

The Catholic Enrichment Center – Answering the Call of Congress XII

In a time when there is wariness of religious and civic institutions, when there is concern about safety in public spaces, when divisions among people seem to run deep, the Catholic Enrichment Center (CEC) remains committed to its mission to be a community gathering place open to all, which provides holistic cultural enrichment, formation and academic development. Established in spring 2000 as an extension of the Archdiocese of Louisville's Office of Multicultural Ministry (OMM), at the CEC people are able to find answers that enhance one's life from a holistic perspective.

The recent Archdiocese of Louisville African American Catholic Five-Year Pastoral Plan of Action provides ongoing direction for the CEC, continuing its alignment with the work and the agenda of the National Black Catholic Congress XII's Pastoral Plan of Action. This work spans multiple objectives, audiences, and time frames. In fall 2018 the CEC began hosting the African American Catholic Leadership Circle which identifies, calls forth, and affirms lay leadership, embracing the leadership priority of the Plan. To specifically support the leadership and spirituality of African American men, the Imani Male Retreat was designed for December 2018. This event is part of overall initiatives highlighting Male Ministry. An Advent Retreat is planned to encourage the faith development of seniors as part of Senior Ministry Programming. This experience recognizes the importance of the action step "to foster Africentric family spirituality" and targets the 'elders in the village'. The CEC will host a Black Vocations Round Table in the spring 2019 to fulfill the objective of "promoting and supporting African American vocations". The November 2018 Thea Bowman Institute Certificate Program workshop addressed the issue of racism. This day-long course examined the lessons learned and best practices of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in dealing with the unrest in Ferguson, MO.

The CEC's interaction with Congress plans is not new. Since its inception, the CEC through the OMM has worked to support and implement the priorities and action steps proposed nationally and locally. Examples include the recent 33rd Annual Day of Reflection for participants to enhance their Africentric awareness and spirituality; facilitated Africentric sacramental prep programs; and the 8th Annual Heroes of Hope Celebration that recognizes the leadership and service of 'everyday heroes'. Each of these examples supports the goal of addressing the needs of African American Catholics and those of the African Diaspora to acknowledge, embrace, and celebrate our cultural gifts as well as offer them to the Church. The CEC, through the OMM, answers the invitation of Congress XII and the Archdiocese of Louisville African American Catholic Five-Year Pastoral Plan of Action to embrace these words from Scripture: "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me: act justly, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God" (Luke 4:18; Micah 6:8).