

Secretariat for  
African American  
Catholics

# Habari Gani

Habari Gani (Swahili meaning "What's the Word")

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring 2006

## A Word from the Committee Chairman

Evangelization in the Black Community: Some Thoughts

*"So before anything else we are confronted with the profundity of God's grace and the mystery of human response in the enterprise of evangelization."*

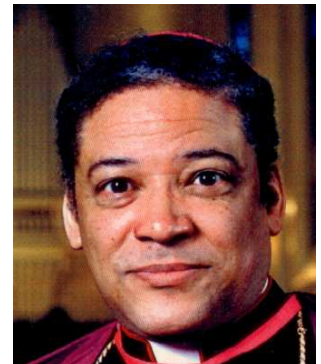
**E**vangelization, that is, bringing others to knowledge and faith in Christ, is not just about numbers to fill the churches. Evangelization is about the wonderful experience of discovering the few who hand their lives over to Christ. Given that Christian faith in these times is represented by any number of traditions, this will mean reaching out to others and offering them the richness of faith in Christ in our Catholic tradition.

The menu of Christian faith is quite large and people can be overwhelmed. We Black

Catholics represent one of the smaller groupings. There are reasons for this in American history, not the least of which were former laws that barred Blacks from assembly or mingling in places where White people gathered and the alignment of churches with the nefarious practices of segregation and discrimination.

What does it mean to be identified as "Catholic"? At first glance, inquirers to Catholicism will notice that while we are a quilt of racial and ethnic variety we are also a patchwork of dogma, doctrine, dis-

ciplines, traditions, ritual, and spiritual wisdom all framed in adoration of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity.



Bishop Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago  
Chairman, Committee on African American Catholics

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## Black Catholics Choose Life—Help Others Choose Life

By Rev. Jim Goode, OFM, Ph.D.



The National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life (NBCAL) invites you to participate in the fourth annual "June Is

Abortion and All Acts of Violence Awareness Month" in the African American community. Our theme: "Jesus Giver of Life Make Us People For Life."

With millions of abortions having occurred since 1973, and the increas-

ing acts of violence in the African American community, we as Black Catholics are called to choose life.

What will we do? We will evangelize for life by witnessing to the sacredness of life in all our churches, institutions, and national Black Catholic conferences; wherever our people will assemble during the month of June and throughout the summer months, we will be praying, proclaiming, and mobilizing African Americans to choose Christ, and by

choosing Christ choose life, because Christ is the giver of Life.

NBCAL is an apostolate that is "all about life" from the moment of conception to the natural end of life. Join us as we stand boldly for an end to abortion and all acts of violence, evil, and injustice that destroy the sacredness of life.

For more information you are invited to visit: [www.blackcatholicsforlife.org](http://www.blackcatholicsforlife.org)

# A Word from the Executive Director

Beverly A. Carroll



**A**fter a brief hiatus, the newsletter has returned with a new look, a new focus, and a new name—*Habari Gani*. We

have made some changes to include a regular column entitled “What’s Happening Inside USCCB,” which I hope you will find of interest.

In every edition of the newsletter we will ask readers for comments on areas of interest, and perhaps, share their responses in a letter-to-the-editor section.

This issue contains articles on evangelization, current information on Sudan, a report on this season’s vocation efforts, abortion awareness, and HIV testing.

## New Orleans Solidarity Trip

Along with 31 other sojourners, I recently returned from touring New Orleans and Biloxi. Eight months after the storm, most residents are not in their homes, some parishes and schools are still closed, and others are in need of repair. What was called a Solidarity Tour of Black Catholics presented a picture of the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Katrina on New

Orleans and Mississippi, the ongoing recovery process, the diaspora of our people and culture. Through all the devastation and misery, what stuck to our ribs was the faith and sheer determination of our people. It’s too soon to say whether all families will return, but those who have returned are determined to save their homes. One thing is clear: our help is still needed, especially volunteers to help in the rebuilding process, and supplies and money.

For a full report on ways you can help, visit: [www.nbccongress.org](http://www.nbccongress.org).

Photo: Beverly A. Carroll  
Executive Director, USCCB Secretariat  
for African American Catholics.

## Tuesday, June 27, is National HIV Testing Day



As crucial as it is to know your cholesterol or blood pressure levels, you should also know your HIV status.

June 27 is National HIV Testing Day. This is an annual campaign hosted by the National Association of People Living with AIDS to encourage everyone to get counseling and get tested.

In observance of this day, thousands of state and local health departments and community-based HIV/AIDS ser-

vice providers will provide counseling and testing sites by holding health fairs, providing community and media outreach, and hosting special testing events.

Voluntary counseling, testing, and referral programs provide an opportunity to learn your current HIV status

and receive counseling about any behavior changes needed to avoid infection or infecting others.

*For more information about HIV testing or to find a testing location in your area visit [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org).*

Confidential HIV testing means you give your name when getting tested and only the medical personnel or state health department have access

to the results. You must give written permission before this information is released to others. Anonymous testing means that no name is given to the testing center and only you are aware of the results. Anonymous testing is available in 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

## U.S. Bishops Speak Out on Sudan

In early 2004 Bishop John Ricard, SSJ, warned that Darfur was “rapidly becoming the newest symbol of human depravity and ethnic cleansing.” And again, in September 2005 in a call to action, Bishop Ricard stated, “The crisis in Darfur must end. We cannot stand idly by while human life is threatened. The United States and the international community can and must do more

to end this moral and humanitarian crisis.”

Over the past three years the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has appealed to and challenged the current administration to respond to the genocide in Darfur. Most recently, Bishop Wenski, chairman of the Committee on International Policy, in response to

the “Save Darfur Rally,” stated, “The humanitarian crisis in Darfur remains grave and demands urgent action to save Darfur.”

**Act Now!** To learn more about Darfur, Sudan, and find out what you can do, visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org); or Catholic Relief Services at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org); or Save Darfur at [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org).

# What's Happening Inside USCCB

## A New Era at USCCB

On February 3, 2006, Msgr. David Malloy, former associate general secretary, assumed the position of General Secretary for the USCCB. Msgr. Malloy will serve in that capacity for the next five years. In addition, two new associate general secretaries began their tenure: Msgr. Ronny Jenkins, former Associate Professor for the CUA School of Canon Law; and Ms. Nancy Wisdo, former Director for the Office of Domestic Policy.

## Ad Hoc Committee on Africa

In November 2004, USCCB approved the creation of an ad hoc committee to aid the Church in Africa. The ad hoc committee is staffed by members of the Offices of International Justice and Peace, Migration and Refugee Services, African American Catholics, Catholic Relief Services, and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The charge of the ad hoc committee is to work in partnership with the Church in Africa to build pastoral capacity through a Solidarity

Fund. To date there have been three arch/diocesan appeals for support. Stay tuned—more information to come.

## Christian Churches Together USA

The USCCB voted (November 2004) to participate in Christian Churches Together USA (CCT). CCT is an ecumenical movement consisting of 34 churches and national Christian organizations. Mrs. Cynthia Morris-Colbert, program coordinator for the Secretariat for African American Catholics, serves as a member of the 12-member USCCB delegation. For more information visit: [www.christianchurchestogether.com](http://www.christianchurchestogether.com).

## Vocations Class of 2006

The USCCB Committee on Vocations' "Priesthood Ordination Class of 2006" media kit spotlights two men of African American descent who will be ordained to the priesthood in 2006.



Kenneth Brown (Monterey) was a university professor of English for 26 years in New Orleans and California before entering the seminary. He was raised in New Orleans and completed his doctoral dissertation on African American writers in the Depression era. Kenneth is preparing for ordination for the Diocese of Monterey in California.

Anthony Lackland (Dallas) converted to Catholicism at age 21. He has served in the Army Reserves and received the Ambassadorial Scholarship from the Rotary International Foundation. Anthony will be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Dallas in Texas.



## North American Institute on Catholic Evangelization

The North American Institute on Catholic Evangelization (NAICE) will host its second institute on evangelization—"Evangelizing God's People in a Culture of Diversity," July 12-15, 2006, at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.



NAICE provides a forum for Catholic national, diocesan, and parish leaders to come together and reflect on evangelization and explore ways to foster ministries in a diverse culture. Presenters include Dr. Eva Lumas, SSS (left) and Dr. Jamie Phelps, OP (right). For more information visit [www.usccb.org/evangelization](http://www.usccb.org/evangelization)



## Evangelization in the Black Community: Some Thoughts (Continued from page 1)

**Thus, mission or evangelization is not triumphalism or coercion however these terms have been misused over the centuries. Evangelization is about sharing the person of Jesus Christ with others, a responsibility that belongs to all of us the baptized. And our evangelizing territory most often is going to be close at hand, places in our own families, neighborhoods, among our friends**

**where there is always found people hungering for goodness and images of faith and inclusion, heroism and service. In these places we will find people whose hearts are disposed and open to promptings of grace. We should do our best to articulate our faith in the richness of our Catholic tradition that explains Him best.**

**No one of us likes to be put on the spot to**

**answer the questions and objections and criticisms of strangers about our faith in today's environment. Nevertheless, in this age of communications and information sharing we all need to be better versed about the fundamental principals of Catholic faith and praxis. And behind most questions and objections is found usually a curious individual seeking the truth and who is thereby worthy of our Catholic embrace.**

To read the full article visit our website at [www.usccb.org/saac](http://www.usccb.org/saac)



3211 Fourth Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017

Phone: 202/541-3177  
Fax: 202/541-3477  
E-mail: [saac@uscgb.org](mailto:saac@uscgb.org)

Secretariat for African  
American Catholics

United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops

Read our newsletter on the web:  
[www.usccb.org/saac](http://www.usccb.org/saac)

## Do You Know?

Catholic Charities Disaster Relief  
Director—Gerald (Jerry) Collins.



In 1990 Catholic Charities USA formally established a Disaster Response Office through an agreement between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities USA.

The Disaster Response Office coordinates the Catholic Church's response to disasters in the United States and disburses relief funds to local Catholic Charities offices, similar to the international relief efforts provided by Catholic Relief Services.

Gerald Collins, a deacon for the Archdiocese of Washington, currently

serves as the Director for Disaster Response for Catholic Charities USA.

Deacon Collins has been intimately involved in the response and recovery efforts to every major disaster to impact the United States. He is responsible for providing guidance and technical assistance to the 150 plus dioceses and Catholic Charities agencies that respond on behalf of the Church to disasters throughout the United States and its territories.

Over the past several months he has been involved in the long-term responses and recovery efforts that have impacted the arch/dioceses in the Gulf area.

To learn more about CCUSA efforts visit their website: [www.ccusa.org](http://www.ccusa.org).

Fannie Lou Hammer, Rosa Parks and  
Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act  
Reauthorization and Amendments Act  
of 2006



Contact your representatives and senators and urge them to support final passage of the Voting Rights Reauthorization and oppose any weakening amendments.

Call 202/224-3121 or to send an email go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and click on "Representative Web Sites."

*We want to hear from you!*

Let us know what items you would like to see included in the newsletter. Send your suggestions via e-mail to Cynthia Morris-Colbert ([cmorris-colbert@uscgb.org](mailto:cmorris-colbert@uscgb.org)) or via fax (202/541-3374).

