FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

The men and means for thriving parishes

Dear Friends of the Josephites:

At the quadrennial meeting of Josephites in June, leadership was elected for the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. I am honored to have been selected as Superior General at the June meeting in Louisiana. The Josephites have been a steady presence throughout my life, which started in Louisiana. At this moment in our history, which traces back to 1871, I ask for your prayers as I begin this new responsibility and mission.

Soon I will be moving from Washington, where I had been serving as rector of St. Joseph Seminary, to the Josephite headquarters in Baltimore. I am blessed to have an excellent group of collaborators in Josephite leadership. Father Thomas Frank, SSJ, was selected vicar general. He previously served four years as consultor general. Father Ray Bomberger, an experienced Josephite pastor who will continue to serve the St. Peter Claver parish in West Baltimore, was selected to serve as the new consultor general.

Area Directors were also elected. These four Josephites will be the primary point of contact with our parishes and ministries in their regions of the country. Those selected are: Father Cornelius Ejogu, Father Godwin Ani, Father Joseph Benjamin and Father Kenneth Keke.

I commend Father Michael Thompson for his leadership. In his four years as superior general, he took on significant issues that laid the groundwork for future mission opportunities in the African-American community. His energy and enthusiasm were a catalyst for change and set a course for growth.

Also, Father Roderick Coates commendably served four years as vicar general. He led the successful 125th anniversary celebration and provided support to our priests and parishes in many ways.

The new leadership team, with God’s help and your support, will continue to provide the men and means for the Josephite mission. This is the first issue of The Harvest that I serve as publisher. It has many uplifting stories about the goings on in our parishes. I pray that the magazine provides encouragement and nourishment for you in these waning days of summer.

Bishop John H. Ricard, Superior General

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The Josephite Harvest (ISSN 0021-7603, USPS 277-080) is the oldest Catholic mission magazine still publishing in the United States. Established in 1888, it is published quarterly by The Josephites (The Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart) to keep our readers abreast of the work of the Josephite apostolate. Periodicals postage paid at Baltimore, MD. Title and full representation trademark. Contents may be reprinted with permission of the St. Joseph’s Society of the Sacred Heart, Inc.)
Bishop John H. Ricard was selected superior general of the Josephites in June. “Throughout my journey, I have been in touch with the Josephites,” the bishop said, reflecting on his election to lead the venerable religious community that has been serving African Americans since 1871. “I was a bit surprised by the selection but look forward to working with my brother Josephites.”

The Josephites gather every four years to elect leadership. The new superior general will soon be moving to the Josephite Generalate in Baltimore.

Others selected to Josephite leadership were Father Thomas Frank, vicar general, and Father Ray Bomberger, consultor general.

Father Frank will be moving from Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Washington to the Baltimore-based Josephite headquarters. Father Bomberger will continue as pastor of St. Peter Claver church in West Baltimore in addition to his national Josephite duties.

Bishop Ricard, 79, steps into the superior general’s position after a long career in church leadership both nationally and internationally. Ordained in 1968, he served for 12 years in parishes in Washington, D.C., as a Josephite priest. He was made auxiliary bishop of Baltimore in 1984 where he served for 12 years before moving to the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee in 1997.

After retiring as bishop of that diocese in 2011, he moved back to Washington taking on responsibility as rector of the Josephite Seminary. In addition to his service as bishop in Baltimore and Florida, he has been president of the National Black Catholic Congress and also served on the board of Catholic Relief Services, making several trips to Africa. “For 25 years, I was the go-to person for the U.S. bishops about African affairs,” Bishop Ricard told The Harvest.

As he begins his new assignment, he said his priority will be recruiting “the men and the means” to support the Josephite mission in the African American community.

His experience in Africa will benefit his new position as the Josephites have a significant presence of recruiting vocations in Nigeria, running two houses of formation there. “The Josephites will continue to invite African clergy to come and serve in this country,” Bishop Ricard said, noting that the Josephites have been working in Africa for 25 years. “We will be recruiting in the United States, too.”

He said he will be giving attention to increasing fundraising, an area that’s necessary to provide resources for parish work and other ministries. “We want to reinforce the parishes that we have so that they can thrive,” the superior general said. “Thriving parishes will invite people to renew and recommit their lives to assist our whole church in renewal and recovery.”

Others elected to leadership included the four area leaders. They are: Father Cornelius Ejiohu, Area One (including Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Nigeria); Father Godwin Ani, Area Two (including Alabama, Mississippi and part of Louisiana); Father Joseph Benjamin, Area Three (including Mississippi and Southwest Louisiana); and Father Kenneth Keke, Area Four (including Texas and California).

“We want to reinforce the parishes that we have so that they can thrive.”
Father Richard Wagner will actively celebrate the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on June 6. As the current oldest active Josephite parish priest, he surely knows how it goes.

Father Wagner hails from Rochester, New York. Born on May 23, 1952, the oldest of three sons of Francis and Edith Birdsey Wagner. He was baptized in St. Monica Church there and attended the parish school before entering the diocesan minor seminary in 1966 for high school and early college education.

He began his Josephite training on entering the year-long novitiate in August 1952 and continuing at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Washington DC. He was ordained a priest on June 6, 1959, by Bishop John McNamara in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC.

His first assignment as a Josephite was at St. Augustine High School in New Orleans while serving concurrently as chaplain at Xavier University, also in New Orleans. In 1965, he was appointed director of the Josephite Brothers’ post novitiate training in the same city until 1968 when he entered parish ministry as co-pastor of St. Veronica parish in Baltimore.

At 87, he celebrates his position as the present oldest, active Josephite parish priest, by continually answering the call, “Here I am, send me.”

Celebrating our Jubilarians

FATHER RICHARD WAGNER, SSJ

60 Years

FATHER PHILLIP J. LINDEN, SSJ

50 Years

FATHER PETER C. WEISS, SSJ

40 Years

Pope advances sainthood cause for African American priest

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis advanced the sainthood cause of Father Augustine Tolton, who was the first African American diocesan priest in the United States and founder of the first Black Catholic parish in Chicago.

Tolton was born into slavery in 1854 on a plantation near Brush Creek, Missouri. After his father left to try to join the Union Army during the Civil War, his mother left to continue as a slave. After his mother died, he was sold to various plantations in Missouri. After his father returned and took him, Father Tolton lived a life of heroic virtue.

Father Tolton had been born into slavery in 1854 on a plantation near Brush Creek, Missouri. After his father left to try to join the Union Army during the Civil War, his mother left to continue as a slave. After his mother died, he was sold to various plantations in Missouri. After his father returned and took him, Father Tolton lived a life of heroic virtue.

Tolton was ordained for the Propaganda Fidei Congregation in 1886, expecting to become a missionary in Africa. Instead, he was sent to be a missionary in his own country and returned to Quincy, where he served for three years before going to the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1889.

Despite rampant racism and discrimination, he became one of the city’s most popular pastors, attracting members of both white and Black Catholic communities. He spearheaded the building of St. Monica Church for Black Catholics and worked tirelessly for his congregation in Chicago, even to the point of exhaustion. On July 9, 1897, he died of heart attack on a Chicago street at the age of 43.

He was known for persevering against all odds in pursuit of his calling and quietly devoted himself to his people, despite great difficulties and setbacks.

Josephite Father Charles Uncles, a former parishioner of St. Francis Xavier in Baltimore, was the first African American to be ordained on American soil when Baltimore Cardinal James Cardinal Augustine was made a bishop in 1958.

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At 87, he celebrates his position as the present oldest, active Josephite parish priest, by continually answering the call, “Here I am, send me.”
At the annual St. Joseph Day celebration at St. Joseph Seminary in Washington, DC on May 1, Fred Kaddu, SSJ, made his Final Promise to the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Father Michael Thompson, Superior General, administered the promises. After the event, the assembled Josephites celebrated this step on the way to priesthood.

I was born in Nangabo Kampala in Uganda on June 6, 1987, the second of four children of Sam Lue and Namulindwa Noeline.

As a kid, my mother took me regularly to church where I was fascinated by the priest celebrating at the altar with other kids. I enjoyed acting out the liturgy. In addition, I served Mass in my parish of St. Joseph.

When I finished elementary school, I joined a minor seminary in 2004. The minor seminary is equivalent to a high school here in the USA.

In 2009, I entered a college in Kenya for philosophy where I earned a diploma. In 2012, I earned a Bachelor degree from Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome.

When Josephite Father William Norvel was vacationing in Kenya in 2012, it was from them I first learned of the Josephites. I felt the calling and came to the seminary in Washington in 2013 and this past May completed a Master of Divinity degree from the Catholic University of America.

Serving in Josephite parishes, during practice ministry, I have been inspired by the parishioners by their love, commitment and willingness to serve their parishes. Because of such dedication and faith, I cannot wait to exercise my ordained ministry as one who is available to serve. I have also witnessed the love of God’s people toward those dedicated to serving God. I have watched how much they have been praying for me. Knowing this lets me know that I am on a journey with others.

I have no blood relatives in the USA but I have met loving people. I have mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters in the USA.

Like John (Chapter 1-4), I think God has brought me to the right place where I will fulfill his mission.
Bishops hear pain and hope at racism listening session

By Christopher Gunty

At a racism listening session, speakers gave examples of being questioned about their presence on church property simply for being Black, of having difficulty entering the seminary because of race, being called the N-word when distributing Holy Communion at a hospital and feeling unwelcome in the church.

The listening session, held in the Archdiocese of Baltimore April 29, was prompted by the U.S. Bishops’ 2018 pastoral “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love – A Pastoral Letter Against Racism,” which calls racist acts sinful because they violate justice.

Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, told the audience in his opening remarks that these listening sessions help the bishops understand the “aching pain” of people affected by racism.

Redemptorist Father William Guri, a priest from Zimbabwe who is studying at Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore and lives and assists with ministry at St. Mary Parish, Annapolis, recounted how he had been walking in the gardens behind the rectory — not wearing his clerical garb — when he noticed a couple taking wedding photos. He deliberately stayed at the opposite end of the gardens so as not to disturb them.

A white man whom Father Guri did not recognize as a parishioner confronted him, asked him what he was doing in the gardens and told him he should leave immediately because he was on private property and his presence was not welcome.

The priest said he explained that he was a priest who lived on the grounds and the man was simply standing, bring people to action.”

Before attending the listening session, Bishop Fabre said, “I visited dioceses across the country to facilitate listening sessions on racism in the U.S. Catholic Church, Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., and chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, notices some constants.

He said the fact that this incident occurred in the backyard of the rectory where he lives “awakened me to the reality that there are some people to whom I can never be good enough for the simple reason of being Black.”

Prior to the listening session, Bishop Fabre said that in previous sessions he had attended he had heard people’s pain and hope. The sessions are a model for what the bishops want to see in society.

“We want people to get together, dialogue, have a conversation,” he said, noting that Pope Francis calls for the same thing — to hear people’s pain and accompany them in their journey.

“The question we are asking is how can we address this together with the richness of the teachings of the church and the sacraments?” Bishop Fabre said.

The other constant that Bishop Fabre notices is how can we address this together with the richness of the teachings of the church and the sacraments? ... We want to bring people to a greater understanding, bring people to action.”

By Erik Zygmont

As he visits dioceses across the country to facilitate listening sessions on racism in the U.S. Catholic Church, Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., and chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, notices some constants.

The first is the “depth of the pain” of Catholics who have experienced racism, “everything from being looked at strangely when you walk into a parish to being rudely dealt with,” Bishop Fabre said.

The stories also cover plenty of in-your-face instances — soon after his 2001 ordination, Deacon Seigfried Presberry, now director of Deacon Presberry, received Communion from the deacon. In a couple weeks, he asked Deacon Presberry if he could bring him the Eucharist at home. In several months, Deacon Presberry served, at the man’s request, at his funeral. He now refers to him as “my dear friend.”

“I know we won’t know the Kingdom of God until Christ comes, but I hope we can heal some of the harm of racism, and root it out of the church,” Bishop Fabre said. “It is my hope that we’ll see great fruit.”
National Black Catholic Congress

Five-year plan continues unfinished work

By Erik Zygmont

With more than a year gone by since the November 2017 publication of a seven-topic, five-year plan developed by the National Black Catholic Congress, the “Congress XII Pastoral Plan of Action” is providing the framework for a goal that is simple, but not easy.

“The plan is an attempt to bring Blacks into the church, and get them involved in every aspect of the church,” said Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ, president of the NBCC and rector of St. Joseph’s Seminary in Washington, D.C. “We hope to see Blacks integrate into every level.”

From church leadership to youth involvement to evangelization to social justice, the plan does address “every level.” In a departure from previous plans, according to Valerie Washington, executive director of the NBCC, the organization asked bishops across the U.S. to select delegates to send to Congress XII.

She told The Harvest that each bishop was asked to choose a “Black Catholic with extensive and ongoing involvement in the church, and one who is engaged in ministering to Black Catholics.”

To prepare for writing the plan, 43 Black Catholics from 25 states participated in an online webinar with Father Stephen Thorne, chairman of the NBCC Pastoral Planning Committee and pastor of St. Martin de Porres Church in Philadelphia, Ms. Washington said.

“The group met in Orlando, Florida, July 6-9, taking inspiration from both the Gospel of St. Luke and the Book of Micah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: Act justly, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God.”

With that spiritual prompt, the group put special emphasis on spirituality and the saints, which later became the first topic of the Pastoral Plan of Action.

“From the earliest times in the church, there have been Black saints,” Ms. Washington said, referencing St. Anthony of Thebes, born in 251, one of the Desert Fathers. “With over three million Black Catholics in the U.S. alone, saints such as St. Anthony the Great, St. Augustine, St. Benedict the Moor, and St. Josephine Bakhita, in addition to the others, give Black Catholics a greater sense of belonging, of ‘ownership’ and pride, or perhaps more accurately, a love for the faith,” Ms. Washington said.

She also referenced more recent Black Catholics whose causes for canonization have been opened: Father Augustus Tolton, Mother Mary Lange, Pierre Toussaint, Mother Henriette Delillie, Julia Greeley and Sister Thea Bowman.

“What great love for others and God all of these people possessed, and what better witness to the depth of faith Black people profess for the Catholic Church?” Ms. Washington said. At the parish level, the plan emphasizes the need for catechesis specific to Black Catholics.

“There are issues of language, culture, and spirituality that must be addressed in order to make all of our brothers and sisters comfortable in the church,” Ms. Washington wrote, noting that the U.S. church has demonstrated success with Latino Catholics, in particular, in this regard.

“But those same needs apply to the African-American community, since there, too, is a difference in language, culture and spirituality,” she said.

The plan puts special weight on Catholic schools, with a straightforward objective: “Creating more sustainable Catholic schools in the community.”

“Research shows that African-American students are under served by public schools,” Ms. Washington said. She noted that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated that African-American students comprise 7.7 percent of all U.S. Catholic school students.

Under Spirituality and the Saints, for example, one of the six action steps dedicated to that objective is “Develop and implement an ongoing process to enable Black Catholics to enhance their Africentric spirituality.”

The six action steps dedicated to that objective range from the individual – going to daily Mass, monthly confession, and weekly eucharistic adoration, for example – to the communal – designing and promoting “cultural experiential activities that infuse catholic social teaching in sacramental preparation.”

Ms. Washington said every U.S. bishop received a copy of the plan as well as a user’s guide at the outset of 2018, to be forwarded to their dioceses, respectively Black Catholic or ethnic minority offices.

“The NBCC is blessed to have a dedicated group of Black Catholic ministry directors across the nation who provide support and oversight for parishes as they conduct implementation programs,” Ms. Washington wrote. “We receive much of our feedback directly from these Black Catholic leaders.”

Members of the Pastoral Plan Committee were surveyed in October 2018 as to which plan topics were implemented in their home dioceses, and how those topics were implemented. Ms. Washington said an additional survey will be conducted this spring, and “the NBCC office will publish its findings and best practices for implementation.”

It has always been the Josephites’ mission to minister specifically to the African-American community.

Bishop Ricard said the Pastoral Plan will broaden support for that mission across the U.S. “(The plan) will strengthen the work of the Josephites, and provide additional rationale for what we’re doing,” he said.

Cardinal Peter K. Turkson joins the procession as the opening Mass for Congress XII.

A woman prays at the opening Mass for Congress XII at the National Black Catholic Congress, July 7-9, 2018 in Orlando, Fla. Cardinal Turkson delivered the keynote address for Congress XII.

Cardinal Peter K. Turkson, center, and Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ, center of the welcoming ceremony for Congress XII of the National Black Catholic Catholic, July 7-9, 2018, in Orlando, Fla. Cardinal Turkson delivered the keynote address for Congress XII.

The Knights of Peter Claver were a strong presence at Congress XII.
After a catastrophic fire hit Our Lady Star of the Sea Church in Houston in January 2018, on the heels of severe damage sustained during Hurricane Harvey the previous August, the pastor, Father Stephen Sohe, SSJ, directed parishioners to the book of Hebrews:

The verses read, "Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges" (Heb 12:6).

Andre Hence, a member of Our Lady Star of the Sea’s pastoral council, explained that the firm winds inspired the congregation to get up and get going.

“It really resounded with our parishioners,” he said, “even our old parishioners. If there was something to do, they were there and at the ready.”

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston insurance company covered the approximately $300,000 in repairs.

Mr. Hence said that while the cause of the fire has not been officially determined, the parish suspects a frayed electrical cord in the sacristy was to blame.

“We do know it was not vandalism or intentional,” he said.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston, presided at a rededication Mass March 1, concelebrated by Father Sohe and other priests. It was a worthy bookend for parishioners who, not so thrilled by the “scourge” at the outset, worked and prayed faithfully toward the follow-up.

The book of Hebrews says, “At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it” (Heb 12:11).

The priest is a member of the area’s clergy ambassadors’ program and the Seventh Ward clergy caucus.

The church has Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups that meet four times a week. It partners with Catholic Charities to help pay the rent and gas bills for those in need. At Thanksgiving, the parish serves a meal to more than 200 people, and every Sunday it offers a hot breakfast to children.

For a few years, until a permanent home could be found, St. Luke served as the church is here for them,” said Father Sohe.

“I’m a strong believer that for better policing, the officers have to know the people they are serving,” Father Ejiogu said. “Because our parish has a good relationship with the police of the Sixth District, the people tend to trust them.”

He meets monthly with the commander of the Sixth District to cultivate a better relationship between the police and the community.

Washington Metropolitan Chief of Police Peter Newsham presents Father Cornelius K. Ejiogu, SSJ, the Chief of Police Special Award. The priest is a member of the area’s clergy ambassadors’ program and the Seventh Ward clergy caucus.

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Looking out into a sea of beaded faces at the 2015 funeral of a young man Gunter down in the nation’s capital, Josephite Father Cornelius K. Ejiogu, admits that he was anxious about choosing the right words.

Many in the congregation were overwhelmed with grief, tears streaming down their faces. Others harbored vengeance, longing to pay back the person or persons responsible for their friend’s murder.

Most of the nearly 500 mourners in the church were young people.

The pastor of St. Luke in Washington wanted to deliver a message of hope and peace.

“It was one of the most difficult things I’ve ever done,” said Father Ejiogu. “I reminded them that the joy of the Lord is our strength, not what we can do, not how much revenge we can have.”

Muhammad Washington was killed not long after being released from jail.

He had been baptized at St. Luke but had “fallen in with the wrong crowd,” Father Ejiogu said.

Although Washington had practiced Islam, Father Ejiogu still considered him a parishioner and made the church available to the family for the funeral.

“He was still our kid,” the pastor said. “It was difficult to bury someone in his early 20s but that’s something I’m called to do as a priest. I’m called to console the grieving.”

Being present for people in the community in times of joy and sadness is a major reason Father Ejiogu was recently recognized by two separate groups as one of the region’s foremost faith leaders.

In March, Father Ejiogu was presented the Chief of Police Special Award for his service to the community and his support of events sponsored by the Sixth District of Washington’s Metropolitan Police.

The same month, the Nigerian-born priest was honored by Radio One as one of 20 pastors of the year from Washington, Maryland and Virginia.

Father Ejiogu has been partnering with the police during his six years at St. Luke. The Sixth District hosts a children’s party at St. Luke every Christmas, where numerous toys are distributed. Police officers assist with parish programs such as a food bank that helps 70 families a month and some of them worship at St. Luke.

“I’m a strong believer that for better policing, the officers have to know the people they are serving,” Father Ejiogu said. “Because our parish has a good relationship with the police of the Sixth District, the people tend to trust them.”

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The church has Alcohols Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups that meet four times a week. It partners with Catholic Charities to help pay the rent and gas bills for those in need. At Thanksgiving, the parish serves a meal to more than 200 people, and every Sunday it offers a hot breakfast to children.

For a few years, until a permanent home could be found, St. Luke served as the site of a U.S. Department of Justice program for helping the incarcerated reenter society.

“We do all these things just to make sure people in the community know that the church is here for them,” said Father Ejiogu, who is also academic dean of St. Joseph Seminary in Washington.

“I could never ask for a better parish,” he said. “The parishioners are loving and caring and enthusiastic.”

Pastor builds bridges

Father Cornelius receives awards in Washington from police, community

By George P. Matyszek Jr.
The parish community of St. James Major, in Prichard, Alabama, is trying to make life a little easier for the members of the community who need it most. “We’re reaching out, specifically to low income earners of the community,” said Father Hyginus L. Boboh, SSJ, pastor of St. James Major.

Father Boboh, who has been ministering to the approximately 350 registered families of St. James Major since 2014, came up with the idea for the food bank a couple of years ago. “The church has always been a beacon of hope to the community.” Father Boboh said.

The food bank, which was blessed and opened its doors March 19, serves approximately 30 to 40 families and is expected to grow. About two dozen families received food the first official day in operation.

Father Boboh recognized the need for the food bank, in part, because of Prichard’s “outrageous” poverty rate, which stands at 35.1 percent. Families come to the food bank for items including canned goods, frozen chicken, milk and strawberries.

While St. James Major’s food bank offers a helping hand to those in need, its mission and purpose goes beyond providing nourishment to the body.

“One way is trying to help the church understand that we are in the community,” Father Boboh said. “Preaching the Word is not enough. This extends on the mission.”

As the food bank’s coordinator and volunteer, St. James Major parishioner Stephanie Danzy’s duties include placing food orders. “It’s a rewarding experience because you’re doing good to help someone else,” said Ms. Danzy, 62, a lifelong parishioner. “It’s a good feeling.”

Ms. Danzy said volunteers were “overwhelmed” by the number of people who have come.

Gwen Lewis, a parishioner of St. James Major for more than 50 years, is also a member of the food bank committee. Ms. Lewis and Ms. Danzy are two of the approximately dozen parishioners who volunteer with the ministry. “We have a lot of people in need” Ms. Lewis said. “It’s a pleasure to help people. There’s always people less fortunate than you are.”

As a committee member, Ms. Lewis helps stock the food bank’s shelves on Mondays and Wednesdays, preparing for its operation the following days. “This is what we’re doing to help our community,” Ms. Lewis said. “It makes it a lot more personal and lets people know we care. The church is here to be of service.”

The seniors were the focus of the homily and the parish formally recognized seniors.

Ms. Vignaud is a longtime parishioner and appreciated the moment to show you love, not just as their priest, but as their son.”

Father Keke said. “The greatest help I get from the elderly in my parish is they encourage me. They show you love, not just as their priest, but as their son.”

Father Keke anticipates that the parish will host the recognition event every few years. “People who have given so much materially and spiritually should be recognized,” he said. “I know that they’re going to get their reward in heaven.” The church is family, Father Keke said. “We’re going to celebrate you,” he said.

Los Angeles parish honors seniors

F

ather Kenneth Keke, SSJ, last year decided to forego his parish’s traditional Christmas party and replace it with another celebration. The goal was to celebrate and recognize older members of St. Brigid in Los Angeles.

“These are the people who are the foundation of the parish, the ones who give vibrancy and life to the parish,” said Father Keke, who has been pastor of St. Brigid for three years.

The celebration of those members age 80 and older was planned by a committee of younger parishioners and represented the first time the parish formally recognized seniors.

Of the parish’s approximately 700 registered families, about 80 parishioners met the 80-and-over age requirement. Only about half of them attended the festivities. “Most of them are shut-ins – they are sick,” Father Keke said. “It was a big day.”

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By Elizabeth Lowe

Parish food bank nourishes community in Prichard

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Father Keke
There are 3 million African American Catholics in the United States.

Of 17,000-plus Catholic parishes in the United States, 7/98 are considered to be predominantly African American.

About 76 percent of African American Catholics are in diverse or shared parishes and 24 percent are in predominately African-American parishes.

More than 20 African Americans have served as bishops in the United States, including three Josephites.

There are 250 African American priests, 437 deacons, in the United States.

There are 400 African American religious sisters and 50 religious brothers.

By the year 2050, the African-American population is expected to almost double its present size to 62 million, and it will increase its percentage of the population to 16 percent.

Living in East Baltimore, Steven Allbright had plenty of options where he could come into the Catholic Church.

Something about Historic St. Francis Xavier, however, set it apart. Reading up on the first Black Catholic parish in the United States, Mr. Allbright was stopped by the date in 1864 when one of its previous worship spaces was dedicated.

September 21.

That’s the same day, in 2014, that Mr. Allbright walked out of the Maryland State Penitentiary Complex, after being incarcerated for more than five years.

“I shook my head when I read that,” he said. “This is not just another coincidence. This is God at work.”

Mr. Allbright was among the more than 600 in the Archdiocese of Baltimore who came into full Communion with the church as he received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil April 20 at St. Francis Xavier in East Baltimore.

He had entered prison in 2008 with a domestic violence conviction. Mr. Allbright made several Catholic friends on the inside, who piqued his interest in the faith and helped him find employment on the outside.

“A lot of people look at me and keep saying, why, when people are running from the Catholic Church, I am running toward it?” Mr. Allbright said. “I tell them about what I’ve experienced from Catholics personally.”

Raised Presbyterian, Mr. Allbright was leading a Buddhist study group in prison and meditating in solitude when he accepted an invitation to sit in on the prayer circle outside the basilica before the Mass, with drums and guitars.

Margaret Ricks, 64, of Southeast Washington said she had longed for a new leader who would boldly speak out about Catholic beliefs. “He’s the answer to our prayers,” she said.

By Catholic News Service

Archbishop Wilton Gregory was installed in May as Washington's first African American archbishop.

Archbishop Gregory takes the helm of one of the most prominent Catholic dioceses. Under the grand dome of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, North America's largest Catholic church, Archbishop Gregory was loudly cheered by eight red-robed cardinals, almost 50 bishops and thousands of Catholic faithful, as he held out the paper scroll proclaiming him the archbishop.

For many, he represents a beacon of hope that a new leader can set right a stricken community.

In his first speech to the archdiocese, he acknowledged Catholic leaders' fault in the sexual abuse crisis — "we clerics and hierarchs have irreparably been the source of this current tempest" — but focused much more on the importance of maintaining faith in Jesus regardless of troublesome circumstances.

"When Jesus Christ ... finally leads us out of this storm of our own making, may He not feel compelled to admonish us for exhibiting a collective lack of confidence in Him, but rather be proud of the undaunted, uncompromising faith that we never lost," Archbishop Gregory said.

The Archdiocese of Washington includes more than 600,000 Catholics who live in the District and suburban Maryland.

Archbishop Gregory, a 71-year-old cleric tapped for the job by Pope Francis, has served as archbishop of Atlanta since 2004.

Archbishop Gregory pledged in his homily that he would be a bishop "who honestly confesses his faults and failings before you when I commit them, not when they are revealed."

It was the first line of his address that drew applause.

"He is the right person at the right time. He’s a man of great integrity and character,” said Frank Butler, a former staffer for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a retired longtime leader of the Catholic philanthropy group FADICA.

Some Black Catholics gathered in a prayer circle outside the basilica before the Mass, with drums and guitars.

## Archdiocese of Washington

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory receives the papal bull on his appointment to Washington from Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, during his installation Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington May 21. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn, Archdiocese of Washington)
Celebrating the Church’s New Life at Easter time is the early April Confirmation class of nine at Josephite, St. Joseph Church in Alexandria. Retired Bishop John Ricard of Pensacola, Tallahassee, now rector of St. Joseph Seminary in Washington, was the minister of confirmation.

Many of the Josephites gathered for an annual retreat in Covington, LA, May 27-31. Bishop Ferdinand Cheri, auxiliary bishop of New Orleans, was the retreat director.

The Josephite Pastoral Center collected baby goods for MarIH Center, a pregnancy center in Alexandria, VA. The boxes included baby bibs and wash towels.

Faces & Places

On May 31, the Josephite senior priests gathered for a retreat at their residence at St. Joseph Seminary in Washington, DC.

Faces

Staying Connected
“Can you hear me now?”

One of the wonders of today’s life and culture, is the cell phone. It used to be the computer – but even that is contained in the little rectangular device called the “cell phone.” Not only that, but it also serves as our camera (still and moving), our calculator, phone, address book, note pad, alarm clock, datebook, weather service, music box, newspaper, photo album, GPS and so much more. Whatever you need, there is probably and App for that.

People bring cell phones to Mass for their missal. Cell phones are great, but can be dangerous. Driving around town you see people looking at their phones as they cross busy intersections oblivious to traffic. Stopped in traffic, many drivers are holding their phone, texting or dialing a number. And sometimes people walk into obstacles while distracted.

Many young people are on the cell phone for hours on end. Most don’t know life without them. This past Lent, our parish Lenten symbol was the “cell phone” – encouraging people to “stay connected” to God.

On the signs we posted everywhere was a beautiful phone with the name JESUS in the center with the word “TODAY” at the top of the screen and the words “Call Daily from the Heart” at the bottom of the screen. The intent was to encourage people to pray more often – daily if they are not – and to make that effort as easy as using your cell phone. When we pray we bring things to God and it is then that He can help us.

How often do we forget or not utilize the most dynamic, powerful, All-Mighty resource at our disposal? So often when problems and crises arise, we pull out our cell phones to call a friend or relative to share the problem without thinking to place it in God’s hands.

On the bottom of our Lenten flyers it said: “Call on Him broken and He will make you whole.” This is good advice for every day. How can we not pray?

God is always on the other side of the line when we call Him. He wants to help, but we have to invite Him. He doesn’t care how many times you call, when you call, or how long you talk.

You are not charged for minutes used, roaming fees and they are all toll free. You are always connected when you call.

Now for your summer projects: #1 Teach a young person how to use his or her cell phones for praying. So many of them don’t know their regular prayers – the Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary, Morning Offering, Act of Contrition, Grace before Meals. Help them download these prayers and set up regular prayer times for them to be reminded to pray. If you don’t know how to do that, they do! They just need the encouragement.

Summer project: #2 Search for all the verses of the song “What a friend we have in Jesus.” They give a fabulous lesson on prayer.
Josephite Perpetual Enrollments

For the Living and the Deceased

January, February, March 2019

Many thanks to all of our Sustaining Partners, who together with loved ones, have been enrolled as Perpetual Members of the Josephites, benefiting them with prayerful daily remembrances by all Josephites.

POLL, Archbishop George
Lanza, Mario
Judice, Ann Marie
Presley, Ellyn
Cheneynton, Karilyn
Cheneynton, Symanthe
Urban, Daniel Scott
Costello, Leonard
Costello, Joan
Madlinskayak, Apolonio
Pennisco, Arthur
Hepen, Catherine
Hepen, Alexis
Duh, Daniel J.
Quinn, Thomas
Eastman, Felix
Quinn, Melina (Family)
Martinson, Lisa (Miller)
Kaner, Hoyd & Adele (Family)
Fahey, Thomas L.
Fahey, Mariann F. “Red”
Nava, Maritana
Coron, Joseph
Coffman, Samuel Gene
Steckel, Tom
Lambert, Mary
Hooper, Jr., William
Seagram, Daniel
Paterson, Tamika
Tristan, Anne T.
Daines, Audrey C.
Deiderer, Barbara
Bradley, Karen
Mergler, C.C.
Trump, President Donald
Bushen, Sylvester
Plotz, Chris
Foley, Dagmar
Connor, Don
Files Family
Gracia, Gabriel
Pierre-Louis, Pauline
Blair, Joseph

Bordenave, Franciscus Cecilia
Abandoned Soul in Purgatory
Gloe, Bridget
Gloe, John
McBerry, SJ, John J.
Orenes, Sandra
Orenes, Rene
Reyes, Lencia
Lowe, Rachel (Family)
Mahoney, Amy (Family)
Wibber, Catherine D.
Maus, Deanna
Maus, Jr., Willie S.
Burney, Thomas
Perez, Romulo R.
Bundal, Ruby
Julian, Louise (Knight #860)
Meredith, Sharon
Lagarde, Jr, Armand
Applewhite, Muriel B.
TBPA
Mizrahi, Charles
Mizrahi, Wendy
Rausch, Joseph A.
Bahn, Bernadette
Bahn, Stefan
McCall Family
Kruk Family
Giannini, Nick
Schwarz, John
Giannini, Nancy
Schwarz, Jan
Chambadal, Randy
Chambadal, Sharon
Jaworski, John
Ryan, Pat
Blanco, Sr., Leonard A.
Neronowicz, Stanley J.
Lucy, Betty C.
Lucky, Judith
Ruggieri, Mark T.
Hitchens, Sr., Charles C.
Hunt, Nancy C.

Special Remembrances

The perpetual enrollment of a living or deceased loved one in the Josephites Society is a lasting commemoration. The person enrolled enjoys special remembrances in Masses for benefactors, and by all Josephites. Special Masses are said on every First Friday. November of Masses are said in honor of St. Joseph and the Little Flower, for the Poor Souls and at Christmas. The offering ($10 for each person enrolled) is used for the education of future Josephite priests, for parishes and schools, and for corporal and spiritual works of mercy undertaken by the Josephite Society.

To enroll someone you love, use the form below or contact:
1200 Vanum St N E. Washington, DC 20017
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Perpetual Enrollment Form

( Please print all information )

Use the pre-addressed envelope in this magazine.

Name: (1) Requested by:

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☐ Individual Deceased $10
☐ Family $50

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☐ Individual Living $10
☐ Individual Deceased $10
☐ Family $50

Your Name: Address:

city/State/Zip:

Certificates are sent only upon request. Please add $1.50 for each certificate you request to help cover handling and postage expenses. Additional requests may be submitted on a separate sheet of paper. Also you can:

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Enclosed is $............ [Your gift supports the Josephite ministries]
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