National Association of Black Catholic Administrators

The National Association of Black Catholic Administrators was formally established in 1976 to promote African American involvement and leadership within the Catholic Church. Fr. Jerome Robinson and Garland Jaggers were believed to have started the conversation of black catholic administrators convening for mutual support and sharing of ideas and programs. (Wilson, 2006) The first meeting included five directors of black catholic ministries in Rochester, NY and the agenda included program implementation and challenges in their respective ministries. Over the years the organization grew as did the establishment of diocesan offices of black Catholic ministry.

Today, the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators is comprised of an Episcopal Moderator, directors of diocesan black catholic ministries, educators, religious and affiliates such as National Black Catholic Congress, Secretariat for Cultural Diversity, National Black Catholics Sisters, National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, and the Institute of Black Catholics Studies. NABCA commits to serving the needs of black Catholics in collaboration with other Catholic organizations and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. NABCA is a vibrant national organization that recognizes the importance of authentic representation at the local and national level.

In 2016 the organization went through a vigorous strategic planning process that was facilitated by Dr. Veronica Morgan-Lee. The focus of the strategic plan was to ensure NABCA remains relevant to its purpose. The membership assigned a committee that was chaired by Fr. Reggie Norman, Diocese of Bridgeport, who worked tirelessly to develop a plan for review by the membership. With the efforts of the committee and the full membership NABCA effectively created a plan for the future. The members of this important organization voice their concerns and address the needs, issues and concerns facing the African American communities.

NABCA gathers annually that includes a business meeting, in-service professional training and on occasion charitable work in the diocese where the meeting is held. The meeting includes discussion on our local structure and the state of Black Catholics in the United States. We also meet in between annual meetings to support each other, share best practices, address issues of concern, and plan events that supports the spiritual growth of the black catholic community. Our members share their time and talents with the Church in various ministerial roles; presenters, preachers, educators, musicians, liturgists, and evangelists.

As we continue to serve as a prophetic voice for the Catholic Church we are encouraged and inspired by the members of NABCA who dedicate their time and effort to the success of this organization. We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, we are inspired by those who are still with us and continue to be involved, and we are hopeful for those who will come after us. We are aware of the challenges of closing black Catholic offices, schools and parishes. In response, we communicate with dioceses that do not have black catholic ministries to provide and share resources to sustain the ministry.
Our next annual meeting will be held in Houston, TX, September 18-21, 2019. The current executive board members are: Pamela Harris, President, Diocese of Columbus, Will Jemison, Vice-President, Diocese of Jackson, James Watts, Treasurer, Diocese of Birmingham, and Sandra Coles-Bell, Secretary, Archdiocese of Washington. Episcopal Moderator, Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Chicago.

Works Cited