



ARCHDIOCESE  
of NEWARK

*IMANI* (FAITH)

Office of African American, African & Caribbean Apostolate

**Servant of God, Sr. Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A.  
visited this great archdiocese 30 years ago to  
give a speech to US Catholic Bishops 1989**

**“What does it mean to be black and Catholic? It means that I come to my church fully functioning. That doesn’t frighten you, does it? I come to my church fully functioning. I bring myself, my black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become, I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility as a gift to the church.”**

**Sr. Thea Bowman**



**BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS 2019**



**The Archdiocese of Newark ushered in a jubilant celebration of African American, African and Caribbean culture in a glorious Mass service this past February for Black History Month.**

**This year's theme highlighted the "Black Migrations" of Catholics of color who left the segregated south to integrate their faith in Catholic churches in the north. Father Emeka Okwuosa, SDV along with Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R. presided over the mass held at the Cathedral Basilica in Newark. Several hundred faithful attended from throughout northern Jersey to pray together and praise together the history of people of African decent. The Celebration of the Eucharist also included recognition of Saint Josephine Bakhita's Feast Day on February 8th. She is the patron Saint of the Sudan.**

**The Christ the King Nigerian Choir, the Jubilee and Cathedral choirs and the Igbo Catholic Community Choir lent their beautiful voices to make this special Black History Mass resonate with the Holy Spirit for all of those in attendance. As in most celebrations, refreshments were served and enjoyed after Mass!**

**Submitted by Michelle Bivins**





Sister Thea was born Bertha Bowman Dec. 29, 1937, in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Her father, Theon Bowman, was a physician, her mother, Mary Esther Bowman, was a teacher. Sister Thea was baptized in the Episcopal Church and raised Methodist, but her natural wonder led her to express to her parents a desire to become Catholic.

As a student, Sister Thea was inspired by the work of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, a male religious congregation, who staffed Holy Child Jesus parish.

In 1953, Sister Thea entered the Franciscan Sisters' formation program at the congregation's motherhouse in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and in honor of her father, she took the religious name Thea (which means "of God").



After attending The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., to become a teacher, Sister Thea earned her master's degree and a doctorate in English and linguistics before returning to teach at the Franciscan Sisters' own Viterbo College (now Viterbo University) in La Crosse.

She returned to Canton to serve the Diocese of Jackson as the director of the Office of Intercultural Awareness, a position created specifically for her.

In 1984, Sister Thea was diagnosed with breast cancer; the same year, both her parents died. Despite her grief and the cancer's aggressive progress, Sister Thea maintained an equally aggressive schedule of engagements around the country, speaking about the importance of faith in Christ as a solution to the racial problems facing the country.



A hallmark moment in her life came in 1989 at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ, when she appeared as a special guest speaker for the U.S. bishops. During her talk, she encouraged the bishops to take the lead in healing the national rift created by racism and concluded her remarks by bringing the bishops together, arm in arm, to sing the traditional African-American spiritual We Shall Overcome.

After learning about her diagnosis, Sister Thea promised to "live until I die," and according to many who knew her, she did just that. On March 30, 1990, Sister Thea succumbed to her cancer and was buried beside her parents and an uncle in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis, Tennessee.

On the tombstone she shares with her parents, beneath her name and dates, Sister Thea had inscribed a simple message summing up her life: "She Tried."

*Part of an article from National Catholic Register of January 7, 2019*



Held on March 16 2019, the Men's Conference which brought together Catholic men from across the Archdiocese of Newark was a fully packed event. An insightful talk delivered by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin C.Ss.R and Fr. Larry Richards and a public Adoration presided by Fr Mariusz Koch, C.F.R, this conference was one that reached the soul, and I was there to witness it all. Above all that took place that day, what made the conference stand out for me was the holy words I heard on that day. Here is a mini reflection on them..

The first nugget from the talk on that day that I would like to re-share is on the importance of retaining focus on our Lord Jesus during times of struggle, and secondly: Practicing daily to model the life of Jesus. These two messages were expanded upon during the retreat, and I hope it makes its way into your heart too. Following the talks was intermediate breaks, during which we had the chance to eat, visit other stands representing the different offices within the Archdiocese, and have round table discussions on God.

During the window of time given to visit office stands, people were constantly attracted to our table due to the large banners of Black Catholic candidates for Sainthood. Some even took pictures with the banners, and were enlightened by the stories of the admirable lives they led.

Towards the end, as the conference winded down, I felt closer to God, and also felt more confident on how exactly to model the life of Christ. If you missed this conference last year, mark your calendar to attend the next one in March, and keep your eyes on [rcanmenscommission.org](http://rcanmenscommission.org) for all updates and times for the next conference.

Submitted by Kenechukwu Ochibili



# RETREAT FOR BLACK CATHOLIC WOMEN



**Who is That Lady? No, it is not about the song by The Isley Brothers. It refers to the Day of Spirituality presented by Rev. Emeka Okwuosa, SDV.**

**Our day of spirituality began with breakfast and networking at Florham Park. Once breakfast was over, the group went over to the chapel, where we had a mass and then some spirited dialogue. Although our retreat took place during the Easter season, our discussion focused on our Blessed Mother Mary. We had to look within ourselves to find the unique personal link that we shared with our Blessed Mother. Not only the obvious choice that we are women, mothers, but honing in on her faith and finding that similarity within us. We prayed, meditated and by the time that we knew it, it was lunch time. Lunch was a time for fellowship and laughter. After lunch, we had a tour of the grounds at Florham Park, which included visiting the Stations of the Cross and meeting the Vocationist sisters who live in the building next door. It was a pleasant experience, walking the grounds, talking to the sisters and watching them ride their bikes. The day was a welcomed relief from the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. We were able to just reflect, pray and enjoy God's gifts.**

**Submitted by Yvette Beasley**



**ICCUSSA means Igbo Catholic Community, USA. It was formed as a means of uniting Igbo Catholics living in the United States of America and to propagate the catholic faith to the younger generation. Annually we have conventions which are rotated among participating states. This year's convention was held in San Francisco California area. The Newark, New Jersey chapter young adults were led by our Chaplain and co ordinator Rev. Fr Erasmus Okere, accompanied by Rev. Fr Emeka Okwuosa, SDV the coordinator of the African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate of the archdiocese of Newark. We had a range of activities ranging from tour of the city and sites, meeting of the Bishop of San Jose with the ICCUSA executives, meetings, panel discussions, spiritually uplifting speeches and teachings, gala night, and finally a mass celebrated by the host Bishop. We really enjoyed this year's convention and pray for a more successful one, come next year.**

**Submitted by Chimezie Ibeneme**



# BI-MONTHLY YOUNG ADULT GATHERING



For us the Young Adults of this generation, especially me at least, it has been very challenging to live a Christ like life with everything going on around on social media, at school and so on. But the events at Florham Park organized by Father Emeka has really appeared to be a culminating point in my Christian life.

Meeting with other young adults under the supervision of a priest that is familiar with our cultural background gave me the opportunity to learn more about my religion, my faith, myself and my purpose in this earthly life. Those meetings are especially filled with joyful moments with good food, deeply involved questions and everyone gets to share their point of view.

In summary, I find it very necessary for us to meet regularly and be around young adults going through the same struggles and challenges in life and to share the faith that builds us up.

Submitted by Ahmed Traore





## FAITH THROUGH THE STORM

This is a brief synopsis of the Archdiocese of Newark's trip to the Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University. Our trip was scheduled from July 6- 12, 2019, but was cut short by two days due the Hurricane Barry.

Early on Saturday July 6th the contingency of students from the Archdiocese of Newark gathered at the Newark Liberty Airport, ready to start their adventure at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, with the support of our Archdiocese, the African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate, Reverend Okwuosa, SDV the coordinator and our individual parishes.

Upon arriving at the university, we settled in our dorm before venturing out as a group. On that first evening, we explored the university and travelled to the French Quarter to see the sights, knowing once we started classes we probably would have no time. It was an evening well spent.

On Monday, morning classes began with a Morning Praise Service. I attended the Elder's Retreat, facilitated by Chaplain Thelma Lucas. She was an energetic, spiritual group leader whose delivery made her audience feel comfortable, citing words of wisdom and encouragement.

Classes were held in the President's Boardroom. On the first day we entered the boardroom singing, "This Little Light of Mine", we carried lit candles to our seats. Each seat had a journal with a scripture written on the cover and an African print scarf as a keepsake. My journal was titled John 13:24- As I have loved you....Love one another". I was so pleased to start my day on a positive note.

Each day covered a different theme- Monday's theme was Witness, Spirit, Prayer and Song.

Tuesday's theme was Vision. We had an opportunity to visit the African American Museum at Xavier University. We saw exhibits by the university's students and a visiting artist from Nigeria. In the evening we learned some African dance moves, which we enjoyed.

Our plans for Wednesday included taking a Sankofa Journey in New Orleans, visiting Congo Square, St. Louis Cathedral, the Holy Family Parish and to have lunch with the Sisters of Holy Family, due to Hurricane Barry our plans were cut short and we had to plan on returning home.

That fateful morning, some of us made it to the cafeteria and but tried to no avail to get to mass; the roads were quickly flooded and everything came to a standstill. The staff however banded together ensuring everyone was safe, we remained in our dorms while safety procedures were put in place and as a group we prayed for everyone affected and for a quick resolution enabling us to return to classes, it was not meant to be.

Thanks to the dedication of some professors, we finished the classwork. Students gathered in the Dorm Lounge for lectures while waiting for final evacuation. We had a faith stronger than any storm, with shepherds who prayed with us and taught us of the perseverance of our ancestors who overcame many storms in their lives with and only through God.

Although the trip was shortened, we felt blessed and were grateful to meet other Black Catholics like us.  
Gyname

Summary from the submission of Diana Daniels-Maina and Robyn Barrington-Padia



SAVE THE DATES

The office of the African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Newark request the honor of your presence to the annual celebration of



**Blessed Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi**  
the Patron Saint of Nigerian

**On Sunday, November 10, 2019**

12:30 pm Mass

Blessed Sacrament St. Charles Borromeo  
19 Van Ness Place, Newark, New Jersey 07108

(Reception Follows after Mass)

For more information please contact:

Bona Durugo (862) 368-5791 or Chinyere Odoemena (908) 937-0827



The office of the African American, African and Caribbean Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Newark

**Cordially Invite you**

**To our first**

**CHRISTMAS CAROL 2019**

Sat December 7th

5:30pm – 8pm

Archdiocesan youth center  
499 BELGROVE DRIVE, KEARNY, NJ

Refreshment served

For more info contact

Fr. Emeka Okwuosa, SDV - Coordinator

Kenechukwu Ochibili - Associate

email: okwuosem@rcan.org - Phone: 973-780-0057, 973-497-4304



# Youth Retreat



Join us for:

**F**aith  
**Food**  
**Fun**

*Talent Show*  
*Christmas Carols 2019*

**Sat December 7th, 2019**  
9:00am – 5:00pm  
Archdiocesan Youth Retreat Center  
499 Belgrove Drive, Kearny, NJ



Dr Ansel Augustine  
Speaker  
Renowned Black Catholic Youth & Young Adult Minister

Cost: \$10 per person

For more information contact: Fr. Emeka Okwuosa, SDV - okwuosem@rcan.org  
Kenechukwu Ochibili - keneco@rcan.org  
Phone: 973-780-0057, 973-497-4304,

Save the date

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS 2020

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2020

AT 12 NOON

Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark

Celebrant

Cardinal Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R.

# Parishes in the Archdiocese of Newark with African American, African, and Caribbean faithful

- (B) BERGENFIELD, ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
- (B) ENGLEWOOD, ST. CECILIA
- (B) HACKENSACK, HOLY TRINITY
- (B) LEONIA, ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
- (B) TEANECK, ST. ANASTASIA
- (B) TENAFLY, O.L. OF MOUNT CARMEL
- (E) EAST ORANGE, HOLY NAME OF JESUS
- (E) EAST ORANGE, HOLY SPIRIT/OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS
- (E) EAST ORANGE, OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL
- (E) EAST ORANGE, ST. JOSEPH
- (E) IRVINGTON, ST. LEO
- (E) WEST ORANGE, OUR LADY OF LOURDES
- (E) MAPLEWOOD, ST. JOSEPH
- (E) MONTCLAIR, ST THERESA OF CALCUTTA
- (E) MONTCLAIR, ST. PETER CLAVER
- (E) NEWARK, BLESSED SACRAMENT/ ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO
- (E) NEWARK, PARISH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
- (E) NEWARK, ST. ANTONINUS

- (H) JERSEY CITY, CHRIST THE KING
- (H) JERSEY CITY, O.L. OF SORROWS
- (H) JERSEY CITY, O.L. OF VICTORIES
- (H) JERSEY CITY, ST. ALOYSIUS
- (H) JERSEY CITY, ST. ANNE
- (H) JERSEY CITY, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
- (H) JERSEY CITY, ST. PATRICK/ASSUMPTION -ALL SAINTS
- (H) JERSEY CITY, ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
- (U) ELIZABETH, HOLY ROSARY/ST. MICHAEL
- (U) HILLSIDE, CHRIST THE KING
- (U) PLAINFIELD, ST. BERNARD AND ST. STANISLAUS
- (U) PLAINFIELD, ST. MARY
- (U) RAHWAY, DIVINE MERCY
- (U) ROSELLE, ST. JOSEPH THE CARPENTER
- (U) UNION, ST. MICHAEL

COUNTIES:  
 B = BERGEN  
 E = ESSEX  
 H = HUDSON

## MISSION STATEMENT

**The mission of the African American, African, & Caribbean Apostolate is to:**

**DISCOVER and PROMOTE leadership among Roman Catholics of African descent in the Archdiocese of Newark.**

**ENCOURAGE Fiscal responsibility and self reliance.**

**EMPOWER young adults to embrace their cultural identity and to refuse to live their lives apart from their Savior Jesus the Christ.**

**LOVE who we are and to Whom we belong thus striving to eradicate all form of racism and oppression.**

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**African American,  
African & Caribbean  
Apostolate**

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*NAME:* \_\_\_\_\_

*ADDRESS:* \_\_\_\_\_

*CITY, STATE, ZIPCODE:* \_\_\_\_\_

*EMAIL:* \_\_\_\_\_

*TELEPHONE:* \_\_\_\_\_

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