



**The Archdiocese of Denver**  
**Black Catholics in the Rockies**  
**Joyful Word**

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*April 2005*

**SACRED HEART JESUIT RETREAT  
HOUSE IN SEDALIA, COLORADO  
PRESENTS:**

**“DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS  
BE TROUBLED”**

**A Retreat for African-Americans on Prayer  
and  
Trust in God**

**April 29—May 1, 2005**

**Presented by Most Rev. George V. Murry, S.J.  
Bishop of the Diocese of St. Thomas  
in the Virgin Islands**

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## AM I ALIVE IN CHRIST?

Since Advent we have been on a journey with Christ. Now that we have reached the celebration of Easter we might think that our journey is complete. The good news of Easter is that we have risen with Christ. What more can be needed?

The fact is, we will never be alive in Christ unless we are filled with His Holy Spirit. Just as the Apostles were timid and fearful after the Ascension, our Christianity is weak if we have not opened ourselves to the action of the Spirit in our lives. Just as we renewed our Baptismal vows at Easter, we must prepare to renew our Confirmation commitment at Pentecost. The Church declares that Confirmation is one of the seven Sacraments, and it is meant to fortify us in living our faith.

One of the realities that we have become aware of in trying to live a vital spiritual life is the centrality of love. We know that love of God and our neighbor will bring us to fulfillment of the Christian life. But St. Paul tells us that “the love of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5) In other words, God gives His love to us through the Holy Spirit. We will not grow in love without the Holy Spirit.

St. John the Baptist said: “I have baptize you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8) In John’s Gospel, The Baptist is quoted as saying: “On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (John 1:33) At the Last Supper, Jesus said: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth...(John 14:15) When He was about to ascend to the Father, Jesus told his Disciples: “Wait for the ‘promise of the Father’ about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4) And: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.” (Acts1:8)

## AM I ALIVE IN CHRIST?—(continued)

When we reflect on these texts and many others in the Gospels, the Letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, we begin to ask ourselves how much our lives are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, we cannot relax when Easter is over. We are like newborn babes who need to grow up in Christ and walk firmly in His service. Like Easter, Pentecost is celebrated every year so that we can see where we are in this year of our lives. How far have we come in being fully alive in the Spirit? As St. Paul says: “Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.” (Romans 8:9) And again: “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.” (Romans 8:14)

Pentecost will be celebrated on May 15 this year. Will we be ready to renew the grace of our Confirmation? One way to prepare ourselves will be by participating in the Black Catholic retreat on the weekend of April 29 to May 1. Bishop George V. Murry, S.J. will come to us from his diocese in the Virgin Islands to help us make this the most important Pentecost in our lives.

If we cannot share in this retreat, we can work on our own, or with the help of the Scriptures and a good spiritual book, to see what we can do to be ready for Pentecost and the rest of our Christian life.

# TEAM AFRICA GOES TO GULU, UGANDA

## PART III

### Meet the Acholi children of Uganda

**By Sister Marion Weinzapfel, C.S.J.**

*In June, four laypeople and a religious sister from the Denver Archdiocese made a mission trip to Uganda. The trip aimed to build solidarity with Africa, as called for by the 2002 National Black Catholic Congress IX. Making the trip were Marcellina Otii, Albert Otii, Deborah Price, Margaret Wright and Sister Marion Weinzapfel, C.S.J. This is the third column in this series.*

**While the focus of the trip was the catechists, the children stole our hearts. Sounds of daybreak in Gulu included the cathedral bell ringing, birds chirping and children talking to one another as they passed by the retreat house where we were staying. It was 6 a.m. Out the door 20 minutes later, we met the last of them on their way home. These children, part of the thousands of "night commuters" of north Uganda, walk up to five miles from their villages each night to sleep in the relative safety of the towns. Most carry a mat or some bedding; but some have nothing. (The LRA, Lord's Resistance Army, has been spreading terror and abducting especially children for fighters and sex slaves for 18 years. Some 1.6 million Acholi people from the north have been herded into displacement camps because of these rebels.)**

**In our visits to primary schools, the children charmed us by their welcome songs, marches and dances. Their incredible resilience evident in the day covered over by the fear and difficulty of the night. At the Gulu mission school we noticed they weren't dressed in the bright pink, lime green or other colors we saw traveling to the north—rather in soft grays and blues—all the better to hide.**

## **TEAM AFRICA GOES TO GULU, UGANDA**

**Sister Marion Weinzapfel, C.S.J.—(continued)**

On our final evening we went to Holy Rosary School where we engaged the children in a peace activity. In answer to the statement, "Peace for me would be ... "Mwaka David and Odong Brian said, "No war in the world, country or village." Responses to the statement: "In the name of Jesus Christ I will do this courage act today" were "*kica*" ("mercy") and "I would remind the rebel to come back home." Ocen Francis and Okello James said, "I would go to school."

At dinner, I noticed a little straw-haired baby bundled on the back of a young girl. We had seen these malnourished children in the nutrition clinics at the hospitals. Gulu Hospital nursing director Philomena Wilobo told us that in a country with land rich enough to yield two crops a year, malnutrition was a direct result of the rebel activity that kept people from their fields.

Recent news tells us that some LRA fighters are returning to their towns and villages where they are being received with amnesty. "Child" mothers are bringing their own malnourished children. Their only education in the years they have been gone has been in violence and survival.

While there have been recent efforts on the part of the government to allow safe passage to those seeking amnesty, random violence continues. The children still walk to the towns to sleep.

A late November e-mail from Father Joseph Okumu of the St. Joseph Catechist Center states: "The good news we receive about the military ceasefire has brought back life into the people and there is much hope that many people will be able to get back to their homes to prepare to cultivate the land peacefully in January, latest February. We pray that talks about land mines being in all the places people abandoned are not true."

## **TEAM AFRICA GOES TO GULU, UGANDA**

**By Sister Marion Weinzapfel, C.S.J. (continued)**

**In addition to prayer, Team Africa invites you to donate school fees (\$25 per term; three terms a year in one Catholic school) for orphaned children. Call for details.**

**Team Africa is also available to give a presentation. Call Marcellina Otii at 303-321-0274, or Sister Weinzapfel at 303-321-3247.**

## **PART OF A GLOBAL CATHOLICITY**

African American Catholics as a community are a bridge connecting them to all Catholic communities of the African continent and the African Diaspora. In the last quarter century, African American Catholics have reached out to the black communities of Haiti, Brazil, Colombia and other Afro-Latin communities in South America and the Caribbean. The Catholic Church of Africa has planted itself in the heart of American cities, where African priests and sisters—Ethiopians, Nigerians, Kenyans, and many more—have enriched the black Catholic community in the United States.

From: *IN ALL THINGS*, a Jesuit Journal of the Social Apostolate, Winter 2004, p. 3

## ARCHBISHOP GREGORY SPEAKS

...If at times, Black Catholics have been an unnoticed group within Catholicism, we have nonetheless grown steadily and continue to remain faithful and valuable to the Church. Despite the overwhelming majority of Protestants within the Black community, and now a fast growing number of Black Muslims, Black Catholics have been a solid witness to the essential “catholicity” of the Church in a society still divided by racial differences.

Are we preparing ourselves for leadership as the number of priests and religious who work with us continue to dwindle? Do we encourage our youngsters to aspire to service as priests, deacons, and religious? Programs that deserve our support and participation to help vitalize our parishes and prepare leadership include the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans, the Thea Bowman Institute in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky and Naimah Ministry, which produces the ‘Keep on Teaching Resource Manual from the Archdiocese of Baltimore’.

What’s needed, particularly now, is broad-based leadership with a common vision. Without a shared vision our parishes and schools will be poorly managed; we will lose membership, especially youth and young adults, and we will be ignorant of many black Catholic community needs.

From: “Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics” by Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta, in a speech at the University of Notre Dame, March 2004.

## DEACON AND WIFE RECEIVE SPECIAL AWARD

At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, on February 6, 2005, Deacon Clarence G. McDavid and his wife, Wanda, were awarded the titles of Knight and Dame of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. The Order of St. Gregory the Great is given at the request of the local Bishop who wishes to honor one of the faithful of his diocese.

This is a fitting award for Deacon Clarence since it is named for a man who at a young age became one of the seven deacons of the Church of Rome in the middle of the sixth century. Gregory became pope in 590 and his name is given to the "Gregorian Chant" which has had such a major influence on liturgical music in the Church since his time.

The class of Knights is bestowed as a special mark of favor of the Holy See for persons who diligently serve the Church on the local level. Since his ordination in 1987, Deacon McDavid has served at Cure d' Ars Church. He has also serves as a member of the Diaconate Personnel Board. He spent two years as administrator at Cure d' Ars Church while holding down a fulltime job in Human Resources. His wife, Wanda has been active in Marriage Preparation, Religious Education and Liturgy Apostolate. As the Archbishop indicated at the award ceremony, Wanda McDavid's "love, sacrifices and support have made Deacon McDavid's diaconal ministry possible."

The Archbishop added that "Deacon McDavid has played a vital role in witnessing the Catholic faith among Colorado's black community. He is highly regarded by his brother deacons and the presbyterate he assists. He models the best qualities of a Christian man."

Speaking for himself and his wife, Deacon McDavid said, "Papal recognition is not something to be taken lightly. It is a call to live in the correct way—to pay attention to what you are doing a little bit more than you were doing before."

Knights of St. Gregory should wear their uniforms at the most solemn liturgical ceremonies. They should also wear them when serving the ordinary or the apostolic pronuncio or nuncio as an honor guard.

## **NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIV/AIDS TASK FORCE**

We come again this year asking for your help in lifting our sisters and brothers who are black living with the HIV virus and AIDS. *We have to do something.* The statistics show that now more than ever the epidemic is taking a toll on Black Communities.

### *Some Facts*

**African Americans make up more than half of new HIV cases reported on the United States annually but represent only 13% of the general U.S. population.**

**African Americans currently account for 54% of new HIV cases reported each year in the United States, and African American women accounted for 67% of all AIDS diagnoses among women in 2001.**

**African American teenagers account for approximately 66% of new AIDS cases among teens, although they make up only 15% of the U.S. teen population.**

**HIV/AIDS is the number one cause of death for African American women aged 25-34 years.**

**About 42% of all AIDS diagnoses in the United States are among African Americans.**

### *SCRIPTURE READING*

**Matthew 11:28**

*“Come to me all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you.*

**We need to provide the leadership to gather people to give thanks and praise, to hear God’s Word spoken to us in Sacred Scripture, to share our testimonies, to re-new our commitment to the HIV/AIDS Ministry in our local communities, and to offer prayers for those who are living with HIV, have died of AIDS and are now at peace with God.**

**Please wear the AIDS Ribbon as a sign of our own awareness and active participation.**

*Resources can be found on <http://www.usccb.org/saac/hivawareness.htm>.*

## LONG CATHOLIC HISTORY IN SUDAN

*There is a need to welcome Catholics from African nations and see that they are integrated into the life of the American Black Catholics who have established themselves here over the centuries. One country whose long Catholic history has become known in recent years is the African nation of Sudan. The following data is taken from Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed, "A History of the Church in Africa," Cambridge University Press, 2000.*

The African country of Sudan has been in the news for quite some time, because of its terrible inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts over the past forty years. All these events happen in a country with a glorious past in its more than 4000 years of recorded history. For centuries, its Christian history from 450—1450 had been almost hidden.

But when in 1959 the UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) sent fifty-nine archeological expeditions to the region, just before a new dam was going to swamp part of the country, they discovered an extraordinary Christian culture, in ruins, yet sufficiently well preserved to allow a breathtaking impression of the glorious riches of this ancient church.

A fresco was discovered in the cathedral of the old Sudanese Nubian capital Faras. Dated from the 9th century, it was hidden under layers of plaster in an old ruin. It represents "Christ Emmanuel," and on its left side is a list of 27 local bishops from 902 till 1200.

From 641, the Arab rule from Egypt began to influence the Nubians, cutting it off from the rest of the Mediterranean Christian world. An Arab attack on the country followed around that time, but ten years later the two parties could agree on a remarkable peace treaty which virtually guaranteed Nubian independence and which—with some modifications—was to last for 700 years.

The Arabs pledged themselves not to wage war while the Nubians even promised to look after the mosque built in their Christian capital: ***"You are not to prevent anyone from worshipping in it...and you are to sweep it, keep it lighted and honor it"***.

The treaty concludes in terms which could be a guide to modern efforts to make peace and to stimulate a dialogue between the two religions: ***"Incumbent on you toward us is the utmost observance of the good faith of the Messiah and that of the Disciples and of any of the people of your religion and community, whom you reverence. God be the witness of that between us"***.

(Data taken from Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed  
*A History for the Church in Africa*  
Cambridge University Press, 2000)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**June 23—26, 2005**

**Archbishop James Patterson Lyke Conference:  
“The Whole World in God’s Hands”  
Adam’s Mark Hotel—St. Louis, MO.  
Fourth & Chestnut, St. Louis, MO 63102  
314/241-7400**

**Lyke Conference:**

**A Roman Catholic liturgical conference whose focus is to enhance worship through enculturation and education in an environment that is richly African American and authentically Catholic.**

**Lyke Conference Inquiries:**

**Fernand Cheri, 404 N. 14th Street, East St. Louis, IL 62201-1931**

**Phone—618/482-5570**

**E-mail: FerdOFM@aol.com**

**August 16-21, 2005**

**World Youth Day**

**For more information visit USCCB Department and Associated Offices and click:**

**World Youth Day or contact the Office of Family Laity, Youth and Young Adults in Washington, DC.**

**<http://www.usccb.org/depts.htm>**

**July 12-15, 2007**

**National Black Catholic Congress: Congress X**

**Buffalo Convention Center**

**Buffalo, NY**

**Hosted by: The Office of Black Catholic Ministry**

**Buffalo, New York**

**Institute of Black Catholic Studies—Xavier University**  
**1 Drexel Drive**  
**New Orleans, LA 70125**  
**Phone: 504-520-7691 Fax: 504-520-7921**

**PROGRAMS:**

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**AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN BISHOPS PROPOSE EXCHANGE**

*Excerpt from The Tablet 20 November 2004*

**In the first large-scale conference between African and European prelates, more than 100 bishops met outside Rome last week and discussed how Africa's vocations boom might come to the rescue of a Church in Western Europe increasingly desperate for priests.**

**The plans formed a central plank in the drafting of Intercontinental clergy exchange program, involving priests, religious, and seminarians.**

**Under the scheme, Europe would be provided with priests for a smaller number of Western clergy with rich academic and pastoral experience, which is sometimes in short supply in Africa.**

**Under the proposals were statistics showing, for example, Nigeria alone has 7,000 seminarians (with 500 to be ordained this year) compared with Scotland's total of barely 30.**

**SUGGESTED READING LIST**

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**“Stamped with the Image of God:  
African Americans as God’s Image in Black”  
By Cyprian Davis, OSB and Jamie Phelps, OP ed  
(Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003)  
Significant documents attest to the integral  
role African Americans have played in the  
history of the Catholic Church in the United States**

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**Governance Structures within the Catholic Church  
Juan Ignacio Arrieta  
Wilson & Lafleur Ltee, 2000  
ISBN: 2-89127-518-7**

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**Wilson:  
African American Christian Worship  
Nashville: Abington Press, 1993  
ISBN: 0-687-00931-6**

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**Rick Chromey  
Youth Ministry in Small Churches: Creative How Tos  
Plus 28 Involving Activities  
Loveland, Colorado, 1990  
ISBN 0-931529-76-X**

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**U.S. Catholic Bishops:  
Renewing the Vision of Youth Ministry  
(Washington, D.C.  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)  
ISBN: 1574550047**

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## **Archdiocese of Denver**

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Editor—Mary L. Leisring

### **Resources & Credits**

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Charles and Mary Leisring  
Sr. Marion Weinzapfel, C.S.J.  
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