

in a
WordTM

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- youth in rural Louisiana remember Black History
- new Provincial for Southern Province
- African nun makes Time magazine's 2014 list of the world's 100 most influential people.



**SAY NOT,
I'M TOO YOUNG**

Photo by: Rev. James Pawlicki, SVD

“A Journey to Freedom” Holy Family Catholic Church Black History Program Lawtell, Louisiana

Author: Gina Readore

Holy Family Catholic Church located in Southwest Louisiana held its biannual Black history program this past February, 2014. The approximately 90 minute program was filled with the celebration of history, music, singing, dancing, and fellowshiping.

Holy Family Catholic Church, under the leadership of Fr. Justin Arockiasamy, SVD, is a small rural church located in southwestern Louisiana in the small town of Lawtell, just 80 miles west of Baton Rouge, Louisiana (the state's capital). Lawtell is a community of a very rich heritage of African Americans whose ancestry range from Africans, French, Spanish, and American Indian. It is also a community of proud people who take pride in their African heritage no matter how big or small. It is this African heritage that they receive culture, pride, hardworking skills, and traditions of community.

The black history program has been a part of the church history for over twenty years. It started as a breakout program from the Martin Luther King program. The choirs sponsored the program which began as a gospel jamboree. Other African American Catholic Church choirs were invited to participate in the program. Over the years the youth choir took over the program and while keeping the musical celebration, an educational aspect was added to the program the last few years.

Each program has a theme, and this year's theme is “A Journey to Freedom.” The focus of the program is on the history of slavery in the United States and the musical role in the Underground Railroad. Included in the program were youth choirs from Holy Ghost Catholic church (Opelousas), St. Mathilda Catholic Church (Eunice), and our sister church St. Ann (Mallet). We were also inspired by the liturgical dancing from the little girls of the Holy Family/St. Mathilda praise dance team; the majority of the dancers were preschoolers.

The program was organized by Holy Family Youth Choir Director, Gina Readore assisted by the parents of the youth choir members. Lenton Broussard, the music director of Holy Family, set up the sound system and accompanied the majority of the choirs present. The itinerary of the program was in two parts: Part 1 consisted of program purpose, overview of the purpose of black history month and lightening of the candles representing the seven principles of wanaa, which reinforce seven basic values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community and culture among African American

people.

Part 2 lead into the musical celebration which was preceded by a timeline history of slavery and the development and purpose of the Underground Railroad. The invited choirs performed two songs: a spiritual and a contemporary gospel song. The meaning the spiritual was discussed before the performance. One of the highlights of the program was the Q&A session in which questions were asked to different age groups. The correct answer was awarded with candy treats. The children surprisingly paid close attention and excitedly competed to answer the questions.

A few spectators had comments to say about the program. Yolanda Guillory, director of Holy Ghost youth choir said, “The most interesting part of the program was the question/answer session. That was quite different from Black History programs in the past. Besides, it held the attention of our youth. They really got into it.” Jackie Carmouche, parishioner of Holy Family, commented “I wholeheartedly enjoyed every bit of the program. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of children that attended with parents and family.

The program was both educational and very much playful for the youngest attendees who definitely proved they were taking it all in. The children have an opportunity to learn about African American history in America and their heritage.” Finally, Antoinette Rene, CCD Director for Holy Family and St. Ann, who loves to see the children play an active role in any church capacity stated, “The program was outstanding, and I liked what was presented.”

There was still standing room only in the church hall at the end of the program that ended with a mass choir of all youth choir participants singing “When all God's children get together.” Considering there was no mass choir practice, the children took direction from the choir director like pros. We hope that the program is just as successful next time with even more excitement and enthusiasm.



Bishop breaks bread with young adults

By Jeff Dixon

East Texas Catholic paper for Diocese of Beaumont, Texas

If you want to know what people think, you need to ask them. So the bishop did. Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD, sat down last fall for a couple of dinners and conversations at his home with groups of young married adults from across the diocese. The evenings, coordinated by the Office of Stewardship and Communications, were a chance for Bishop Guillory to hear their concerns.



“They love their Catholic faith. They want to share their time, talent and treasure in order to further the mission of

Jesus Christ but they also have challenges. They want to get involved in a variety of ministries including religious education, youth groups and being lectors,” Bishop Guillory said.

For young adults, challenges come from all angles, especially the secular world many of them work in. “A lot of them feel that their faith is a challenge in today’s world. It’s not easy to live your Catholic faith in a very secular world. One point that was brought up was that the surrounding community isn’t as supportive of the faith as maybe it was when their parents were young adults,” Bishop Guillory said.

But challenges can also come from fellow parishioners and their attitudes toward the needs of the young adults. “They need the Church and especially the parishes to be more welcoming to young couples that have children. Children can be a challenge in church and other parishioners could be more understanding of that fact. It was also expressed that a cry room made the parents feel alienated from the Mass so we have to think about those kinds of things and different ways to approach them,” Bishop Guillory said.

Family situations can affect how involved young adults can be and that’s important for pastors to remember.

“One issue that young adults have is that they have different needs as a group. Some are single, some have kids, some are married but don’t have kids yet. That’s something that needs to be remembered when parishes

need them to be involved,” Victoria Pham said. Pham, along with her husband, Marc Bui, serve as New Participation Chairs for the 2014 Bishop’s Faith Appeal. Both were guests at one of the two evening events.



The events grew out of concerns that young adults between the ages of 25 and 45 do not seem to be visibly active in their parishes and the larger local Church – the diocese. The perception is upheld by a number of national surveys not only of the Catholic Church but other mainstream Christian denominations.

However, Pham pointed out that the young adults she knows are excited about helping the Church if they can and if they feel needed and that their ideas are considered.

“Young adults want to be involved but a lot of times they feel unwanted. Like their help isn’t needed. If we go to them and make a personal invitation that we need them they will be more involved,” Pham said.



Bishop Guillory was greatly encouraged by what transpired as the dinners wrapped up.

“The most encouraging thing is that they are all going to keep in touch with each other. They exchanged emails and phone numbers after dinner and they are going to give each other support which is wonderful. It’s good for them to know that they aren’t going through these things alone,” Bishop Guillory said.

Each of the first two dinners included only five couples. “We wanted to keep each group small so everyone could really get to know each other and our bishop and have lots of time to share their ideas,” said Morline Guillory, associate for the Office of Stewardship and Communications.



“I think both groups were extremely pleased that bishop not only listened to their concerns but is considering many of the great ideas,” Guillory said. The ministry is helping Bishop Guillory plan another round of dinners for small groups of adults. The next one will include single, young adults.

in a word or two



Father Paul Kahan, SVD has been named Provincial of the Southern Province in the USA by the Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word. His term begins on June 1, 2014.

Father Kahan comes from Indonesia. He studied theology at Chicago Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois. He was ordained in 1999. Father Paul did an overseas program in Bolivia. He is proficient in English, Spanish, and Bahasa, Indonesian.

Father Paul has served at St. Mary's in Houston, Texas; Pastor of St. Mary's in Cleveland, Texas and St. Rita Catholic Church in Fort Worth, Texas. He has been Vice Provincial of the Southern Province for the past 6 years. The Priests and Brothers in the Southern Province are well pleased with his appointment and look forward to his leadership. Congratulations Father Paul!

Dr. Shannen Dee Williams' new essay, ***"Influential' Ugandan Nun Shines Light on Sacred Tradition of Black Catholic Women,"*** has just been published on *Patheos*. View the article at

<http://www.patheos.com/Catholic/Ugandan-Nun-Shines-Shannen-Dee-Williams-05-14-2014?offset=0&max=1>

In the article Ms. Williams writes about the significance of Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe's inclusion on Time magazine's 2014 list of the world's 100 most influential people.

Some quotes from the excellent essay...

"Featured alongside the likes of Pope Francis and music entertainment mogul Beyoncé, Sister Rosemary is the first black nun to be named to this prestigious list of world leaders, and this fact should not be so easily overlooked."

"Indeed, Time's recognition of Sister Rosemary and her transformative ministry to young victims of sexual violence in Uganda and Sudan not only signals a major turning point in mainstream awareness (and acceptance) of black nuns, but also brings critical attention to one of the most significant, yet under-reported, social revolutions of black women in the contemporary era."

*"Over the past five decades, the global population of black Catholic nuns has experienced unprecedented growth, with the vast majority of new sisters coming from Africa. According to a Catholic World News report released in 2013, the population of African nuns increased by 28 percent between 2010 and 2011 -- the highest of any continent. When compared with only 18 percent growth in Asia and steep sister-population losses in Europe (-22 percent) and the Americas (-17 percent), **it is clear that if this trend continues the dominant face of the Catholic sister will soon be brown, and most likely African.**"*



Programs and Workshops

The Archbishop James Patterson Lyke Conference will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana from June 11-15, 2014. Theme is ***"Celebrating the Sacramental Life of Black Catholics"*** For more information go to: <http://www.lykeconference.org>



Unity Explosion 2014 workshop sponsored by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston will take place in Houston, Texas June 11-15, 2014

Theme: ***"Rejoice Together ...Encouraged Forever"***

For more information contact:

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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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