

PASTORES DABO VOBIS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC SEMINARIANS ASSOCIATION

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Gathering Together in Prayer for Vocations

A Message from the President

IT WAS A GREAT JOY reuniting with some of you and getting to know others in Washington, DC during the March for Life Vigil Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. It was most encouraging to see Black Catholic seminarians from various dioceses and religious communities. It was good to reconnect with my ordinary, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville. I was very proud to see Bishop Martin Holley of Washington and other Black clergy. Indeed, the Catholic presence at the annual March for Life will be greatly enriched by an increased presence from the Black Catholic community in future years.

A day does not go by without me asking the Lord what the NBCSA must do to encourage more young men to become open to the possibility of ministerial service *in persona Christi*. Christ did not come to simply offer a demonstration of life, but was asked to give His life so we could live and share His life with others.

To encourage a more prayerful attentiveness to the need for a renewed “vocation culture” in the Black Catholic community, the NBCSA is asking you to participate in a **National Day of Prayer for Vocations in the Black Community** on Saturday, April 24 (more information is provided in this newsletter).

It is pressed upon me, also, to ensure that the **NBCSA Annual Meeting in St. Louis** (July 26-27) will be an opportunity for seminarians to encourage and support one another in prayer as we prepare to offer ourselves up to God to nurture, heal, and sustain the lives of others. It will be an opportunity for us to share our vocation stories and to enter into dialogue in the hope of finding better ways to encourage vocations to priesthood and consecrated life. To honor and recall the memory of Black priests in the U.S. who have prepared the way for us, I have asked a trusted friend and mentor—Benedictine Father Cyprian Davis—to give the inaugural NBCSA National Lecture at the annual meeting. His lecture, *The Black American Priest: A History of the Service to the Church*, will be open to the public. It is my hope that this lecture will not only educate but offer inspiration and help all of us who seek to become bridges to Christ in the United States.

I again ask you to prayerfully consider supporting these efforts. In all things, let us continue rejoicing in hope, confident that our God will send us shepherds after his own heart. Ω

Christopher S. Rhodes

NBCSA President

“I will give you shepherds...”

Jeremiah 3:15

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The Newsletter of the
National Black Catholic
Seminarians Association

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Christopher S. Rhodes

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EDITOR

Desmond Drummer

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comments and story ideas, send an
email to the National Black Catholic
Seminarians Association.

NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC SEMINARIANS ASSOCIATION

*The NBCSA is an affiliate of the
National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus*

Mailing Address

Christopher S. Rhodes
Theological College
401 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017

Email Address

nbcseminarians@gmail.com

NOTES:

NBCSA IS ON FACEBOOK

Responding to Pope Benedict's message for the 44th World Communications Day, **the NBCSA overhauled its presence on the social media network Facebook by creating a "Fan Page"** to highlight our activities and expand our base of supporters. The central theme of the Holy Father's message was the encouragement of evangelization through new media. Internet-based social networking is one aspect of new media, and Facebook is the most widely used forum in this regard. The new "Fan Page" provides more opportunities for interacting with those on Facebook who have expressed an interest in the NBCSA. So far, we have been posting links and news items from a variety of reputable Catholic sources, including Vatican Radio, the Apostleship of Prayer, Catholic News Service, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Our "Fan Page" also allows us to draw attention to vocation resources and Catholic entities on Facebook, such as Catholic Relief Services, Priests for Life, and SQPN (the leading Catholic new media operation). **The new NBCSA "Fan Page" acquired over 100 fans within the first week!** Find the NBCSA on Facebook today! Ω



Deacon Alonzo Cox was ordained to the diaconate by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio on December 8, 2009, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

NBCSA'S NEW PRIEST MODERATOR

Reverend Clarence Williams, CPPS



Reverend
Clarence Williams, CPPS

FATHER CLARENCE WILLIAMS, CPPS, PHD is a priest of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. As the Priest Moderator for the NBCSA, Father Williams provides pastoral guidance in support of the organization's mission.

He serves as the Senior Director of Racial Equality and Diversity Initiatives at the National Office of Catholic Charities, USA in Alexandria, Virginia. Father Williams is also the founder and director of the *Institute for Recovery from Racisms* at the North American Paulist Center in Washington, DC. The Institute is an organization dedicated to the promotion of racial sobriety through the training of certified facilitators. Father Williams has published several books, numerous articles, and has offered retreats and workshops throughout North and South America, Africa, and Europe. Ω

FR. AUGUSTUS TOLTON'S CAUSE FOR SAINTHOOD INTRODUCED

CARDINAL FRANCIS GEORGE, Archbishop of Chicago, announced on March 1, 2010 that "Fr. Tolton's cause for sainthood is being introduced in the Archdiocese of Chicago." The announcement was made in an entry on the *CARDINAL'S NETWORK* - an email listserv that features Cardinal George's reflections on spirituality and faith life. Please pray for the success of this cause and, most of all, do not hesitate to ask for Fr. Augustus Tolton's intercession for your prayerful intentions. Ω

SEMINARIAN PROFILE:

Rev. Mr. Alonzo Cox

Diocese of Brooklyn



Deacon Alonzo Cox (*pictured on previous page*) is a transitional deacon whose ordination to priesthood is scheduled for June 26, 2010. Deacon Alonzo is 26 years old and was born and raised in Brooklyn. As a student in high school, Deacon Alonzo worked at his home parish, Queen of All Saints in Brooklyn. He served as a sacristan on the weekends, which gave him an opportunity to learn more about priests.

Deacon Alonzo applied and was accepted into the college seminary program for the Diocese of Brooklyn. As a college seminarian, he lived at the Cathedral Seminary Residence and attended St. John's University for classes. He completed college seminary studies in September 2005 and was assigned to the major seminary, the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY.

"For me, priesthood is more than just about helping people," explains Deacon Alonzo, "it's about allowing people to have a close and intimate encounter with the Lord." He says that this has been completely revealed to him since his ordination to the diaconate. "I pray that as I finish my formation that God may continue to strengthen not only me but all of those called to this most awesome vocation to bring his Son Jesus to all those to whom we minister." Ω



“...after my own heart.”

DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

APRIL 24, 2010

THE NBCSA IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE **Saturday, April 24** as a **National Day of Prayer for Vocations in the Black Community** (one day before the World Day of Vocations on Good Shepherd Sunday). The Day of Prayer will be held on the anniversary of the priestly ordination of Father Augustus Tolton, the first recognized Black priest in the United States. **Parishes, Catholic schools, Newman Centers, and other Catholic communities are encouraged to participate by offering a Mass, Holy Hour, Rosary, or other prayerful activity for priestly vocations in the Black community.** To lead this prayerful effort, Bishop Martin D. Holley, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on African American Affairs, will celebrate Mass at Theological College, the National Seminary of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

To register your community's participation, acquire a tool kit, or to receive more information, please send an email to: nbcseminarians@gmail.com. Be sure to mention your parish/institution, city, and (arch)diocese. Ω

NBCSA ANNUAL MEETING

JULY 26-27, 2010 | ST. LOUIS, MO

The Annual Meeting of the National Black Catholic Seminarians Association in 2010 will again coincide with the annual gathering of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (NBCCC).

The program for the NBCSA Annual Meeting will involve liturgy, the inaugural NBCSA Lecture, Catholic site visits, a business meeting, and opportunities for fraternity.

MEETING SITE:

Embassy Suites St. Louis-Airport Hotel
Bridgeton, MO

Conference fees and hotel rates are forthcoming. Seminarians are encouraged to discuss their ability to participate with their diocesan director of vocations/seminarians or religious superior.

For more information:
nbcseminarians@gmail.com

Monday • July 26, 2010

Luncheon Meet & Greet

NBCSA Briefing

Midafternoon Prayer & Rosary

Tour of the St. Charles Lwanga Center

Vespers

Mass w/ the NBCCC

Eucharistic Exposition & Adoration
with Solemn Night Prayer

Tuesday • July 27, 2010

Lauds & Mass w/ NBCCC

Complimentary Breakfast

NBCSA National Lecture

Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB

*"The Black American Priest:
History of Service to the Church"*

Lunch w/ Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB

Pilgrimage to the

Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis

(tour, rosary, museum, business meeting, & vespers)

Reception & Dinner