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BELIEVE DAT!!

Photo by: Father James Pawlicki, SVD

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by

Ansel Augustine, Daniel Boucree, and Devon Watts

The 4th Annual Youth and Young adult revival took place this year on March 20th at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church in Marrero, LA. This is not your typical revival. This revival is for people of all ages, but is planned and put on by the youth and young adults of the IMANI Team of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.



The IMANI Team is a group of Black Catholic youth from the Black Catholic parishes and schools brought together to serve the Black Catholic community of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The members of the IMANI team serve on other leadership teams, such as Teen Cross (the Archbishop's leadership team for Youth Ministry), The Archdiocesan Youth & Young Adult Gospel Choir, as well as other groups throughout the Archdiocese. Members also plan and attend leadership retreats such as Habari Gani (a leadership retreat for Black Catholic parishes and high schools) and CLI (Catholic Leadership Institute). During the IMANI team meetings, members discuss issues that Black Catholic youth are dealing with in the Church. By bringing this team together, we are making sure everybody is on the same page about advancing the needs of Black Catholic youth within the structure of the CYO Office events, as well as events throughout the Archdiocese. This group is brought together through the leadership of the CYO Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office and the Office of Black Catholics of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Preparation

The preparation for this revival was difficult due to the fact that many people participate in high school extracurricular activities and some of the meetings were planned on days of games and performances. The IMANI Team members are active throughout the community. Some other difficult parts of preparation were making sure everyone was on the same page and they knew what they had to do. Being original and making sure our culture was represented in



the revival also provided a challenge. Making sure we had what we needed and all that our materials worked correctly was diffi-

cult. Since this revival is planned by youth and young adults, we wanted to make sure the topic related to the Bible as well as to the issues that people of all ages are facing today. There were many months of planning and rehearsals to make sure that this event was the "Spirit-filled" event that it was.

Seeing it come together

When the revival came together it was an indescribable feeling to see all of the hard work that was done pay off. To see a packed church (it was standing room only) full of supporters was amazing. Seeing the amount of people, of all ages, that were entertained by the things we envisioned and created made us feel good.

The revivalist, Seminarian Daniel Green, also addressed many topics that bother us as Black Catholics. The altar call

done by Seminarian Joshua Johnson was also very inspirational and really helped to show that all the people in attendance could lean on each other for strength and love as we are called to do as Catholics.

The Archdiocesan Youth & Young Adult Gospel Choir, along with the guest choir from Xavier University of Louisiana, led us in powerful songs that really filled the church with praise. The dancers and drummers from St. Katharine Drexel Catholic Church, showed another aspect of how our spiritual expressions give God praise. The experience of putting on this revival made our faith grow, because through all of the meetings and rehearsals we realized how much we sacrificed just as Jesus did. It was a blessing to have so many clergy come out and support us and to show that we mattered, especially Bishop Fabre. **So, as our theme for the revival states, "Believe Dat... You're Welcome Here!", we are not ashamed to say that this is OUR CHURCH and this is OUR FAITH, and this revival was our way of showing our church community that we are proud to be soldiers in God's Army!!**

Ansel Augustine is the Associate Director and Coordinator of Black Youth Ministry for the CYO Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Daniel Boucree and Devon Watts are students at St. Augustine High School and are member of the IMANI Team and TEEN CROSS.



A LETTER FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS TO CONGRESS CONCERNING DEFICIT REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I call on Congress to place the needs of poor, unemployed, hungry, and other vulnerable people first, both home and abroad, in setting priorities in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Continuing Appropriations Resolution. Decisions on how to allocate opportunities and burdens in setting budget priorities are more than economic policies — they are significant moral choices. Meeting essential human needs is a compelling ethical and fiscal priority. A moral measure of the budget is how it treats “the least of these” at all stages of life.

Some current proposals call for substantial reductions, particularly in those programs that serve the poorest and most vulnerable people in our nation. In a time of economic crisis, poor and vulnerable people are in greater need of assistance, not less. Preserving national security is imperative and we need to secure our nation without worsening the insecurity of poor and vulnerable people in our midst.

It is important that our nation address the long term impacts of deficits on the health and stability of the economy. New policies and effective strategies to address the federal deficit are needed to ensure stability and security for future generations. Any just and effective policy must be a balanced approach that calls for **shared sacrifice by all**. Strategies to raise adequate revenues, eliminate unnecessary defense spending, and address the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs in a fair manner, also need to be offered and discussed. Congress should adopt a spending plan for the remainder of FY 2011 that ensures adequate funding for programs that offer opportunity and help to poor people, children, seniors, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable persons. Congress should help to alleviate their burden, not make it worse.

Protecting human life is a first requirement. Therefore I strongly support provisions that **retain all appropriations riders against abortion funding**, and that **restore a consistent ban on such funding in the budget of the District of Columbia**. I hope funds now provided to organizations that perform abortions, and to programs that promote contraceptives to unmarried minors, will be redirected to meeting the basic needs of the poor. I offer the following directions for budget policies as examples of measures to protect the poor and vulnerable. These are some of the proposed cuts that will have a serious impact on poor and vulnerable people:

-The USCCB has long called on Congress to work to ensure adequate and lifegiving **health care** coverage to those in need. The proposed **\$1.3 billion** cut to **Community Health Centers** will deny health care to nearly eleven million poor and vulnerable people including mothers and children at risk. These centers are often the only access to health care for tens of millions of people in our country.

-The bishops affirm their long-standing advocacy for safe, affordable and decent housing. At a time of record foreclo-

tures, increasing homelessness and rising housing costs, reductions of **\$2.3 billion** to **affordable housing programs** is not justified in light of the continuing housing crisis for low-and moderate-income families.

-Reducing **job training programs** by a proposed **\$1.75 billion** is unwarranted at a time of high unemployment and low job creation. This will prolong the economic pain of those seeking adequate training to re-enter the job market. Many of those most affected by job loss are less-skilled workers who need additional training and skill development. Congress should work to strengthen, improve and adequately fund quality training programs with successful outcomes that help the jobless find decent work.

-The proposed cuts in federal **education** programs that especially assist low-income students and students with disabilities are particularly disturbing and unwise. Efforts to cut significantly ESEA Title I, IDEA, Head Start, and Pell grants harm students who most need assistance to be successful in school or college.

-There are unacceptable reductions in **FY 2011 refugee funding** including for example: \$77 million (more than 10 percent) is cut for domestic refugee resettlement programs operated by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement and \$827 million (44.8 percent relative to FY 2010) is cut from refugee admissions and overseas refugee assistance programs in the Department of State. These reductions **would have a devastating** effect on refugees, Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa recipients, victims of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied alien children, and other vulnerable populations. Communities across the country that welcome these populations would also be affected by these cuts. At a minimum, Congress should **maintain funding for these essential programs at the current level**.

The spending choices of Congress have clear moral and human dimensions; they reflect our values as a people. Catholic Bishops are not policy makers, but pastors and teachers. I recognize that these decisions are not easy, but poor and vulnerable people have a priority claim on our limited, although still substantive, financial resources. In efforts to pass a responsible spending resolution for the remainder of FY 2011, decisions should be made that not only reflect a commitment to national and long term fiscal security, but also demonstrate justice, compassion and fairness. My plea, then, is simple: Put poor and vulnerable people first as you consider how to spend limited federal resources.

Sincerely,
Bishop Stephen E. Blaire Diocese of Stockton Chairman,
Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development .
March 4, 2011

in a word or two

The Catholic Health Association is pleased to announce a new resource to help inform your patients and communities about benefits of the Affordable Care Act. This new resource complements the other health reform information and resources that CHA creates and updates for the ministry.



Health reform is often in the news, but many people aren't sure how the law affects them. That's why CHA recently joined with other leading national organizations to form the Health Care and You Coalition. Bringing together groups that represent consumers, patients, physicians, nurses, hospitals, and pharmacists, the coalition's goal is to provide easy-to-understand information about the health care law to help individuals and families understand what it means for them.

Members of the coalition are AARP, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American College of Physicians, American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, National Community Pharmacists Association, and CHA. The coalition's new website is now live at www.HealthCareAndYou.org. The website features information on the law in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, an interactive timeline of when different parts of the law take effect and current health coverage options for people in various situations.

The Institute for Black Catholic Studies will be held this summer at Xavier University of New Orleans from July 1- July 23, 2011. A number of programs are offered.

The Master Degree Program is the only Black Catholic graduate program in pastoral theology in the United States. The popular Certificate and Enrichment Programs are one week sessions that forms students for effective Catholic ministry in the African American community and Church at large.

A new addition this year is the One Week Seminar for Cross Cultural Priests to be held from July 17-July 23, 2011. Titled *PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN BLACK CATHOLIC & MULTICULTURAL PARISHES* this one week seminar for cross-cultural and indigenous priests and pastors explores theological and practical pastoral issues that arise in the dynamics of the pastor's role in Black or multicultural Catholic parishes.

The Institute and this course are ideal contexts for missionaries, cross-cultural priests and indigenous pastors to explore the historical and cultural realities of Black Catholics in the United States and to plan effective pastoral strategies. (2 sem. hr. credits)

Professor: Fr. Dr. Freddy Washington, C.S.S.p., D.Min. (Pastoral Theology) and Instructor: Fr. Gerard Marable, M.Div., Th.M. (Pastoral Theology)

The Diocese of Charleston office of Ethnic Ministries is sponsoring a *Black Catholics Heritage Celebration* from May 6-7, 2011 in Greenville, South Carolina.

The two day event is being hosted by St. Anthony of Padua parish in Greenville. *Heritage 2011* will be taking donations for promoting Catholic education in and for the Black community. The office is supporting the building of a new school at St. Anthony of Padua and ongoing support of St. Martin de Porres school in Columbia. For more information contact Pat Wegman at 864-242-2233 ext 209 or e mail pwegman@catholic-doc.org Kathleen Merritt is Director of the Office of Ethnic Ministries.

Black Catholics Heritage Celebration
May 6-7, 2011

Dr. Kevin Johnson

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmone
Bishop of Charleston

Sr. Dr. Oralisa Martin

Heritage Dancers

Rev. Patrick Tuttle, OFM

Rev. Paul Williams, OFM

Honorable Arthur C. McFarland
Rev. Emmanuel Andinum

**Hyatt Regency Hotel
Greenville, SC 29601**

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 6,000 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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