



THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESSES

FROM 1889 TO TODAY



NBCC FOUNDER: DANIEL RUDD

INTRODUCTION

History tells us that Black Catholics were the first to hold a National Lay Catholic Congress in the United States.

The Congress offered opportunities for Black Catholics to speak for themselves on the issues of evangelization, spirituality, education, and the plight of Black Americans.



The first national gathering of laypeople in America was the Black Catholic Congress, held January 1-4, 1889, at St. Augustine Church in Washington, D.C.

Attended by over 200 African-American delegates, the Congress sought *“to try and devise ways and means of bettering our condition both religiously and socially.”*

SIGNIFICANT LEADERS



- Daniel Rudd (1854-1933), founder of the National Black Catholic Congress, editor and owner of ***The American Catholic Tribune***, a newspaper printed for and by Black Catholics in the 19th Century

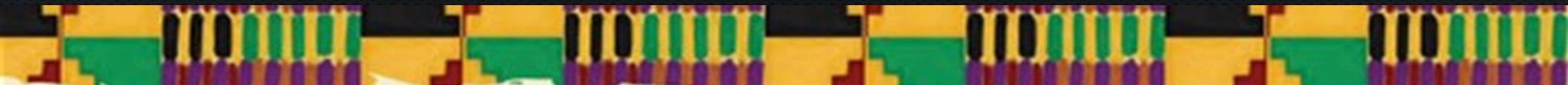


- Rev. Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), first recognized black priest in America, celebrated Mass at first Congress



THERE WERE FIVE BLACK CONGRESSES IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

1 ST CONGRESS	2 ND CONGRESS	3 RD CONGRESS	4 TH CONGRESS	5 TH CONGRESS
<i>Washington, DC Jan 1-4, 1889</i>	<i>Cincinnati, OH Jul 8-10, 1890</i>	<i>Philadelphia, PA Jan 5-7, 1892</i>	<i>Chicago, IL Sep 4-8, 1893</i>	<i>Baltimore, MD Oct 8-10, 1894</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called by Daniel Rudd • Recognized women's role in evangelization • Fr. Augustus Tolton celebrated High Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called to establish an Industrial School • Demanded abolition of slave trade in Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed committee to write constitution of permanent organization • Favored education of the races • Supported the Brussels Treaty against slave trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed discrimination in Catholic schools • Created St. Peter Claver's Catholic Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Rise up and stamp out the prejudice which is today destroying the life's blood of the country" – Dr. William Lofton



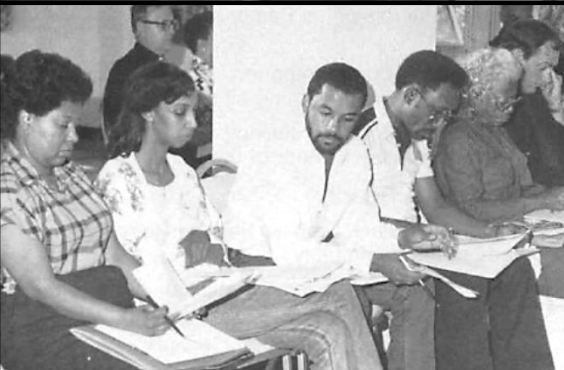
OFFICIAL SYMBOL OF THE NBCC: THE ACACIA TREE



Native to Africa, it is mentioned in the Bible in the book of Exodus and in the Book of Isaiah. The wood of the tree was used to build the Ark of the Covenant. It is mentioned in Isaiah as a sign of the Messianic restoration in Israel.

The Acacia tree has deep roots, and survives through drought, dryness and famine. It is a strong tree which provides shelter for wild animals from the soaring heat of the sun. It also provides food and nourishment.

Since biblical times, the Acacia tree has been a symbol of stability and resilience. The tree is still found in many areas of Africa and has been a symbol of that land.



BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS VI - 1987

May 21-24, 1987
Washington, DC
1,800 participants



*Then I heard the voice
of the Lord saying
Whom shall I send?
Who will go for us?
Here I am:
I said, send me!*

Isaiah 6:8

“In this Congress we must sense that we are being sent as prophetic voices, speaking on behalf of the Lord to heal, to mend, to comfort, to build, to restore, to create a New Kingdom of justice, love and peace. Our purpose is the development of a National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan so that our dreams may be translated into action.”

– Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ

OBJECTIVES OF BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS VI

Theme: *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:
‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’
‘Here I am’, I said, ‘Send me.’” – Is. 6:8*



*Then I heard the voice
of the Lord saying
Whom shall I send?
Who will go for us?
Here I am:
I said, send me!*

Isaiah 6:8

- To bring together black and white Catholic leaders and develop practical methods of evangelization within the context of social and economic conditions of Black Americans
- To witness and affirm the Catholic faith among Black Catholics
- To provide mutual support and cooperation among the leadership of Black Catholics at large
- To devise proper strategies for evangelization
- To develop a Black Catholic agenda for evangelization for the remainder of the century

Rochester Delegates

Linda Rosier
Donald Toyer
Freida McCray
Jean Pryor
Eli Danzy
Denise Lourette
Margaret Williams
Betty Anderson

BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS VII

Theme: *"The African American Family"*

- Pastoral Plan Areas
 - The African American Family
 - Sacrament of Marriage
 - Laity & Family Life
 - Children & Youth
 - Catholic Schools
 - Diocesan Structures
 - Pastoral Ministries
 - Religious Education/Catechesis
 - African American Catholic Ministries
 - African Catholics & Public Policy
 - Evangelization & Family Life



Pastoral Statements: Recommendations

THE NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS
1992 CONGRESS VII

**July 9-12, 1992
New Orleans, LA
2,500 participants**



BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS VIII

Theme: *“What We Have Seen and Heard We Proclaim and Celebrate”*

- Challenged people to bear the responsibility of sharing their faith with others
- Nearly 5,000 people attended the dedication Mass for Our Lady of Africa Chapel at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
- The last Congress to be convened in the 20th Century



August 28-31, 1997

Baltimore, MD

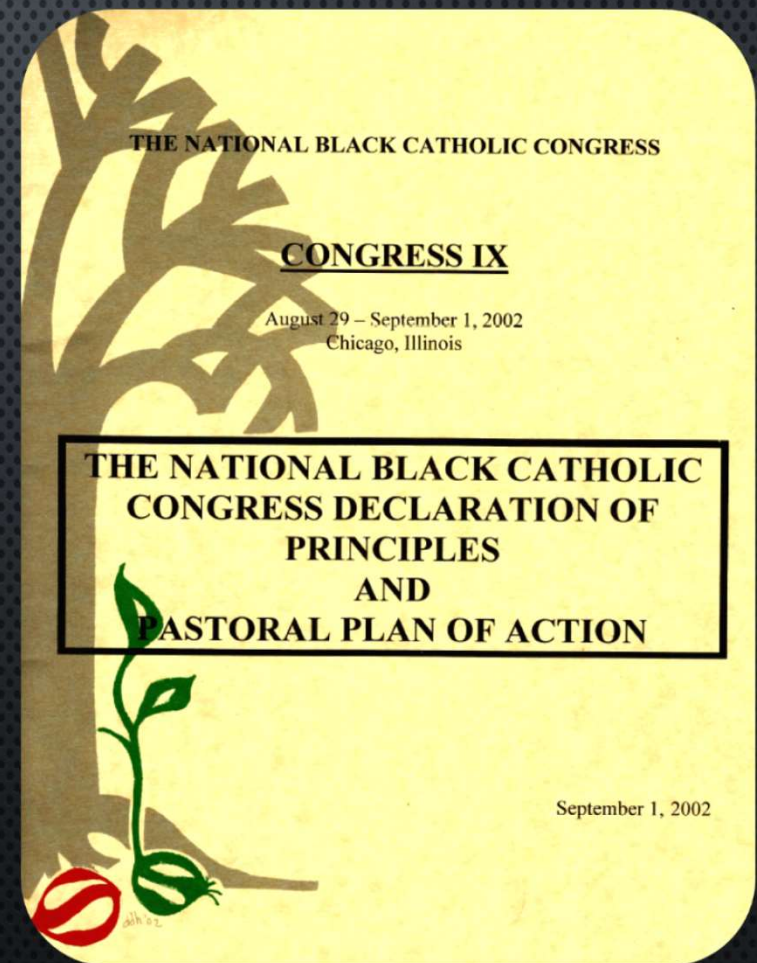
3,500 participants

BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS IX

Theme: “*Black Catholic Leadership in the 21st Century: Solidarity in Action*”

- Liturgies highlighted the African American leadership in the Church
- Identified 8 principles
 - Spirituality
 - Parish Life
 - Youth & Young Adults
 - Catholic Education
 - Social Justice
 - Racism
 - Africa And HIV/AIDS

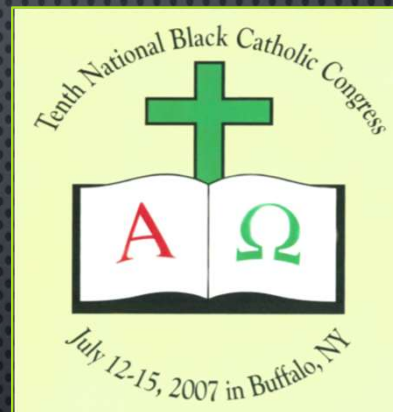
Aug 29 - Sep 1, 2002
Chicago, IL
3,000 participants



BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS X

Theme: *“Christ with Us: Celebrating the Gifts of the Sacraments”*

- Reflected on the 8 principles from Congress IX through the lens of the 7 sacraments
- Challenges to evangelization:
 - Declining # of Black Catholic parishes
 - Promoting vocations
 - Sustaining Catholic education
 - Inclusion in pastoral planning
 - Integrating African immigrants into Black Catholic movement



July 12-15, 2007

Buffalo, NY

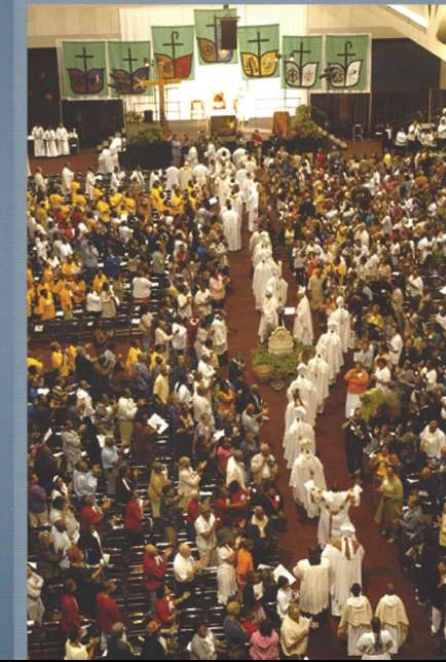
+100 youth &

2,000 adults



BUFFALO, NY
JULY 12-15, 2007

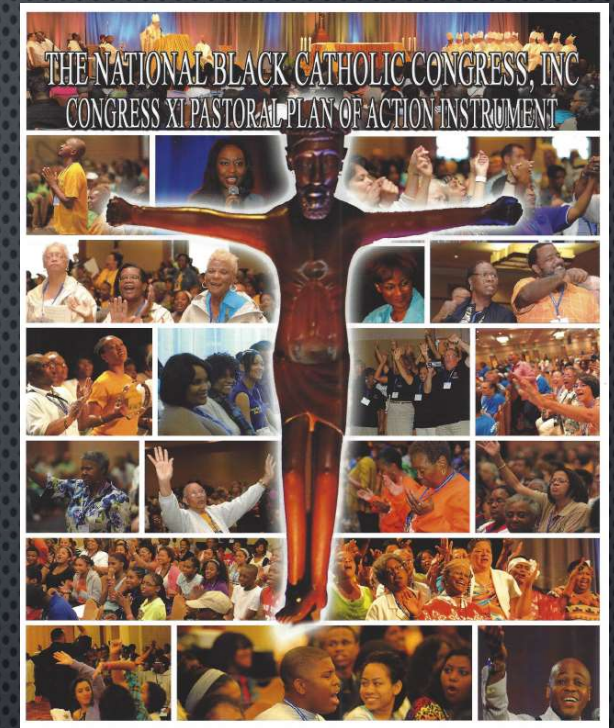
CONGRESS X
PLAN OF ACTION



BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS XI

Theme: *"Faith Engaged: Empower. Equip. Evangelize."*

- Celebrated 25 years of "What We Have Seen and Heard"
- Reflection was based on the findings from the 2011 National Black Catholic Survey conducted by the University of Notre Dame
- Identified 10 themes for the Congress XI Pastoral Plan
- Youth participants developed their own pastoral plan of action



July 19-21, 2012
Indianapolis, IN
+250 youth &
2,500 adults

BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS XII

Theme: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: Act justly, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God."*

- Pastoral Plan Areas
 - Spirituality & the Saints
 - Leadership in the Church
 - Addressing Social Justice Issues
 - Catechesis & Evangelization
 - Support Catholic Schools
 - Vocations in all forms
 - Youth Ministry



July 6-9, 2017
Orlando, FL
2,000+ participants

WRITE THE VISION:
*A Prophetic Call
to Thrive*



BLACK CATHOLIC CONGRESS XIII

JULY 20-23, 2023

NATIONAL HARBOR, MARYLAND

TO REGISTER: [HTTPS://WWW.NBCCGATHERING2023.ORG/](https://www.nbccgathering2023.org/)