

Secretariat for
African
American
Catholics

Habari Gani

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

Volume II,
Issue I

Spring 2007

A Word from the Committee Chairman

A Collection for the Church in Africa

For several years now the bishops of the United States have batted around the idea of having a national collection for the Church in Africa similar to the support of American Catholics have given to the black and Indian Missions Collections and the collection for the Church in Eastern Europe.

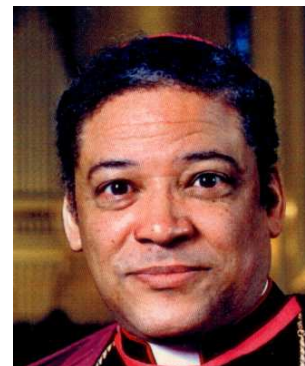
The US Bishops' historic 2001 statement: *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* has given urgency to this idea. The Church continues to grow faster in Africa than on any other continent with the number of Catholics in its sixty-one countries ex-

"The Church continues to grow faster in Africa than on any other continent with the number of Catholics in its sixty-one countries expected to surpass the total in Europe in the next two decades."

pected to surpass the total in Europe over the next two decades. While we do tremendous work to promote development in Africa to improve the quality of peoples' lives through the unparalleled efforts of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a similar level of attention has not yet been given to elevating the quality of programs and materials for the pastoral work of the Church in Africa.

In more recent years individual parishes in the United States have embarked on unprecedented initiatives with parishes and

dioceses across the African continent. The bishops in the US, in effort to demonstrate their unequivocal solidarity with their brother



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

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Poverty in America—Strengthening the Child Health Care Insurance Program

Last month three national Catholic organizations — the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Health Association, and Catholic Charities USA — called on Congress to strengthen child health insurance in America —

The State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was enacted to provide adequate health care coverage to low-income children who do

not qualify for Medicaid because the family income is too high. In the joint letter, Catholic leaders stated "the proposed \$5 million increase over the next five years is not sufficient to continue coverage for those children now in SCHIP, let alone add more children to the valuable program."

Contact your Congressional representative to express support for:

- Increased health care coverage for all children;

- Adequate funding to continue coverage for children currently enrolled in the program and all eligible low income children not currently enrolled.
- Increased state resources for outreach and education to bring eligible children into the program.

For more information visit:

www.usccb.org

www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

www.chausa.org

A Word from the Executive Director

Beverly A. Carroll



Reorganization Realigns Conference committees and offices — Reflects New Priorities

The US Catholic Bishops' Conference supported the plan for reorganization of Conference committees. The plan was proposed by the Committee on Priorities and Plans and voted on by the body of bishops at the November General meeting. Accompanying the committee reorganization is an administrative reorganiza-

tion that will be implemented by the General Secretary.

What does this mean to African American Catholics? First our Committee on African American Catholics is now the Subcommittee on African American Affairs under the Committee on Cultural Diversity. Four other subcommittee are under this Committee are Hispanic Affairs, Native American Affairs, Pacific Island Affairs, and Pastoral Care of Migrant, Refugees and Travelers. January 1, 2008, the newly cluster committee assumes responsibilities.

The Secretariat for African American Catholics is now a part of the Cultural Diversity in the Church cluster. Se-

lection of staffing of the cluster is now underway. Position descriptions are being developed, interviews are being held, and open positions are being advertised. It is the hope of the General Secretariat to confirm staff by late April 2007.

The bishops also approved priority goals for the 2008-2011 planning cycle.

1. Implementation of the pastoral initiative on marriage.
2. Faith formation focused on sacramental practice .
3. Priestly and religious vocations.
4. Life and dignity of the human person.

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

“On the Up and Up” and “And the Children Shall Fly” - HIV and AIDS Resource



“On the Up and Up” and “And the Children Shall Fly” was developed in 2004 by the Secretariat for African American Catholics. The resource is designed to increase awareness and discussion about HIV and AIDS between parent and children in grades third through sixth, in partnership with educators. The program is infused with African and African American culture and is both culturally and theologically relevant.

For more information about HIV and AIDS in the African American community visit our website: www.usccb.org/saac.

The resources were first piloted in 2005 in the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Diocese of Charleston. This pilot consisted of one summer program and one school based program. The following year (2006) we operated a pilot in the Archdiocese of Baltimore with four sites involved. This year (2007) we are operating our final pilot in the Diocese of Memphis, with two sites involved. Research has shown that the resource is useful in heightening the awareness of HIV and AIDS in children in grades

three through six. In addition, the research has shown that if parents are given the proper tools needed to discuss this sensitive issue with their children, they are likely to engage in conversation. Catechists using the resource have found the materials easy to present and a useful tool.

The Secretariat for African American Catholics will be hosting a workshop at the National Catholic Educational Association convention on the AIDS curriculum in April, in Baltimore, MD.

What's Happening Inside USCCB

Faithful Stewards of God's Creation: A Catholic Response for Environmental Justice and Climate Change



In 2001, the US bishops stated in *Global Change: A Plea for Dialogue, prudence and the Common Good*, that “global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one

human family. It is about protecting both ‘the human environment’ and the natural environment.”

Faithful Stewards of God's Creation: A Catholic Response for Environmental Justice was design to provide information that can be used to better understand the important connection between the Catholic faith and the environment.

In July 2006, the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary, featured their new educational DVD, *Struggles*

for Environmental Justice and Health in Chicago: African American Catholic Perspectives, during their national convention held in Houston, TX. The new DVD will be distributed through USCCB Publishing.

For more information on what you, your diocese, parish, organization can do visit: www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/indexx.shtml.

Reminder—Sunday, April 22 is Earth Day!

Bridging Gaps



Early this year Carole Norris Greene, Associate Editor, Catholic

News Service (CNS), began her series entitled "Bridging Gaps." To date she has completed three articles focusing on Black Catholic ministry in the United States and the National Black Catholic Congress X to be held July 12–15, 2007, in Buffalo, NY.

In the first article, "Changing how the Church is perceived among US Blacks (January 22, 2007)," Green examines the Church's role in welcoming African Americans.

"When Black Catholics say to other Blacks, 'Come on in, the water's fine!' the unchurched among those U.S. Blacks who aren't Catholic just may be looking back thinking: 'Not me! How can you stand the cold!', writes Green.

"Visibility is important in this visually oriented age, says Green. "Blacks on the outside [of the Catholic faith] looking in may not be aware of the countless warm and welcome Catholic parishes scattered throughout the US."

Her second article in the series asks the question, "Offices of ministry to

minorities: do they have a future in the Church? (March 5, 2007)." Her most recent article "To one, extent, yes the Church is responsible! (April 9, 2007)" is in response to a reader's letter after reading her first article.

Look for Ms. Green's column in Catholic newspapers in your area or email Ms. Carole Norris Greene (cgreene@catholicnews.com) .

Bridging Gaps column is part of the CNS columns package. To learn more about Catholic News Service visit their website: www.catholicnews.com

A Word from the Executive Director

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5. Recognition of cultural diversity with a special emphasis on Hispanic ministry in the spirit of *Encuentro 2000*.

Each reorganization is unique.

More information to come in future issues

A Collection for the Church in Africa (Continued from page 1)

bishops in Africa, established a voluntary annual appeal to raise money for a Pastoral Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa. The bishops took this appeal back to their dioceses in order to arrange how best to respond. Some dioceses wrote a check immediately, others took the appeal to their parishes, some only to their African American parishes.

The USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on the Church in Africa, as of March 2007, has collected over \$1.5M, with distribution of the first grants to begin later this year. Individual African Episcopal Conferences will be allowed three petitions for grants for approved programs in the vicinity of twenty-five thousand dollars each.

African American Catholics on the Move

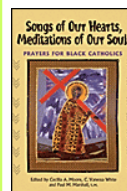
Congratulations to Bishop George Murry, SJ installed Bishop of Youngstown, March 28, 2007!



Congratulations to Bishop Shelton Fabre ordained Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans, February 28, 2007!



Reading Corner



Songs of Our Hearts, Meditations of Our Souls – Prayers for Black Catholics, Cecilia A. Moore, Ph.D., C. Vanessa White and Rev. Paul M. Marshall, SM. St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Sweet, Sweet, Spirit: Prayers Services from the Black Catholic Church, Joseph A. Brown, SJ. with Fernand Cheri, III, OFM. St. Anthony Messenger Press.



To order a copy visit: <http://catalog.americancatholic.org/> or call 1/800-488-0488

Coming in June: Oblate Sisters of Providence: A Pictorial History. To reserve your copy visit: <http://oblatesisters.com>

For more information visit the website:

www.usccb.org/churchinafrica

I urge you to encourage your arch/diocese to take up a collection to help aid the church in Africa.



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**Secretariat for African
American Catholics**

*United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops*



**Ron Jackson,
Executive Direc-
tor, DC Catholic
Conference and
President,**

**National Associa-
tion of State Catholic Confer-
ence Directors**

After serving as the Treasurer and Vice President, Ron Jackson was elected President of the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD) in 2006. He is the first African American to serve as president of the NASCCD.

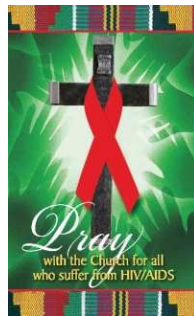
Ron Jackson is no stranger to being “the first.” He was the first African American professional to serve a city councilman in Jackson, Mississippi (1973-74). He went on to become the first African American to work for a Mississippi Congressman/Senator since Reconstruction, when he joined the staff of Senator Cochran’s staff (1974-77).

Do You Know?

USCCB Publishing Resource Membership

Did you know that USCCB Publishing has a **Resource Membership**? The Resource Service is an annual subscription service that costs **\$129** and entitles the subscriber to receive one copy of all titles automatically from USCCB when they are published plus up to 40% off on all other purchases.

Or if you would like to create a USCCB resource library, Publishing offers the **English Bookshelf** option. The cost \$99 per year and allows subscribers to receive all English-language resources in 10 to 12 mailings annually.



New AIDS Prayer Card

100 copies for \$12.00

**Place your order now — visit
www.usccbpublishing.org/ or visit our
website at www.usccb.org/saac.**

Read our newsletter on the web:
www.usccb.org/saac

The NASCCD, in which Mr. Jackson currently heads, consists of 29 conferences and 9 affiliates throughout the United States. The organization founded in 1968, meets twice a year. The NASCCD primary mission is to serve as a forum to communicate and promote positions that are shaped by Catholic moral and religious beliefs on public policy issues.

State Catholic Conference Directors represent and speak on behalf of the arch/diocese to local and federal governments, as well as other organizations on matters pertinent to public policy. In addition, state Catholic conference directors work with parishes, arch/diocesan agencies, and institutions to educate and advocate public policy on behalf of the most vulnerable.

Ronald Jackson’s term as President will end in 2009.

For more information on the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors visit the website: **www.nasccd.org**.

A Word to the Editor

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, Editor (cmorris-colbert@uscgb.org) or via fax(202/541-3374).

