



NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS

A SUMMARY REPORT FROM THE CONGRESS XIII DAY OF REFLECTION

Arch/Diocese: **Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, New York**

Date of Day of Reflection: **October 29, 2022**

Number of Participants: **31**

Convener: **Bernard Grizard, Diocesan Director of Pastoral Services, bernard.grizard@dor.org**

“WRITE THE VISION: A PROPHETIC CALL TO THRIVE”

1) *SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR: What spiritual wisdom or stirrings were expressed during the Day of Reflection?*

Throughout the Day of Reflection, the participants felt spiritually inspired and guided by the WORD in the scripture passage of Habakkuk (2:2-4) and shared the following wisdom:

- We must have patience and trust in God's vision for our Black Catholic community and throughout the nation for it will not disappoint. God's vision will come to fruition in the right time. His time is not our time. A delay is not a denial because we are assured it will come. The vision needs to be written so that eyes can be opened and hearts changed. This will move others to join in the vision, to evangelize and to enter into the journey toward the mission of sharing the Good News. Most important is that Jesus needs to be in the center.
- To move forward, we must unite in solidarity so together we can bear witness, pray without ceasing, accompany one another, and grow in faith and courage as a Catholic community of believers. This will lead us to stand up as one and be a strong voice that acts towards the eradication of racism, injustices, abuses, situations that negatively affect the Black community and the Church as a whole. We need to use LOVE as the foundation.
- As we unite as one Catholic community, we must remember our young people. We need to engage them to join in the journey and take ownership of it. They have many God-given gifts to offer and new ways of communicating that speak to their peers. We must serve as role models in faith, advocacy, promoters of justice, prayer, missionary service, evangelizers, and courageous disciples of Jesus. Our young people need encouragement and accompaniment as they grow in faith and courage to go out and share it with others.
- In order to evangelize effectively and have a prophetic voice, we need to have a seat at the table. The presence of Black Catholics at all levels of our local Church can ensure that we are not forgotten, and we are included. At this table, the difficult conversations need to be had in truth, love, understanding, humility, and solidarity. This brings us toward uniting as children of God; united in Him and for Him while at the same time celebrating our different gifts and experiences. We are also reminded to live the Gospel always and not just on Sundays.
- We must be visionaries and missionaries not reactionary and unprophetic. Prophets and disciples share the vision and live God's commandments for love of our brothers and sisters, who are all children of God. Let us not just ask for change but be its protagonists.

2) *NAME IT AND CLAIM IT: As a result of those spiritual stirrings, we were led to identify these action items as pastoral concerns to be on mission as our "Prophetic Call to Thrive."*

- ❖ Be role models for our young people while giving them a space to act and to use their God-given gifts. Encourage them to grow in their faith and equip them with the tools needed to be disciples, evangelizers, and missionaries. While we give them space to grow and act, we need to accompany them, so they know we support and empower them.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for young people to engage in faith-filled experiences that will lead them to strengthen their relationship with God and a stronger moral compass. This will lead them to make better choices, serve as role models to their peers, and evangelizers to all. Encourage them to follow their Sacramental call.
- ❖ Ensure that diocesan communication channels fully include the Black Catholic community's contributions to diocesan life that encourage evangelization and understanding.
- ❖ Create opportunities for prayer, spiritual nourishment, joyful worship, and liturgies that inspire a strengthening of faith and solidarity.
- ❖ Create opportunities for awareness and dialogue about the negative effects and realities of racism and social injustice, and what the Church can do together to help eradicate it. Have these open and honest conversations focusing on finding solutions as one Church.
- ❖ Ensure that Black Catholics are engaged at all levels in the Church leadership, especially young Black Catholics. It is important to be present by having a place at the table.
- ❖ Look to the lives of the people on the road to sainthood as role models and examples of faith, courage, perseverance, and how to live the Gospel at all times. They gave witness through kindness, service, suffering, sacrifice, and most of all love for everyone.
- ❖ Go out and share God's love in service to help people in need, through sharing the Word and faith to those who are lost and need to find their way back. Also, being solace to those who are hurt and need comfort and healing. We must put action to love and not just words.