



# **Pastoral Statements: Recommendations**

**THE NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS  
1992 CONGRESS VII**

**THE NATIONAL  
BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS**

**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT #9**

**African American  
Family Life**

**July, 1992**

**Statement #9 African American Family Life as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

It is recommended that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following strategies that would:

1. Help African American families cope with the pressures and issues of our modern society - substance abuse, unemployment, affluence, media, etc.
2. Assist the increasing numbers of African American families who lack the basic necessities of life - food, shelter, clothing, and emotional support.
3. Recognize and minister to the African Americans with special needs of the single, separated, divorced or widowed and support the specific type of parenting that single parenting requires.
4. Develop parish-based marriage preparation and enrichment programs within the African American community that celebrate the uniqueness of African American life.
5. Teach African American family members how to relate to one another, with a particular emphasis on parent/child and parent/teen communication skills.
6. Develop family ministry programs that grow out of the traditional cultural values of African American life.
7. Enhance African American family ministry to enable children, youth and adults in discerning their call to participate in some form of ministry.
8. In collaboration with judicatories of various religions, speak out on the violence of prisons and advocate building a climate that will be more receptive to positive alternatives to imprisonment and punishment.
9. Develop within each parish a prison ministry program for family support, consolation, and guidance.
10. A commitment to "being there" - materially, emotionally, spiritually - for all African American women in the midst of a crisis pregnancy and their unborn children, so that no woman feels abortion is her only realistic choice.

11. Plain and clear communication to African American women in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, through word and action, that the Church loves them both.
12. Forceful resistance to an ethic which judges each person's worth according to their "quality of life," and rather affirm that every human being, born and unborn, is a child of God and a gift to the world.
13. Recognition of the physical, mental and spiritual pain of those women who have been the victims of abortions, and acknowledge and address the need for outreach to demonstrate that the Church is open to receive them in full communion and reconciliation.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#10**

**Marriage as a Sign and Sacrament**

**July, 1992**

**Statement #10 Marriage as a Sign and Sacrament as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all the Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

Programs of Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment which are culturally relevant to African American people and development of programs where none exist. Among existing programs are the following:

1. Marriage Preparation
  - a. Pre-Cana Conferences
  - b. Engaged Encounter Programs
  - c. Sponsor Couple Programs
  - d. Marriage Preparation for Older Couples
  - e. Cultural Elements in the Wedding Ceremony
  
2. Marriage Enrichment
  - a. Marriage Encounter
  - b. Newly Married Ministry
  - c. Ministry to Troubled Marriages
  - d. Natural Family Planning

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#11**

**The Laity and Family Life**

**July, 1992**

**Statement #11 The Laity and Family Life as rewritten according to accepted amendments.**

The National Black Catholic Congress recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Opportunities for training lay ministers in parishes which serve African Americans.
2. Training provided for lay ministers in their relationships to parish councils and other parish committees.
3. Recognition that it is the ministry of the laity to be involved in the development of public policy, social and economic life of the community and to provide training and opportunities for such participation.
4. Support lay Catholic people in appropriate ecclesial ministries so as to foster, and encourage the participation of the laity in ministries of word, worship and service.
5. Provision of scholarship opportunities developed for those who have heard the call of serving the Church in professional lay ministry.
6. Adequate salaries and benefits provided to support lay men and women in ministry.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENTS #12**

**Children and Youth**

**July, 1992**

**Statement #12 Children and Youth as rewritten according to accepted amendments.**

The National Black Catholic VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Training for African American parish personnel in Catholic Youth Ministry for African American Catholics.
2. Plans of outreach and welcome for African American adolescents.
3. Creative programs that help youth understand their cultural heritage, especially as it connects with one's personal faith and the church.
4. Addressing at-risk issues of youth in the African American community and family in collaboration with civic organizations, public and private agencies and schools.
5. Leadership training opportunities for African American youth.
6. Encouraging affiliation with the National African American Catholic Youth Ministry Network (NAACYMN).
7. A parish ministry program developed with a particular focus on youth and young adults for family support and guidance.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#13**

**Religious Education  
and Catechesis**

**July, 1992**

**Statement #13 Religious Education and Catechesis as rewritten according to accepted amendments.**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Identification, publicizing, and, if necessary, developing materials to be promoted for use in homes and in the Church, which family members can use to share their faith experience -- with particular attention to African American traditions. The Kwanzaa program is an example.
2. Prayer experiences and rituals in the African American tradition which are printed and distributed for use by families in the home, wherein the home becomes a cultural center.
3. American families who are supported and empowered to nurture growth in faith through inter-generational gatherings and activities.
4. Parishes which initiate celebrations that will enhance the understanding of the developmental stages of the life-cycle and the potential for African American families to celebrate and nurture their faith throughout the stages of the life cycle.
5. Multi-media programs (existing and future) that are developed for use in African American homes and neighborhood groups, especially for primary care-givers and parents to nurture the understanding of what it means to be loving adult disciples and their important role as teachers of faith by word, action and example, who will transform the world and how this can be shared with children and youth.
6. Programs for parish renewal that are adapted specifically for African Americans to enable parishioners to give a consistent witness of a living, active faith -- especially through the formation of small faith-sharing communities.
7. Video programs that are developed for use in the Church, and in African American homes or neighborhood groups to nurture the understanding of what it means to be loving adult disciples who will transform the world and how this can be shared with children and youth.
8. Education and promotion activities that are initiated in all parishes with African American representation to help the community better understand its collective role as a teacher of faith by its spirit of welcome and hospitality, the vibrancy of its worship, the care and concern for those who are alienated or neglected.

9. Educational efforts that are initiated to promote understanding of the importance of catechesis in the African American community and encourage all adults, in particular African American adults, to be trained for this role.
10. More extensive implementation of the MARIAMA program for preparing African American catechists.
11. Potential leaders in all parishes who receive extensive training in theology, catechesis, and theory and practice in learning and teaching styles, particularly adapted for African Americans, so they will better carry out leadership roles as Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education and in turn provide ongoing training for parents and catechists.
12. Diocesan lay ministry training programs that include a track for training parish catechetical leaders, with particular sensitivity for the learning needs and learning styles of African American participants.
13. Evaluation of Catechetical resources for their sensitivity, usefulness, representation and authenticity of African American teachers and learners.
14. Pastoral care for African American Catholics who are located in dioceses which are without an established concentration of African Americans.
15. Parishes which develop and support an educational committee to contribute to the educational planning and decision making within the parish.
16. Publishers of religious educational materials, such as textbooks, audio-visuals, magazines, prayer books, and other resource materials that are inclusive of diversity and representative of African Americans.
17. The staffing of Diocesan Offices with persons sensitive to the African American cultural and religious heritage and that diocesan formation programs, congresses, conferences, and workshops include an Africentric perspective in planning and implementation.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#14**

**Catholic Schools**

**July, 1992**

## **Statement # 14 Catholic Schools as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Catholic schools which continue to provide high quality education, to include the history of African and African American people, for all their students in a context infused with Gospel values and present the opportunity for evangelization with non-Catholic students as well.
2. Serious efforts which will ensure that Catholic schools are available for Catholic and non-Catholic parents who wish to send their children to them.
3. New initiatives launched at the diocesan level to secure sufficient financial assistance from both private and public sectors for Catholic parents to exercise this right.
4. Salaries and benefits of Catholic school faculties and administrators which reflect our teaching as expressed in "Economic Justice for All."
5. Concerted efforts made to maintain urban schools.
6. Creation of least one gender specific Catholic elementary school geared to the needs of the African American male in each diocese where there is a significant African American population.
7. Development of Catholic school curricula and programs inclusive of the historical and cultural contributions of African Americans.
8. Catholic schools in the African American community which are Africentric in their teaching methods, environment, worship and philosophy.
9. The National Catholic Education Association work in conjunction with the African American Catholic leadership to implement the directional statements of the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-first Century.
10. Diocesan Offices of Education and The National Catholic Education Association encouragement of publishers of educational textbooks, magazines, audio-visuals and other resource materials to become more diversified in representing African Americans in particular, as well as other cultural, racial and ethnic groups.
11. On-going training for administrators, teachers, and staff in Catholic schools about African and African American History, African American expressions of faith, and African American learning styles.

12. Aggressive support for legislation that promotes tax-supported school choice options which enable all parents to choose appropriate and effective education for their children, with their share of the tax dollar.
13. The establishment of a National Catholic Education Committee to look at the needs, effective strategies and content for an African and African American infusion curriculum and resource development for Catholic education.
14. The availability of counseling services in the total school curriculum and environment.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#15**

**The Family And  
African American Ministries**

**July, 1992**

**Statement # 15 The Family and African American Ministries as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Establishment of an Office of African American Catholic Ministries in those dioceses where these offices do not exist.
2. Support and affirmation of the Office of African American Catholic Ministries, its staff, operations and functions by African American Catholics individually and collectively as a community.
3. Demonstrated diocesan commitment to the Office of African American Catholic Ministries by accepting responsibility for full funding of the office.
4. Use of the Guidelines for Establishing Offices of Black Catholic Ministries in Dioceses and Archdioceses in the United States of American in the establishment and operation of offices, which is a publication by The National Association of Black Catholic Administrators.
5. Focus, as a priority, on the concerns of the African American family, which includes program efforts directed to African American youth.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#16**

**Diocesan Structures Which  
Address Family Life**

**July, 1992**

**Statement # 16 Diocesan Structures Which Address Family Life as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Diocesan Family Life Offices and all other diocesan offices which are sensitive to the needs and concerns inherent to diverse cultures and which enlist the participation of the African American community throughout all levels of program planning, development and implementation.
2. Diocesan offices which become knowledgeable of the various programs and opportunities that presently are available within African American culture to assist them in their own broadening and understanding of African American culture.
3. The pastoral letter "Brothers & Sisters to Us" be reintroduced and implemented.
4. Dioceses which encourage and motivate the parish family to include and welcome all people.
5. All existing Councils, Boards, Commissions, etc. which include people representing the ethnic, racial and cultural diversity of the diocese.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#17**

**Pastoral Ministry  
To Families**

**July, 1992**

**Statement # 17 Pastoral Ministry to Families as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Religious communities and dioceses which adequately prepare pastors and pastoral ministers for ministry in the African American parishes. That religious communities and dioceses take full advantage of pastoral training programs that are offered for ministry in African American parishes. That dioceses or religious communities recognize that not all are suited for work in African American parishes.
2. African American pastors and those who serve African American parishes to receive adequate training in the proclamation of the Word that is effective and relevant to the people.
3. Pastors recognize the importance of the use of language, signs and symbols, especially those which point to the African past and African presence. That pastors must support the catechesis of the people into an understanding of the deeper reality of what the signs and symbols mean.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#18**

**African American Catholics  
And Public Policy**

**July, 1992**

**Statement # 18 African American Catholics and Public Policy as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Support and encourage for full participation on the diocesan and parish levels in the development of Public Policy which impacts the African American family.
2. Diocesan efforts in public policy which actively recruit and involve the leadership of the African American Catholic community, and other minority cultures to appropriately represent the Catholic constituency.
3. African American Catholics who are active in community affairs.
4. Offices for Black Catholics or similar diocesan groups and agencies which work with parishes located in areas largely populated by African Americans to help them form partnerships with, and provide resources to, their surrounding communities.

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**AGENDA REPORT  
PASTORAL STATEMENT#19**

**Evangelization And  
Family Life**

**July, 1992**

**Statement # 19 Evangelization and Family Life as rewritten according to accepted amendments**

The National Black Catholic Congress VII recommends that the American Catholic bishops, other Catholic leaders, and all Catholic faithful implement and support the following:

1. Evangelization that takes into account and considers those unique aspects of African American culture which includes signs and symbols.
2. Evangelization which is conducted in such a way that worship becomes the center and unconditionally embraces gospel values.
3. Evangelization which is directed to meaningful involvement of the African American male in a variety of activities within the community, the family and the parish.
4. Evangelization which is family centered and demonstrates a knowledge of and respect for African family traditions.
5. Evangelization efforts which involve children and youth in meaningful ways in the life of the Church, the family and the community.
6. Evangelization in the African American community which is coordinated with all aspects of the "Church in Community".
7. The National Black Catholic Congress, in conjunction with the Secretariat for African American Catholics, in the development of a National census and a data bank on African American Catholics.
8. Evangelization which emphasizes the sacred dimension of family life, enabling people to appreciate and understand how witness and proclamation happen in the intimate relationships and ordinary daily circumstances of family living.
9. Evangelization which is steeped in the tradition of service, embracing God's charge that we are linked as brothers and sisters to each other and are ultimately responsible for one another.
10. Evangelization which seeks to reach unchurched African Americans.

11. Evangelization renewal programs which are developed for African Americans who are active in the Catholic Church.
12. Evangelization programs which are developed to involve Catholic school students and their parents.