

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF FAITH, UNITY, AND SERVICE

The African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States (ACCRUS) is an association of priests and religious men and women from Africa who are working and studying in the United States. For over 25 years, ACCRUS has served as a vital community that enriches both the African and U.S. Catholic Churches through spiritual support, cultural understanding, and collaborative ministry. Rooted in fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church and a deep love for the People of God, ACCRUS promotes fraternity among African clergy and religious while encouraging spiritual growth, pastoral collaboration, and leadership in the service of the Gospel.

For 25 years, ACCRUS has served as a platform where clergy and religious come together to support one another in ministry, share pastoral experiences, mentor younger ministers, and promote unity within the Church. Its members serve faithfully in parishes, hospitals, universities, chaplaincies, and missionary settings across the United States and beyond. By fostering fellowship and ongoing formation, the association continues to strengthen those who labor in the vineyard of the Lord.

In 1995, Father Aniedi Okure, O.P., was appointed the first Coordinator of Ethnic Ministries at the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees (PCMR). That same year, PCMR, in collaboration with the Secretariat for African American Catholics and the Archdiocese of Boston's Office for Ethnic Apostolate, sponsored the inaugural African Catholic Community Conference held in Boston. This conference addressed the pastoral challenges facing African immigrant Catholics in the United States.

Recognizing the diverse backgrounds of Africans across the country, PCMR faced the challenge of effectively integrating these newcomers into local church communities. To meet this challenge, Father Aniedi Okure, O.P., along with Sister Marie Prefontaine, SND, conducted regional orientation and acculturation workshops for African women religious in cities such as Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, Jersey City, New Orleans, Oakland/Bay Area, Newark, Portland (Oregon), Philadelphia, Jackson (Mississippi), and Detroit. These gatherings aimed to empower women religious to further the evangelizing mission of the Church.

This year marks a historic milestone as ACCCRUS celebrates its Silver Jubilee; 25 years of dedicated service to the Church. In many African cultures there is a proverb that says, “When a tree survives twenty-five rainy seasons, its roots are deep and its branches begin to give shade.” Twenty-five years is not merely a measure of time; it is a testimony of endurance, growth, and fruitfulness. Just as a young tree grows stronger with every season, so too ACCCRUS has grown through the dedication, sacrifices, and prayers of its members. What began as a vision of fraternity and support has now become a flourishing network that continues to provide shade, encouragement, collaboration, and spiritual strength, to those serving in ministry.

The Jubilee celebration will take place during ***ACCCRUS 2026 Convention in Dallas-Texas from July 21-25***. It will gather clergy, religious, and lay faithful from across the country for a time of thanksgiving, reflection, and celebration. The program will include a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving which will take place on Friday, July 24 at 5PM at St. Joseph Catholic Church. It will be officiated by Bishop Edward J Burns, Bishop of Dallas Diocese. It will also feature recognition of founding members, testimonies of the association’s impact, and a jubilee banquet celebrating the journey of ACCCRUS over the past quarter century.

As ACCCRUS celebrates this Silver Jubilee, we give thanks to God for the blessings of the past 25 years while looking forward with renewed zeal to the mission ahead. With gratitude for the pioneers who laid the foundation and inspired by the next generation of clergy and religious, ACCCRUS remains committed to building up the Church and advancing the Kingdom of God for many years to come.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey.

Rev. Fr. Valentine Nworah
ACCCRUS Publicity Secretary



LEFT TO RIGHT: Fr. Cletus Orji, Fr. Dr. Martin Ahiaba, ACCCRUS Member, Fr. Valentine Nworah, Publicity Secretary, and Fr. Ebuka Mbanude, Financial Assistant Secretary – ACCCRUS Convention: San Bernardino, 2025



His Excellency, Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Emeritus Apostolic Nuncio to the United States and Fr. Dr. Canice Nwizu, ACCCRUS National President



FRONT TO BACK:

ACCCRUS Members, Sr. Mary Emmanuel Utulu, DDL, Sr. Juliana Asuzo, HHCJ and Sr. Veronica Ogunlade, SSMA



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Fr. Valentine Nworah,
Publicity Secretary

Fr. Dr. Canice Nwizu
President

Fr. Daniel Okafor,
Treasurer

Gala Night: ACCCRUS Convention, San Bernardino, 2025



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Fr. Valentine Nworah, Publicity Secretary, Bishop Jerome Feudjio, Diocese of St. Thomas the Virgin Islands in the US, Your Excellency, Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Emeritus Apostolic Nuncio to the United States and Fr. Leo Ahanotu .



Convention Members Houston, 2024



Gala Night: ACCRUS Convention, Washington 2023



Group Discussion



Tour of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston: ACCRUS Convention, Houston 2024.