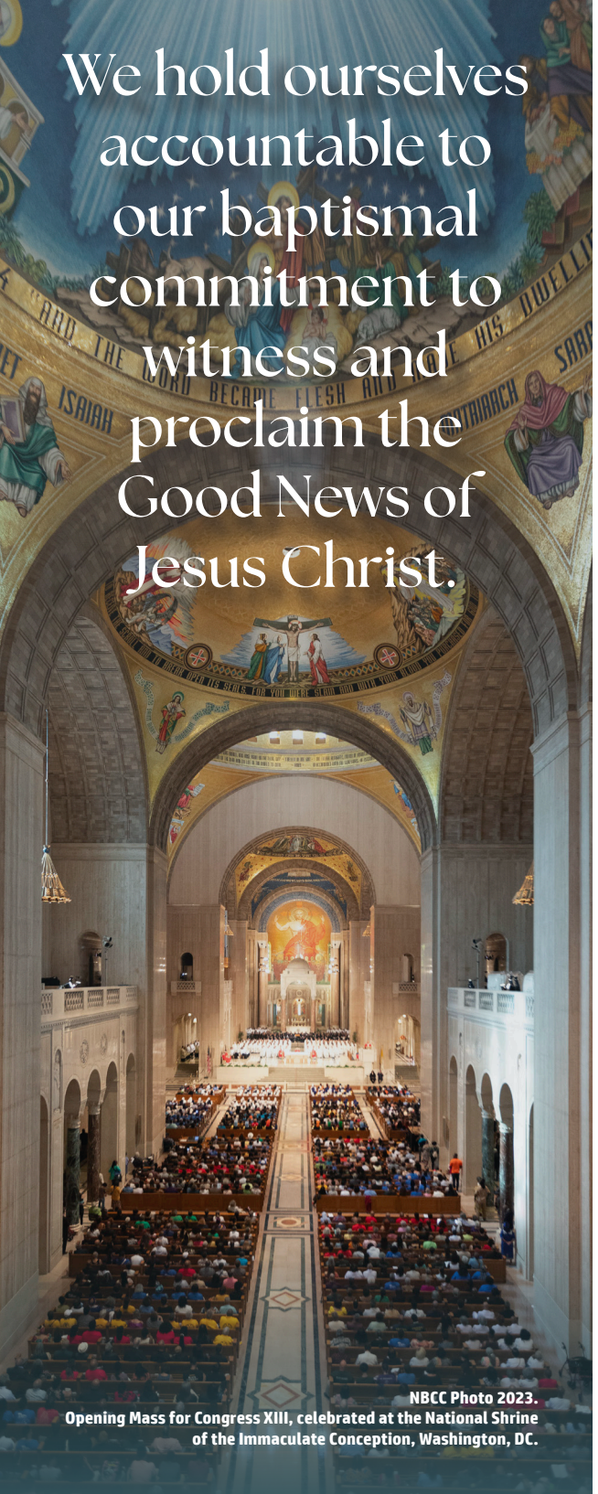


NBCC Photo 2023.
Opening Mass for Congress XIII, celebrated at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC.

Who We Are

The National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit funded by program fees and the generous support of donors. The NBCC works closely with its member organizations through their representation on the Board of Trustees. The NBCC collaborates with the USCCB, yet is independent.

NBCC Member Organizations:

- Black Bishops of the United States
- Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver
- National Association of Black Catholic Administrators
- National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus
- National Black Catholic Seminarians Association
- National Black Sisters Conference
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church/African American Affairs
- Xavier University of Louisiana/Institute for Black Catholic Studies

NBCC Administration:

PRESIDENT:
Most Reverend Roy E. Campbell, Jr.
Auxiliary Bishop of The Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, DC

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Valerie Washington

PROJECT COORDINATOR:
Kimberley Hefner

CONSULTANT:
Reverend Stephen Thorne, Ed.D.



Several Congregations of Religious Sisters were represented at Congress XIII

What We Do

Rooted in our faith and inspired by our heritage, we work to ensure that the voice, presence, and gifts of Black Catholics are fully recognized and celebrated in the Church and society. Since the Congress Movement was reignited in 1985, we have gathered every five years—thousands strong—to pray, reflect, and act on the spiritual and social needs of our people.

With faith and purpose, we affirm the presence of Christ among Black Catholics and strive to:

- Evangelize through the lens of our rich cultural identity and lived experience,
- Promote full inclusion and leadership of the Church
- Form and empower leaders—clergy, religious, and lay leaders
- Celebrate and preserve Black Catholic stories, traditions and gifts

Through our national gatherings, local partnerships, educational programs, and grants, the NBCC continues to be a beacon of hope and a force for transformation.

We do this not just for ourselves — but for the generations to come.

For more information, scan the QR Code below to visit the NBCC Website:

Support Our Mission

The National Black Catholic Congress supports programs that meet the complex needs of Black Catholics and those who minister to them.

Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring monthly donation by scanning the QR Code below:

Fulfilling the Vision

Building a Thriving Black Catholic Community



The National BLACK CATHOLIC Congress

320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
PHONE: 410.547.8496; FAX: 410.752.3958
EMAIL: nbcc@nbccongress.org
WEBSITE: www.nbccongress.org

Our History



Daniel A. Rudd

The National Black Catholic Congress traces its roots to the visionary Daniel A. Rudd—a pioneering journalist, activist, and devout Catholic. Born in 1854 to Catholic parents who were enslaved in Bardstown, Kentucky, he dedicated his life to faith and justice.

Seeking better opportunities in Springfield, Ohio, Rudd founded the American Catholic Tribune, the first Black-owned Catholic newspaper in the U.S., using it to elevate Black Catholic voices and promote justice rooted in Church teaching.

In 1889, Rudd organized the First Colored Catholic Congress at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., gathering over 100 laymen to advocate for dignity, education, and full participation in the Church. Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first publicly recognized Black priest in the U.S., celebrated the opening Mass, and delegates were later welcomed to the White House by President Grover Cleveland.

Though the movement faded, Rudd led five such Congresses through 1894, addressing discrimination, empowerment, and evangelization. (Gary B. Agee has written extensive biographies: “A Cry for Justice’; and “Daniel Rudd: Calling a Church to Justice.”)

In 1987, the Congress was revived as the NBCC, which today carries forward Rudd’s mission—uniting Black Catholics in faith, fellowship, and action.



The Colored Catholic Congress, Philadelphia, PA, 1892. Note the presence of Fr. Augustus Tolton in the center of the front row.

Contemporary Mission

The National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC) gives voice, visibility, and vibrancy to African Americans within the Catholic Church. As a collaborative body of member organizations across the U.S., we represent a united expression of Black Catholic faith, leadership, and dedication to justice.

Our mission grows from a deep awareness of the rich spiritual legacy and real challenges faced by African American Catholics. In a Church and society that often overlook our contributions, we remain faithful to our baptismal call to proclaim the Good News—with courage, hope, and cultural authenticity.

NBCC Mission Statement:

The National Black Catholic Congress, comprised of member Catholic organizations, represents African American Catholics, in collaboration with these organizations. Aware of the challenges faced by African American Catholics, we are committed to evangelize ourselves, our church and unchurched African Americans, thereby enriching the Church.

We hold ourselves accountable to our baptismal commitment to witness and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We are committed to evangelizing within our own community—strengthening the faith and identity of Black Catholics—and reaching those who feel disconnected or have never been welcomed into the Church. This work, rooted in love and justice, enriches the Church through the gifts, resilience, and witness of Black Catholic life.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and united in faith, the NBCC seeks to help build a Church that reflects the true beauty of God’s people: diverse, faithful, and alive with hope.



NBCC Photo 2023. His Eminence Wilton Cardinal Gregory gives the opening keynote address at the Congress XIII gathering.



NBCC Photo 2023. Attendees from the Diocese of Lexington, KY make their presence known during Roll Call at Congress XIII.



NBCC Photo 2023. Priests process in for the Eucharistic Liturgy at Congress XIII.



NBCC Photo 2023. The Morris family sending out some peace.

On the Path to Sainthood

Seven Holy Black Men and Women

Top to bottom, listed alphabetically:

Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman
A Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, and a vibrant speaker, educator, and singer.

Venerable Mother Henriette Delille
A free woman of color, Delille founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1842.

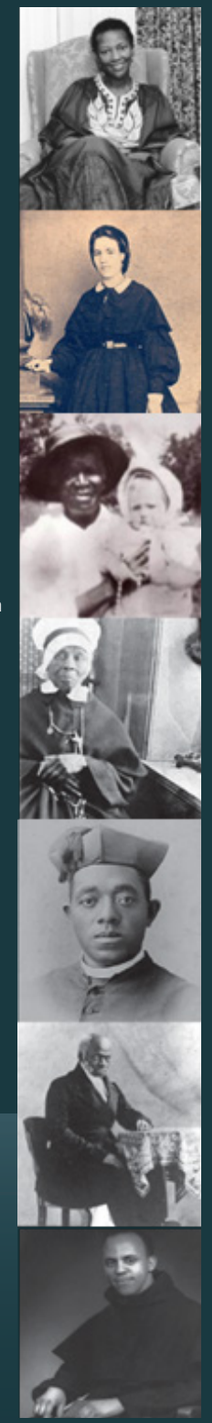
Servant of God Julia Greeley
Born into slavery, partially blinded by a slavemaster, but despite this, Greeley cared for others in need.

Venerable Mother Mary Lange
Lange founded a religious congregation for the education of African American girls, the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

Venerable Father Augustus Tolton
Born into slavery in Missouri, Tolton entered the seminary in Rome and was ordained the first African American priest in 1886.

Venerable Pierre Toussaint
Born into slavery in Haiti, brought to New York City and apprenticed to a hairdresser, Toussaint died a free man and devout Catholic

Servant of God Friar Martin de Porres Maria Ward, OFM
A Franciscan friar, Ward served as a missionary in Brazil for more than forty years.



Saint Josephine Bakhita



On Oct. 1, 2000, Josephine Margaret Bakhita, FDCC, a Sudanese Catholic religious sister, was canonized. Bakhita joined the Canossians after winning her freedom from slavery.