood, but by love and faith and shared circumstances. This understanding fits the

African and African American understanding of extended kinship patterns complete with godparents and fictive kin. It is within this family that the children begin to shape their understanding of themselves and the world around them and also begin to form their moral conscience.

The Role of Mothers

Women play a critical role here, as they have always been the “bearers of culture.” They are the ones who form the children and introduce them to their culture and traditions, the songs, the stories, and the characters, and also help them to find their place therein. They are the weavers of the family tapestry, adding new and colorful stitches for each member as it slowly expands.

From Firm Foundation to Deteriorating New Freedoms

It was this ability to build community that enabled our foremothers and forefathers to survive the horrors of life in the United States with its brutality

and dehumanization. Buoyed up by a paradoxical faith in a “wonder-working” **God** who never failed, Black men and women worked hand in hand in the fields and the big house, in shops and factories, as domestics and janitors, and as teachers and preachers, while ensuring that the generations coming after them would have a firm foundation upon which to build.

Black families remained strong through slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow and two World Wars only, ironically, to falter and slowly begin to fail with the success of the Civil Rights Movement. Once linked by a shared segregation and oppression, the common destiny of Black Americans was somehow undermined by the new freedoms, which the destruction of legal discrimination brought about. Materialism, individualism and secularism, the temptations of American society, sang a siren song that many could not resist.

The Black Family in the 21st Century

Today, we have become divided, not by skin-color, but by class, by economics. Those that “have” left and those that “have not” were left behind in communities bereft of role-models, caring teachers, and others who could open the doors to a different and more vital way of life. Our faith has also faltered as churches abandon the inner cities for the more affluent suburbs while those remaining find themselves increasingly constrained by lack of members and thus lack of funds. Faith has become narrowly introspective and human rather than God centered, losing sight of the fact that we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, something

our ancestors needed no reminder of.

The Black community is still negatively affected by the racism of dominant U.S. society but we are also affected by the classism within our own ranks. We can no longer blame racism for all of the problems in our communities. A return is called for, a return to a simpler way of life and a renewed understanding of who is our neighbor. Our children no longer know the old stories nor can they remember the words to the songs or the prayers. They mistake television and movie images for a desirable culture while ignoring the diversity and richness of the cultures all around them—threads of Africa, the Caribbean, and all of the Americas.

The Black family is endangered today because we have lost sight of who we are as a people. Our children need us as parents, whether real or fictive, if they are to survive in today’s world. They need peers and role models of their own age with whom they can contend but also adults who are willing to model life for them as it should be, in solidarity with others, so that they can be morally shaped and prepared for viable futures.

The institutional Church can also be said to have failed our families, as evidenced by the recent sexual abuse scandals, but the responsibility is not theirs alone. It is our responsibility to rebuild the domestic church, the family, gathering ourselves once again as family across ethnic, language, and class lines. By so doing, we help to rebuild the Church as a whole, recognizing and acting on our understanding that we too are Church, the People of God, the Body of Christ. ❀ ❀ ❀

White Racism and Denial: The Trent Lott Affair

Mack H. Jones, Ph.D



Dr. Mack H. Jones, Professor Emeritus,
Clark Atlanta University

On matters of race and racism, white Americans have always been schizophrenic, endorsing racist practices while decrying racism. From the beginning of the Republic, white racism and the denial of its centrality in American life have been two of the most significant features of the American political culture. For example, the Constitution as adopted in 1789 championed human equality and universal freedom but at the same time it endorsed slavery and put the power of the national government at the disposal of slave owners in their efforts to recapture runaway slaves. The Constitution, however, did not include a single word or phrase that conveyed the real intentions or beliefs of the founding fathers on the matter of race. Indeed the words slavery, Black, nor African appear nowhere in the document. Knowing that they were writing a document for posterity the founding fathers left themselves plenty wiggle-room for plausible denial on matters of racism. This

disposition toward white racism and denial has continued unabated to this day. The Trent Lott affair precipitated by his pro-segregationist comments at Strom Thurmond's birthday party is simply the latest episode in the American drama of racism and denial.

Strom Thurman and the Dixiecrats (The 1948 Presidential Election)

At the birthday party, Lott noted that when Thurmond bolted the Democratic Party in 1948 and ran as the presidential candidate of the Dixiecrats, Lott's home state of Mississippi had voted for Thurmond. Lott went on to say "... *if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all of these problems over all these years.*" Founders of the Dixiecrat Party had left the Democratic Party; it should be remembered, because of President Truman's modest support for civil rights.

To understand the significance of Lott's reference to the 1948 election considers the position taken by the Mississippi Democratic Party. On a sample ballot printed and circulated by the party, white Mississippians were told: *A vote for Truman electors is a direct order to our Congressmen and Senators from Mississippi to vote for passage of Truman's so-called civil-rights program in the next Congress. This means the vicious FEPC – anti-poll tax – anti-lynching and anti-segregation proposals will become law of the land and our way of life in the South*

will be gone forever. (Mississippi Historical Society, *Presidential Elections, Mississippi Voting History*).

The Mississippi party, and Lott by inference, not only opposed positive acts such as fair employment practices but also endorsed lynching.

Not Merely an Off-the-Cuff Remark

Archival research showed that Lott's birthday party statement was not merely an off-the-cuff remark. He had made virtually the same statement at a 1980 Reagan Campaign Rally (*New York Times* December 11, 2002). Lott's history as an unreconstructed racist was or should have been well known by his colleagues because since being in Congress Lott has opposed practically every measure designed to improve the lot of African Americans. He opposed the Voting Rights Act extensions of 1982 and 1990, voted against extension of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that gave Blacks access to public accommodations, and opposed the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday bill. As a Congressman, Lott supported the successful effort to re-instate the citizenship of Jefferson Davis, the unrepentant Confederate President. Additionally, Lott has a long history of association with racist groups such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC). In a 1984 speech, Lott told the SCV that the "... spirit of Jefferson Davis lives in the 1984 Republican platform" (*Southern Partisan*, 4th Quarter, 1984). Indeed one national magazine, *Extra*, in 1999 ran a cover story on Lott's involvement with segregationist groups. In spite

of his record as a segregationist, or perhaps, because of it, Lott was chosen as Senate majority leader by his Republican colleagues who knew him for whom and what he was. His racist record did not disqualify him from being their leader. Only when his racist sentiments were voiced in an undeniable manner did he lose favor.

Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say

When Lott's remarks were made on December 5, they were largely ignored by other public figures and opinion leaders including those who attended the birthday party. President Bush and other white leaders had no immediate response. Five days later after some Internet stoking by political gadflies, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and other outlets raised questions about the import of Lott's commentary. Only then did President Bush and other political leaders publicly chastise Lott and initiate pressure that led to his resignation. Lott was not criticized for his anti-civil rights record or his coziness with segregationist groups. He was criticized because his comments expressed undeniable racist sentiments that ran counter to the racially inclusive rhetoric of the Republican Party. Lott was given the choice of demonstrating that he was not a racist or resign. After what must have been a humiliating yet unconvincing mea culpa interview on BET, the Black oriented TV network; Lott threw in the towel.

Southern Political Demagoguery: Déjà Vu

Poor Lott must have been confused. After all he and many of his white southern

colleagues including Strom Thurmond had migrated to the Republican party precisely because they viewed the Democratic party as being pro-civil rights and out of step with the interests of white southerners. Indeed was it not true, he must have wondered, that for more than two decades the Republican Party had followed the so-called Southern strategy, a strategy through which it hoped to become the majority party by appealing to racists sentiments of the white South? Had not George W. Bush only a month ago campaigned enthusiastically in Georgia for a gubernatorial candidate who appealed to

racist sentiments by promising to support a referendum on returning to the Confederate emblem as the state flag? Had not Reagan and Bush appointed to the federal bench judges known to be hostile to civil rights? Had not Bush nominated Lott's fellow segregationist and friend of 40 years, Charles Pickering, for an appellate judgeship? Had not Reagan and the Bushes attempted to stack the US Civil Rights Commission with persons hostile to the civil rights establishment? Had they not opposed affirmative action and any other race-specific remedies supported by civil rights groups?

The American Way—Denying that Racist Actions are Racist

Apparently Lott did not understand the game. It is all right to oppose measures designed to atone for past and continuing racial discrimination so long as the support can be portrayed as something other than racism. It is all right to stack federal courts with judges hostile to Black interests in the name of strict constructionism. In short, it is all right to advocate and support policies and behaviors that sustain existing racial disparities. The key is simply to be able to deny that the actions are racist. That is the

American way. This was made abundantly clear when the US Senate replaced Lott with a new majority leader whose legislative history on matters of race was practically the same as Lott. And it was reinforced when President Bush re-nominated Lott's friend, Judge Pickering, for the appellate court.

Lott's resignation, then, was not a victory for the civil rights establishment. Nor was it evidence of a significant change in American race relations. It was simply the latest episode in continuing drama of racism and denial in American life and culture.

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Youth/Young Adults MLK Program

*Charles O. Prejean, Sr.
Director - OBCM*



Sts. Peter and Paul's Holy Steps Liturgical Dancers

Catholic Ministry (OBCM) sponsored the Youth/Young Adults MLK Program. The effort was co-chaired by the very capable Bryan Ali and Kenya Griffin, both members of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. The program was conceived, developed and produced by the participants, under the leadership of the co-chairs. The idea was to allow the two age groups to use their creative and organizational talents to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King. The production included performances by the kindergarten class from St. Thomas More Catholic School (their picture appears on the front page. Their photo also made front-page coverage of the January 19AJC) and the very talented seventh grader, Kyleah Starling from St. John Neumann.

Other performers included Sts. Peter and Paul's Holy Steps



Emefa Selormey, Traditional African Dancer from Ghana, Student at Clark-Atlanta University

Liturgical Dancers and the Amazing Grace Dancers of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Lyke House Drummers presented a combined African Music-Storytelling-Dance rendition that evoked thunderous applause. Deacon Ricardo Bailey set the spiritual context for the program and weaved in Dr. King's message of nonviolence and human wellbeing, using preaching and song like none other can but he.

The attendance consisted of an overflow crowd of over three hundred parents, grandparents, relatives

and friends. The program was a roaring success because of the excellence and dedication of the leadership, the quality of the talents of the performers, and the enthusiasm and caring disposition of everyone. The experience was truly one of a community of people, Black and White, joined together in the spirit of love. It was a reflection of Dr. King's Beloved Community.



John Osai-Kwapong, African Story-teller from Ghana, Graduate Student at Clark-Atlanta University

This year marked the first time the Office for Black

A Drum Major for Peace

A Youth Perspective of M.L.K.'s Life

Kyleah Starling

Birth of a Civil Rights Leader

On January 15th, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr. was born to a schoolteacher, Alberta King, and a Baptist minister, Martin Luther King, Sr. in Atlanta, Georgia.



Kyleah Starling, 7th grader, St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School, giving her speech at the youth celebration.

From the very start of Martin's life God's plan for him was to be a leader, one who stood up for his rights, and demanded justice, which was not in fair effect. During his childhood, Negroes were not allowed to sit and eat at restaurants. Things such as bathrooms and water fountains were often segregated. When Martin got older, he decided to take a stand for the rights of minorities. Dr. King led a bus boycott because of the law that required Negroes to move to the back of the bus when a white person needed a seat. With this action started, many other civil rights fighters helped the struggle. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. earned many awards due to his accomplishments, such as the Nobel Peace Prize. But it was Martin's will power to succeed that kept him

fighting even when the leading light seemed diminished. When I say he kept fighting, I don't mean he took the violent route, No! He took the peaceful route to success. He focused on a path similar to Gandhi's, a leader like himself. Even when the choice of violence seemed like the answer he kept fighting with Gandhi's nonviolent protest philosophy.

A Revolutionary Voice

Dr. King wrote many speeches that inspired. Some of his most famous and greatest speeches include: *I Have A Dream, Our God Is Marching On, Where Do We Go From Here, I've Been To The Mountaintop, and Beyond Vietnam*. But today I am going to focus on another speech, the one that inspires me the most, *The Drum Major Instinct*.

The Drum Major Instinct

The Drum Major Instinct incorporates a biblical parable found in the book of St. Mark about James and John, requesting from Jesus to sit on the left and right hand of the Throne. To most that would seem selfish or greedy. But the way James and John acted was identical to the way in which we act. Everybody at some time or another has the desire to lead, to be first. This is what Dr. King called the Drum Major Instinct. Everyone shows it in different ways. As a baby, a cry for attention; A child's want for first place; An adult doing good in order to be praised, and to be put in a higher position. Often we do things just for the praise, glory or to just receive, not for the

satisfaction of doing good from the heart. Everybody wants to shine, to be the Drum Major. Everyone has the Drum Major Instinct, to be first, to be a leader.

Throughout life, the Drum Major Instinct becomes very real. The worst thing about the instinct is racial prejudice, the need for one race to feel superior to another. You find yourself in the position of supporting your oppressor, when through prejudice and blindness, you fail to see how those same forces that oppress poor African American people also oppress poor White people. The instinct just makes you think that you are special and better than other races. You feel as though your skin is ordained to be first, even though you live under the same conditions.

Currently, the struggle between the nations greatly distorts the Drum Major Instinct. Nations are always fighting to be the most powerful, or wealthy. Nations are always in a contest for Supremacy.

In answer to James' and John's question Jesus replied, "It is good to have this instinct, but only if you use it properly. "Use it to be first in love, moral excellence, and generosity."

Dr. King's Legacy

Dr. King left this earth wanting not to be known for his accomplishments or where he went to school, but that he was a Drum Major. A Drum Major for Justice. A Drum major for Peace and A Drum Major for Righteousness. He gave his life serving others, loving others, trying to be right on the War question, clothing those who were naked, visiting

those in prison and loving and serving all of humanity. In living God's plan, Dr. King earned the respect of many.

Our Legacy

I challenge all of you to reflect on this . . . "My friends, the seed has been sown, but the struggle continues."

If it were not for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s belief in equal treatment no matter what color, race or gender: Condoleeza Rice couldn't be the National Security Advisor, or Colin Powell the Secretary of State; Halle Berry, Sidney Potier, and Denzel Washington could not have received best actor and actress awards; Vanessa Williams could not have been the first African American to win the Miss America title; Serena & Venus Williams, Arthur Ashe and Tiger Woods could not play tennis or golf on formerly segregated courts. I would not be allowed to attend St. John Neumann.

Now, I will leave you in the same way Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would with a song, a memory, or a prayer. *If I can help somebody as I pass along, If I can cheer somebody with a word or song, If I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain. If I can do my duty as a Christian ought, If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought, If I can spread the message as a master taught, then my living will not be in vain.*

Finally, I ask you to remember his words, which have resounded through the decades.

"The measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."



Few Out of Many: African Diasporic Phi Beta Kappa

*Ms. Akua Kankam,
Graduate Student in African & African American Studies,
Clark Atlanta University*



Phi Beta Kappa Members within the Atlanta University Center: (l-r) Robert Frankson, Kevin Khan, Fr. Edward B. Branch, Catholic Chaplain, Lyke House at AUC (with members of Phi Beta Kappa), Sekou Remy, and Damian Cupid (not shown)

There are over five hundred thousand Phi Beta Kappa members nationally. With two hundred and sixty two chapters, it is interesting to note that only four of that number, Fisk University, Howard University, Morehouse College and Spelman College, make their home on historically black college or university campuses. It is guesstimated that three to five thousand, or less than one percent, of those members are Africana people (Roach, Ronald, "Extending Their Reach," *Black Issues in Higher Education* October, 2002: 20). To understand the importance of this understated fact, it is necessary to understand the history of the organization.

Phi Beta Kappa History

Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1776 at the college of William and Mary. The society is the oldest, undergraduate liberal arts society in the United States. The listing of famous and notable mem-

bers is extensive. In addition to literary, philosophical, and scientific members, there are former presidents and current politicians that have helped to shape the fabric of America. Phi Beta Kappa members have assisted in altering the political climate of the country and have influence over many sectors. For example, Oliver Wendell Holmes dissented in the 1890 Sherman Anti-trust Act, which, to his mind, only fortified the concept of monopoly within the United States (www.arlingtoncemetery.com/owholmes.htm). Another member, Paul Robeson, was ostracized due to his outspoken viewpoints on racism, segregation, lynching and his attraction to communism. The organization's members have affected the perception of people and influenced their thoughts. Therefore, it is important that Africana people be involved with this organization. We must be concerned

with all aspects of society in order to effect positive change and shift detrimental policies.

Black, Catholic and Phi Beta Kappa

It is with these thoughts in mind that I introduce four of the Phi Beta Kappa members within the Atlanta University Center. These four students are members of the Lyke House Catholic Center of the Atlanta University Center. *Damian Cupid, Robert Frankson, Kevin Khan and Sekou Remy* are among the Catholic Center's brilliant scholars. All four men were born and raised on the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. They all attended Morehouse College, one of the Phi Beta Kappa member institutions, and have all gone on to attend graduate schools in the Atlanta area.

Sowing Seeds of Mental, Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Health

Damian Cupid graduated Summa Cum Laude with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Physics in May of 2002. Mr. Cupid is currently attending Clark Atlanta University on a full scholarship where he will receive his Master of Science degree in Physics with the anticipated graduation date of May 2004. His future research will focus on the integrity or stability of computational materials physics based on quantum mechanics. He is currently working on a presentation for the National Society of Black Physicists Conference to be held at Spelman College from February 13th through the 16th of this year. For Mr. Cupid possessing a stable sense of self was the answer to the question, what has higher education taught you thus far?

He said, "Education is not as important as sowing the seeds of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wealth."

Architectural Sustainability

Robert Frankson, with the honor of graduating, Magna Cum Laude, received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in May of 2001. Mr. Frankson is twenty-five years old and a graduate student at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is working on his Master of Architecture. He plans to create and promote psychologically healthy building development through an architecture known as sustainability. Sustainability is the development of environmentally conscious architecture.

A Noble Profession

Kevin Khan graduated Summa Cum Laude in May of 2001 with his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. He is a student at the Georgia Institute of Technology working on his Ph.D. in Mathematics and is an integral part of the Mathematics department serving as a teaching assistant. It is his goal to continue his career in mathematics, in order to pursue a career as an educator and researcher at the university level. He plans to do research and focus within the field of algebraic topology.

Community Self-Preservation

Sekou Remy, Magna Cum Laude was a dual degree major receiving his Bachelor of Science degrees in Computer Science from Morehouse and his Electrical Engineering degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology, in May of 2002. As a graduate student of the Georgia Institute

of Technology, Mr. Remy is a Ph.D candidate majoring in Electrical Engineering. His future focus will concentrate on teaching and research that will help propel the concept of community.

The A.U.C. Responsibility

The Atlanta University Center is supposed to stand for the ability of Africana people to advance not only themselves through education, but to aid and help support people. Because they have chosen to take part in higher education, these four young men have been challenged ,as all of us, as students are challenged. They are obligated as educated men, to continue what previous generations have done before them. Being Catholic, Africana, Diasporic, and Phi Beta Kappa, they must say what has not been said (but should be said), and do what has not been done (but should be done). They must add to the discipline and continue the discourse of what it means to be a Phi Beta Kappa member and a minority.

These four gentlemen are but a small example of the caliber of students that the Lyke House Catholic Center at the A.U.C. has to offer. Their enthusiasm and life-goals are a testament to their family, friends, and the community that surrounds them. They contribute to the Archdiocese of Atlanta with their time and talent. The benefits they have received in return have been fruitful to them. They are a part of this Roman Catholic family and evidence positive result by bringing themselves to the table of community and sharing what they have.

For more information, see www.pbk.org.

Visit with **Emmett Till (1955)**, victim of that brutal Mississippi lynching that



set in motion the Contemporary Civil Rights Movement and inspired **Rosa Parks** and **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



Righteous Ancestors Marching to Zion

*John C. Phillips, Student Editor
Charles O. Prejean, Dir., OBCM*

Below and to the right, you can't miss **Harriet Tubman (1821)**, an escapee to freedom returning to the South to rescue countless other slaves, fearlessly guiding them through the intricacies of the Underground Railroad. She would appreciate your visit and so would **Nat Turner**, a black slave revolutionary who



chose to fight and die for freedom in the so-called Land of the Free. Next sit and talk with the gentle, but determined looking idealist, **Crispus Attucks**



(1770), another Black warrior who fought and died for freedom in the American Revolutionary War.

Dred Scott, who sued for his rights all the way to the Supreme Court in 1850 is



one of the Marchers, and so is **Homer Plessy (1896)**, who, forty-six years later, also went before the Supreme Court. He challenged the Louisiana Statute that established that state's system of racial



separation. Both lost their cases to the truncated self-serving logic of man. Justice, however, was on their side. Justice always prevails from **RIGHTEOUS**

STRUGGLE . . . The Civil War was fought to free the Slaves. Wasn't it? Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment freed us from Slavery! Didn't they? With the Fourteenth Amendment came citizenship for us! Didn't it? And the Fifteenth Amendment, the right to vote! So they say! **Charles Hamilton Houston**



(1950), Dean of Howard University Law School with his pupil and future U.S. Supreme Court Justice, **Thurgood Marshall** had to tell the U.S. Supreme Court what these Amendments really meant. Finally, formal constitutional freedom was won. But, new forms of racism emerged to inhibit the practice of our God-given rights.

Booker T. Washington, William Edward Burghardt Dubois and Marcus Garvey, having seen the trivia of their



disagreement, they are now of one and right accord. In unison they sing the song of Zion.

The only dispute between **Malcom X** and **Elijah Muhammad** is the bantering over whom has the best voice. There are more heroes and sheroes, though not pictured;



we can see them and the contributions of all of our ancestors in the transparencies of the eyes and faces pictured.

We can see even more clearly, the nameless of the ages, from the darkness of the ocean bottom spanning from Africa to the New World. They prefer not to be named, but simply to be remembered for their gift to "The System of Habits for the Preservation of Our Race." So Say it loud **"I'm Black and I'm Proud."**



MLK Eucharistic Celebration 2003

Planting the Seeds for a Community of Love

Will Thomas, Morehouse College Intern, Catholic Georgia Bulletin



Photo by Michael Alexander

Most Reverend George V. Murry, S.J., Bishop of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. "Wherever Black America is going, Atlanta will get there first."

As the comfortable coldness of the Atlanta wind blew threw my charcoal colored suit, I wondered why I was really walking up these steps of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. When I walked in, it was more than the heater that warmed my soul, but more the warmth of community within the building. Community is an interesting concept, which at times is generically used and overlooked. Some look at it as an identification of location or similar interest, but for Black Catholics in Atlanta the word "community" is more than just a dog tag of a collective group. Community, for Black Catholics, is a state of mind, a way of living, a self and communal consciousness.

Communal Consciousness

The communal consciousness was heard through drum call, the emphatic "call to worship" by the Lyke House

drummers. It was felt through the angelic voices of the Archbishop James P. Lyke Memorial Mass Choir; it was seen through the crisp white suits and full regalia of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver. The true spirit of our religion finds its foundations in

our experiences, both socially and historically. We creatively extract the truth that we find in our experiences, which is articulated through our spiritual expression. However our spiritual expression would not be possible without the spinal cord of community. That's why community works so well if it's a way of living. Nothing is done for the self, but more for the collective group, which affects the self. Living life in community is a way of not only taking care of others, but also a way of taking care of the individual. Why taste the sweetness of a cake with one finger, when you can eat more with one hand? There is no such thing as witnessing the sacred mysteries by yourself, for the Eucharist is a communal sacrament in which God reveals himself through the community of love. The light of God is revealed through community. At the same time community is the light that leads us to God.

God's Garden Community

We must also realize how our community has grown, and from what garden it has grown. While our seed was planted in the fertile ground of Africa, we grew in the individualistic and capitalistic soil of America. But we grew. We continued to grow even when slavery refused to nourish our roots with sun and water. We continued to grow when our garden, known as America, decided to appoint Jim Crow as our gardener. We continued to grow out of the wilderness of social, political, and economic inequality. And we are still growing. That's the beauty of community. All of our parishes are sets of growing flowers in a beautiful bouquet. Your Black Catholic Community is a set of Bouquets being presented to the garden of the Catholic Church. Your purpose is to grow as a community in your separate gardens, in order to make your true gardener (God) happy.

We will continue to grow, because the gardens in Atlanta are rich in soil. The city reminds me of a new-aged Black Renaissance, reminiscent of the days when Harlem was the "Black Mecca." Even Bishop George B. Murry of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands spoke of the momentum of Black people in Atlanta. He stated during his homily at the Mass honoring Dr. King's Legacy that "*the African American Catholics in Atlanta and those who are not African American, but walk with you with sincerity of heart, you all have the opportunity to make Dr. King's dream a tangible reality. I believe you will lead the way and lead the nation. Wherever*

Black America is going, Atlanta will get there first."

We Reap What We Sow

The opportunity to grow in faith, love and community in Atlanta is a privilege and should not be taken for granted. And as everyone knows, with the privilege comes responsibility.

Mrs. Margaret Wooten, the Fr. Bruce Wilkinson Founders Award recipient for 2003, professes her responsibility by evangelizing throughout her community. We are all responsible for not letting our growth come to a halt, by failing to remember the price that was paid to be Black and Catholic. We are responsible for the articulation of our stories, making sure they are included in the history of the Catholic Church. We are responsible for utilizing the energy of youth, as well as the wisdom of our seniors. We are responsible for being Catholic.



Photo by Michael Alexander

Margaret S. Wooten, St. Bernadette Church, Cedartown, winner of the 2003 Father Bruce Wilkinson Founders Award, is shown with Charles Prejean, Director - OBCM. The award honors outstanding work in evangelization.

As Catholics, we are called to make sure that every seed in every garden is growing: the seed that will grow into justice, the seed that will allow us to be healed and reconciled, the seed that will allow us to grow out of our darkness and into God's spiritually nourishing light.



Day of Reflection – Fixing the Internal Problematic

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

Prepared by John C. Phillips, Student Publisher

The November 9th Day of Reflection was the next step to bring the Congress initiatives closer to its realization. The intent was to convene a session with representatives of the parishes so that the Atlanta Delegates to Congress IX could share the proceedings of Congress IX. More specifically, the intent was also to review the Congress IX Pastoral Plan, to discern its particular relevance for the Atlanta parishes, and to discuss ways to implement the collectively reached recommendations.

The Congress IX Pastoral Plan consists of Eight Principles. (Spirituality, Parish Life, Youth/Young Adults, Catholic Education, Social Justice, Racism, Africa, HIV/AIDS) These Principles are issues of importance to the Black Catholic community. Acting as a whole, the Congress IX delegates established goals for each principle and recommended a timeline for implementation.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

(Because of space consideration only the actual recommendations from each breakout session are presented.)

Spirituality

(The recommendations below have yet to be prioritized and projected over time)

1. Identify and incorporate Africentric cultural symbols, language and experiences in parish liturgies, i.e. Multi-Cultural Masses.
2. Develop scripture study programs and prayer groups from an Africentric perspective.

3. Expose youth and young adults to religious life, i.e. to relevant materials, and organize visits to seminaries, convents and monasteries.
4. Request pastoral staff, who are trained to serve spiritual, physical and emotional needs of black Catholics.
5. Create religious training sessions on the South Side.
6. Secure assistance to enable pastors of the Black Catholic parishes to examine all the programs within their parish to determine their cultural relevance.
7. Make the Archdiocese aware of our needs.

Parish Life

Inclusiveness:

1. Encourage Priests to be the first to welcome new members personally.
2. Form welcoming committees to contact new members and acquaint them with church ministries, organizations and clubs — every segment of the parish community should be represented, i.e., ethnic groups, disabled, etc.

3. Establish a mentoring or “Buddy” System

(To be achieved in one year.)

Leadership Training:

Develop leaders who will train others to “pass the torch” and share leadership positions. Some type of continuity should be in place.

(To be achieved in three years.)

Resources:

1. Establish a financial networking system within each parish, i.e., business directory.
2. Find needed financial support for churches. Parishioners need to be educated on costs required to operate a parish and on their financial stewardship responsibilities.

(To be achieved in five years.)

Youth & Young Adults

Educate youth, young adults, and parents about the tenets of faith and the relationship of our Catholic Faith and our cultural tradition through better and relevant catechesis. *(To be achieved in one year.)*

Develop fully functioning youth ministries with mentoring programs and full participation of youth and young adults in worship services. *(To be achieved in three years.)*

Develop strong leadership training and more vocations to strengthen the wider Catholic Church. *(To be achieved in five years.)*

Catholic Education

(The recommendations below have yet to be prioritized and projected over time)

1. Establish a Task Force Committee for Black Catholic Schools in Atlanta. Identify talents and gifts of those members in our parishes to be appointed to this Task Force, i.e., Bankers, Catholic educators, etc.
2. The Task Force should:

- Develop a strategic plan to address creative fund raising initiatives for Black Catholic Education.
- Meet with those who have successfully reopened Black Catholic Schools within their inner cities and replicate best plans.
- Solicit support of educators, fundraisers, bankers, accountants, brokers and others.
- Develop a network of information to be shared with all Black parishes on Black Catholic Education issues and concerns.
- Contact and involve those who are actively doing scholarly research and cost analysis work on Black Catholic Schools.
- Research funding sources and write grants (i.e., Lily Foundation, Pew Trust, Federal Government-Faith Based Education Initiatives, etc.) that may support funding for Black Catholic Schools.

3. Communicate to the Archdiocese of Atlanta the need for Black Catholic Schools and solicit commitment and involvement from the Bishop for inner city Black Catholic Schools.

Social Justice

(The recommendations below have yet to be prioritized and projected over time)

1. Convene a North Georgia Black Catholic Congress, similar to the recent national one.
2. Identify a contact person for each of the principles so that parishes can have a central point of contact.
3. Encourage all parishes to come together on one common social justice issue.
4. Sponsor a single mothers' retreat
5. Utilize existing church groups, i.e., Knights of Peter Claver and others, to sponsor parish meetings on social justice issues. Ensure that children south of I-20 receive the same financial and social support of the

Church as the children north of I-20.

6. Develop support groups for our African American senior citizens, i.e., many suffer from depression.

Racism

First Year

1. Meet with the Archbishop and his advisors quarterly to discuss issues of racism in Church and society.
2. Make sure the Office for Black Catholic Ministry has more clout in the Archdiocese with an advisory group made up of at least one representative from each of the core Black Catholic parishes.

Three Years:

1. Continue to meet with the Archbishop to voice concerns. Include a representative from each parish.

2. Encourage minorities to go to Christ the King at least periodically.
3. Create forums to discuss issues of racism, bigotry and prejudice.
4. Develop education materials and programs that speak to the dignity of all people.

Five Years:

Request Black priests and deacons to work in each Black Catholic parish, or ones of other cultural heritages who have been well prepared for assignments in Black Catholic parishes.

Africa

(The Africa focus group concentrated on the first year goals.)

1. Develop materials and resources on African/African American history, culture, politics, African saints, martyrs and popes.

Also, develop materials on Africa's contributions to the Church, disseminate this information to Catholics in general, and specifically to Black Catholics.

2. Develop resource materials with a series of homilies based on "A Call to Solidarity with Africa" and suggestions for planning Africentric liturgies and celebrations.

HIV/AIDS

(The HIV/AIDS focus group concentrated on the first year goals.)

1. Provide educational HIV/AIDS awareness opportunities for parish staffs, schools, parishioners and the local community.
2. Develop a Black Catholic fund to support HIV/AIDS ministries in the United States and in Africa.

Lenten Regulations

Ash Wednesday, March 5th, and Good Friday, April 18th, are days of abstinence from meat and days of fast.

- Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat (canons 1250— 1253).
- All Catholics 14 years of age and older are bound by law of abstinence (canon 1252).
- All Catholics are bound by law of fast who are 18 years of age, and are bound until they have reached their 59th birthday (canon 1250).

By exercising fasting one may eat one full meal each day with meat included (except for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) which are days of fast and

abstinence, plus two smaller meals — both of which together do not equal the one full meal. Drinking beverages such as coffee, tea, milk, juice and soft drinks are allowed and do not break the fast.

A single violation of these Lenten obligations is not a serious sin. General or substantial neglect of the obligation to do penance would be a serious matter.

The following are recommendations for voluntary self-denial or personnel penance:

- Daily participation in the Mass
- Prayers for vocations
- Personal service to the aged or the sick
- Fasting at least once a week as a way of identifying with the poor and starving of the world
- Prayers for Peace

The Office for Black Catholic Ministry expresses its gratitude to all members of the 2003 Martin Luther King, Jr. Program Committee for a well-planned and executed program. Thanks also to the leadership and talented participants of the 2003 MLK, Jr. Youth/Young Adult Program for an equally successful effort.

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Parish Calendar Announcements



The Atlanta Archdiocesan Office for Black Catholic Ministry – National and Regional

Special

Announcement: *The Black Catholic Clergy Group* of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, who consist of 20 Black priests and deacons that serve in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, had its inaugural meeting at St. Paul of the Cross in September 2002. The Office for Black Catholic Ministry wishes them success in all their endeavors.

Feb. 2 – National Day of Prayer for the Black Family

Feb. 8 – Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita (Born 1869 in Sudan and died 1947 in Italy)

Job Opening – Archdiocese of Milwaukee: Looking for a youth minister for All Saints Parish and St. Martin de Porres Parish. Our program is a collaborative youth ministry effort between the two parishes that are located in the heart of Milwaukee serving some eighty young people. The position is full-time with an excellent salary and benefits. For information or send your resume to Rev. Dennis A Dirkd at dirkxd@ameritech.net

Feb. 28 & Mar. 1 – Social Justice Lecture and Workshop: “The Little Stories of St. Martin de Porres and the Big Story of Social Justice;” The Aquinas Center of Theology and Immaculate Heart of

Mary Catholic Church; Dr. Alejandro Garcia-Rivera, Graduate Theological Union, Berkley, CA.; Lecture-Friday, February 28, 2003, at 7:30 p.m.; Workshop-Saturday, March 1, 2003, 9:30 a.m.; Cost: \$30 w/ lunch. For further information phone (404) 727-8860

Mar. 2-8 – The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of Aids. The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is the launching point for mobilizing African American churches to become centers for AIDS education and compassionate care. For more info email info@balmingiead.org or visit www.balmingiead.org.

July 24-27 – Unity Explosion: “*Our God is an Awesome God;*” Catholic Diocese of Galveston-Houston – Office of African American Ministries. For info contact Charolette Davis at (713) 659-5461 or cdavis@diogh.org.

June 20-22 – Ambassadors of the Word, Sankofa Youth Summit VI, in San Francisco, CA, “Reaching Up To Higher Ground” sponsored by the Ambassadors of the Word (Fr. Chester and Charles Smith). Info: 516-485-0122.

June 29-July 19 – Xavier University, Institute For Black Catholic Studies Programs (Catechesis, Youth Ministry, Leadership). For Info contact (504) 485-7921.



Most Blessed Sacrament

Every Wed. at 7:30 p.m. – Bible study in the St. Martin de Porres Parish Center. Feb. bible study focus is the book of Genesis.

Feb. 22 – Mardi Gras celebration at the Warehouse

from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m. Tickets: \$25.00 for food, music, and fun. For further info contact our parish at (404) 349-0176.

Mar. 7 & 14 – Lenten Fish Fry Dinners: Dine In/Take Out. For further info contact the parish at 404-349-0176.

End of Mar. – Lenten Play hosted by our Teen Club ministry, “Radicals for Christ.” Open to the public. For further info contact Gretchen Eugene, *Youth Minister*, at (404) 349-0176, ext. 22.



Our Lady of Lourdes

Feb. 9 – Our Lady of Lourdes will be celebrating our 91st Parish Anniversary and the Diaconate Ordination of Chester Griffin. Rejoice with a Choir Concert at 4 PM and Parish Dinner at 6:00 PM. Come and celebrate all our Lourdes’ blessings!

Starting Feb. 2003 – Drexel Institute for the Arts – “Educating the Catholic Community of Atlanta” will be offering Weekly Arts Lessons for Children, Youth and Adults. Students will take private lessons with well-trained faculty on weeknights or Saturdays.

The following courses will be offered:

Music: Applied Studies in Piano, Guitar, Voice, Strings, Drums and Brass.

Art: Studio courses in Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics and Graphic Design.

Dance: Courses in Ballet, Modern, Jazz and Tap.

Drama: Drama, Musical Theater and Theater Workshop.

For more info contact Our Lady of Lourdes Rectory at (404) 522-6776.



Saint Anthony of Padua

Feb. 16 - The Teen Ministry of St. Anthony of Padua Parish will have a Mass in Celebration of Black History Month and the Parish Centennial on Sunday, February 16, 2003, 11:30 a.m. at St. Anthony, 928 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd., SW. Father Roy Lee will be the Guest Homilist. The Teen Ministry also invites everyone to join in fellowship immediately following the Mass at the St. Anthony Parish Lyke Center, 951 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd., SW.

Mar. 4 – Fat Tuesday night, sponsored by Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary, Court #276. Call church office for details.

Mar. 7 – Health Ministry Fish Fry, 12 noon – 6 p.m., St. Anthony’s Lyke Center; Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m.

Mar. 14, 21, 28, Apr. 4, 11 – Ladies Auxiliary of Saint Anthony Fish Fry, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., St. Anthony’s Lyke Center; Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m.

Mar. 29 – Parish Retreat. Call church office for details.

Apr. 12 – RCIA Retreat. Call church office for details.

Apr. 17 – Holy Thursday, 7 p.m.

Apr. 18 – Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary, Court #276, Good Friday Fish Fry, 12 Noon – 7 p.m., St. Anthony’s Lyke Center; Good Friday Mass at 7 p.m.

Apr. 19 – Holy Thursday, Vigil Mass 7:35 p.m.

May 3 – First Holy Communion and May Crown-ing at the 8:30 a.m. Mass.



St. John the Evangelist

New



Music
Director: St. John The Evangelist welcomes Mr. John Beal as the Parish's full time Music Director as of

January 1st.

Feb. 16, Mar. 16, May 18 – Breakfast sponsored by KPC & KPCLA (after 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses). Please note that this event has changed to the third Sunday of the month.

Mar. 1 – Anointing of the Sick (5 p.m. Vigil Mass).

Mar. 7-9 – KPC/KPCLA Junior Conference, Charleston, SC. *Attendees:* Grand Lady Woodyard, Lady D. Taylor, (Junior Daughter Counselor), Lady Burroughs (Assistant Junior Daughter Counselor), and 7 Junior Daughters.

Mar. 8 – Sickle Cell Support Group Meeting: 10 a.m. - 12 noon.

Mar. 22 – Home and School Association Auction.

Daly Hall/after 5 p.m. Vigil Mass.

Mar. 26 – Court 340 Ladies will prepare supper and serve the homeless at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

May 2-4 – Gulf Coast Conference, Mobile, AL. *Attendees:* Grand Lady Woodyard, Lady D. Taylor (Junior Daughter Counselor), and selected delegates.



St. Paul of the Cross

Feb. 21 – “*My Tribute: A musical Celebration of African American Artists.*” Featuring Sabrina Coleman Clark, *soprano* and Mark Husey, *piano*; including the Atlanta Premier of Lee Hoiby’s Masterful Setting of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *I have a Dream* and Works of Margaret Bonds, Harry T. Burleigh, et al; Fri. at 8 p.m.. Cost: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. For more info call (404) 696-6704.

Mar. 1 – Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary/ Court 301, St. Paul of the Cross: Christian Love Luncheon at 7:30 p.m. at the Georgia Railroad Depot, 55 MLK, Jr. Dr. Cost: \$30.00.



Sts. Peter and Paul

Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 1, May 2 – Friday Mass 7:30 p.m. and Fish Fry

Feb. 8 – Haitian Community Dinner 5:00 p.m.

Feb. 9 – Jr. Knights & Daughters Black History Program: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Feb. 22 – First Reconciliation: 10:00 a.m.

Feb. 1 – International Dinner: 7:30 p.m.

Mar. 4 – Mardi Gras Celebration sponsored by the Young Adults 7:30 p.m.

Mar. 5 – Ash Wednesday Masses 8:30a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Mar. 15 – KPC/KPCLA Quarterly Initiation

Mar. 23 – Seniors Appreciation: 2:00 p.m.

Mar. 29 – Mary Day Event: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Apr. 7-11 – St. Peter Claver School Spring Break

May 4 – Emmaus Meal: 5:00 p.m.

May 11 – May Crown-ing: After 8:30 Mass

May 11 – Mother’s Day Breakfast: 10:00 a.m.

May 17 – St. Peter Claver School Spring Fest: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

May 24 – Haitian Mother’s Day Dinner: 5:00 p.m.



The Lykehouse - AUC

Feb. 1 – Pre-Marriage Workshop by Deacon Fred and Connie Sambrone 9-5 p.m.

Feb. 15 – Service Saturday 7:30 a.m.

Feb. 22 - Liturgy Workshop 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Mar. 5-12 – No Bible Study (Starts again Mar. 19).

Mar. 8-18 – Spring Break. Trip to Lalibela, Ethiopia. Anyone interested please call (404) 522-3733. Mar. 22 – Pre-marriage Workshop’s 10th Reunion

Mar. 27 – Rosary at 6:00 p.m.

Apr. 12 – Sickle Cell Race at 7:00 a.m.

May 3 – Pre-Marriage Workshop by Deacon Fred and Connie Sambrone at 9-5 p.m.

May 4 – Last Mass of Semester, and Closing Picnic at 10:00 a.m.

May 18 – Commence-ment Morehouse College and Spelman College

May 19 – Commence-ment Clark Atlanta University



Parish Connection

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