

in a

Word™

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Pope Francis

First Pope from Latin America

SCHOOLS TOO VALUABLE TO SELL

(Part Six of National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan)

Truth, wisdom, learning, and good sense - these are worth paying for, but too valuable for you to sell. (Proverbs 23:23)

Catholic Schools continue to be critical means of evangelization. Whether parish, regional, independent, or some new variation, the critical characteristic is a Catholic environment, where the values of hope, charity, prayer, service, sacrifice, and respect for the dignity of every human person are taught and reinforced.

Our perspective as African Americans

From the first National Black Catholic Congress in 1889, to 'What We Have Seen and Heard,' which the Black Bishops of the United States issued in 1984, to the Pastoral Plans of Action from Congresses IX and X, the NBCC movement has re-iterated concern for the vitality of Catholic schools.

After Congress IX, the NBCC appointed a Special Commission on Catholic Education. The commission emphasized that Catholic schools have long been "beacons of hope and opportunity" for families and young people in the Black community and that sustaining these schools is achievable, with commitment, creativity, and leadership. Successful innovations include: work-study, such as Christo Rey programs and the Independent School Model in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; innovations in diocesan support, such as the Jubilee Schools established by Bishop Terry Steib in Memphis; and targeted foundations such as Chicago's Big Shoulders Fund and the Foundation for the Nativity & Miguel Schools. These creative approaches, and the commission's ten recommendations for sustaining the schools, are described at length in its 2007 report, *Sustaining Catholic Education in and for the Black Community*, which is available through www.nbccongress.org.

Following the special commission's recommendation, in 2010 the NBCC Board of Trustees created the NBCC Catholic Education Foundation LLC. The foundation has expert educators available for consultation with struggling schools. The Foundation is currently raising funds for an endowment from which it will make grants to elementary schools to support financial stability, training, scholarships, or implementation of new models. This foundation is the Black Catholic community's own means to build up the elementary schools that minister in Black communities and educate Black children.

Our faith engaged

- We call upon the many leading professionals, athletes, artists, and other public figures, who are products of Catholic schools, to give back to the schools that gave them a strong academic, moral, and athletic foundation.
- We call for ongoing professional development, continuing education opportunities and Catholic faith formation for teachers, administrators, staff, and school board members.
- We urge Catholic schools to invite their students' parents to learn about the Catholic faith through RCIA.
- We call upon book companies and publishers to include Black Catholic saints and other people of color in their publications.
- We urge all Catholic schools to integrate into their curricula the history of African Americans and the history of people of African descent in the Catholic Church.
- We commit to spreading word of the work of the NBCC Catholic Education Foundation to our fellow-parishioners and diocesan leaders.
- We show our support for Catholic education in and for the Black community by becoming financial supporters ("partners") of the NBCC Catholic Education Foundation, so that it may flourish.
- We celebrate the special place of Xavier University of Louisiana, the only historically-Black Catholic university in the United States, and we honor its remarkable president, Dr. Norman Francis. We urge Catholic high school guidance counselors to acquaint their college-bound seniors with this outstanding institution.



For more information on Education Foundation go to web site <http://nbcccatholiceducationfoundation.org> or find nbcccatholiceducationfoundation on Facebook

WILL THE CHURCH RETURN TO THE PEOPLE?

(THOUGHTS ON THE ELECTION OF POPE FRANCIS)

Habemus Papam! Those Latin words were seen and heard throughout the world after the Cardinals had chosen a new Pope. As the world waited to see who was named there was the almost universal question on everyone's mind.... "What would he be like?"

The answer to that question was answered when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio appeared on the balcony of St. Peter and said *Buon Giorno!* His humility and simplicity was apparent and the subsequent reporting of who he was and how he lived in Buenos Aires brought a wave of fresh air to the Church.

There are many expectations for the papacy of Pope Francis. Its almost like the Spirit is groaning to appear as Paul says in Romans 8:26.... "but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words".

The world wants something new. Pope Francis has the opportunity to bring that fresh air back. Only time will tell if he can truly bring the church back to its roots and be a church for all people and not just a church focused primarily on laws and doctrines.

The election of Pope Francis, who is the first non-European Pope in modern times, reminds us that the Church is global institution not just European. African American Catholics and other cultures throughout the world know too well the struggles to be free of a European mind set.

In a brilliant article published by the **National Catholic reporter** on March 14, 2013 Father Antonio Pernia, SVD, the former superior general of the Society of the Divine Word reflected on the election of Pope Francis. He says in the article...

"One can see he had a true love for people, especially the poor and the marginalized in society. Thus, one is not surprised with his choice of Francis as his pontifical name. He will make a good pastor of a church for and of the poor. The first non-European pope in the modern era, the first Latin American pope. Bergoglio's election puts a new face to the Catholic church, one that is no longer a European church, but a truly global church. It also reflects the so-called "demographic shift" of the Catholic church, from heavily populated in the "global

north" to the "global south" (that is, Latin America, Africa, Asia), where about two-thirds of the 1.2 billion Catholics now live. In fact, almost 50 percent of all Catholics live in Latin America alone. So it is only reasonable that the head of the Catholic church should originate from the same continent."

Father Pernia further states... *"To speak of the "global south" is also to speak about mission and evangelization, if only because these used to be the traditional "mission territories," but also because more and more missionaries are now originating from these young churches. Indeed, the first important challenge of the Catholic church is the "ad-extra" dimension, and that is, mission and evangelization, or bringing the Gospel to peoples. As theologians put it, the church exists by mission just as fire exists by burning. **If something is wrong with the church today, maybe it is because it is not doing (or not doing enough or not doing well) what it is supposed to do. There is no fire because there is no burning. There is less church because there is less mission and evangelization.**"*

"Not only do we now have the first Latin American pope, but he is also the first Jesuit pope and the first pope belonging to a religious order in recent history. This fact is significant for religious congregations have a more collegial style of governing. For instance, just as the superior general of religious orders has a council to govern with him, cannot the pope, too, have a council (e.g., of six, or eight or 10) who would share the responsibility of leadership with him? In a more complex world -- more multicultural, pluralistic, post-modern, global and technological -- it is no longer possible for one person to govern alone."

"Team leadership, or participative leadership, is becoming more and more a necessity. It would seem the Second Vatican Council's intuition about collegiality now needs to be taken seriously."

Will the Church return to the people? With the help of the Holy Spirit guiding Pope Francis this may happen. Only time will tell.

*Antonio Pernia, is currently on sabbatical leave at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University.
Read the entire article by Father Pernia at ncronline.org*



in a word or two



(from left) Cathy Green Miner
with Vivian Rousan - 2001

Vivian Verly Rousan died Dec. 10, 2012. She was a kind and spirit-filled person who celebrated her 83rd birthday in July in St. Petersburg with all her adult children and nearly all grandchildren gathered. She had multiple careers and achievements, including secondary school teacher, substance abuse recovery program staff, community newspaper publisher, writer/editor, consultant and volunteer.

A Xavier University of

Louisiana 1951 graduate, she taught in the Pinellas County public school system 30 years, was a columnist for The St. Petersburg Times and Evening Independent and an instructor with Modern Media Institute, fore-runner of Poynter Institute. She earned a Masters in 1979. She was a community activist involved with the NAACP, community service organizations, Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's, Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, serving as president. Mrs. Rouson was active with the Institute for Black Catholic Studies and very supportive of *IN A WORD*. She also was regarded as mother and aunt by many. She will be missed.

In his latest work, *Notes from the Underground*, best selling author Father Donald Cozzens, author of the *Changing Face of the Priesthood* and *Sacred Silence*, calls attention to a vast "unseen church" with a heart that is beating for change and renewal. This church, according to Father Cozzens, is "a pilgrim people who believe that the Holy Spirit is loose in the world and whose rumors of wisdom might be found in any of God's people as well as in their ordained leaders."

Father Cozzens uncovers the spiritual riches that are buried beneath a church that has been rocked by scandal and doubt. This is "a church," writes Father Cozzens, "that wants to be simply adult—a church not of children or adolescents hesitant to think and reflect on the lessons of human experience...A church closer to the spirit of Yves Congar and Teilhard de Chardin, to Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa, a church in step with the spirit of the gospel."

Especially timely after the election of a new pope, *Notes from the Underground* is expected to be widely debated and discussed. It is a cry from the heart of a priest who loves his church and has a radical vision grounded in tradition that will allow

the church to open its doors to healing grace. It is published by Orbis Books, the book publishing unit of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Founded during 1970, Orbis Books endeavors to publish works that enlighten the mind, nourish the spirit and challenge the conscience. Orbis seeks to explore the global dimensions of Christian faith and mission, to invite dialogue with diverse cultures and religious traditions, and to serve the cause of reconciliation and peace. Learn more at <http://www.orbisbooks.com/> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/orbisbooks>.

ALL ARE INVITED!

Diocese of Charleston
Office of Black Catholics
HERITAGE 2013
CELEBRATION
APRIL 5-6 | GREENVILLE, SC
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL WITH MASS
AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH



Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone
Bishop of Charleston



ValLimar Jansen
Singer, cantor and recording artist



Father Paul Williams, OFM
Vicar for Black Catholics

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

6:30 p.m. Reception at the Hyatt Regency Hotel (220 North Main St. Greenville)
7:30 p.m. Farewell Banquet for Fr. Paul Williams (Tributes by Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone and others.)
10:30 p.m. Entertainment/Social

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

12 noon Heritage Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church (307 Gower St. Greenville)
1:45 p.m. Luncheon with ValLimar Jansen at the Hyatt Hotel
3:45 p.m. Afternoon break
4:00 p.m. Afternoon Family Gatherings
5:00 p.m. Family Reunion ends

Adults \$60, youth \$35. Friday night banquet only \$45. Luncheon with ValLimar only \$35. Youth track available. Registration deadline is 3/29. For more information, visit <http://sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries>

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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