



A  
Study Guide  
for

'What We  
Have Seen  
and Heard'

*A Pastoral Letter  
on Evangelization  
From the Black Bishops  
of the United States*

DEDICATED

TO

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- Cover illustration by Sister Angela Williams, O.S.F.

## INTRODUCTION

The Guide is just that: a Guide.

The pages are arranged for easy duplication.

DEVELOP, ADAPT, the Guide as you

pray over,

reflect on,

study,

discuss,

the Pastoral Letter on Evangelization

### WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD.

The Guide attempts to follow the intent of the  
Black Bishops:

*.... We urge you to study and discuss the points laid before you in this, our pastoral letter. We ask that you heed the opportunities that are ours today. Let us not deprive the Church of the rich gifts that God has granted us.*

*For this reason we write to you, brothers and sisters, in the many parishes across our country. We urge the Black people of these parishes to take to heart our words of encouragement to spread the message of Christ to our own and to those of all other ethnic and racial groups. We ask pastors, co-pastors, pastoral assistants, classroom teachers and directors of religious education--indeed all who are staff and board members in the parish and in the diocese--to speak the Good News clearly in the idiom and expression of our people. Let it be the responsibility of every parish council and every parish team to ponder the meaning of Black evangelization and the burden of this pastoral letter in each respective community.*

What We Have Seen and Heard (Conclusion).

It is our hope that this study guide will be of assistance to parish and diocesan personnel as they assist the People of God in unfolding the message of the Pastoral Letter, What We Have Seen and Heard. The document is divided into five sessions. Each session works out of an experiential approach to adult learning, which allows the participants to take a more active role in the unfolding of the content of each session. The structure of the sessions is as follows:

- 1.- Enrichment - sharing of the key components from the document.
- 2.- Integration - unfolding the content
  - a). Reflective - this silent time of individual reflection encourages a more prayerful spirit-filled approach to the discussion.
  - b). Small group sharing - with specific reflection questions to guide them, the adults share their own personal insights.
  - c). One member of the group is selected to share the insights of their group. (Each segment leads toward an action orientation).
  - d). Small group representative shares with the larger group.
- 3.- Spirituality - celebration component
  - a). So often we gather as a community of faith to enter into a learning experience yet we do not express our greatest asset. We are a people of prayer. Above all, the prayer/celebration component must not be overlooked. It would be better to curtail the discussion rather than shorten or rush the time of prayer. It is in and through prayer that we maintain and test-out what we sense, hear and see. We must be people of prayer if we are to be people who share the Good News.
  - b). The suggested prayer is based upon the Liturgy of the Hours, the Prayer of the Church. The re-introduction of this form of prayer to the laity is as much a learning

experience as the enrichment and discussion components.

- (\*) The simplicity of this approach will allow the participants to share, not only their own life experiences, but also to integrate into their daily lives the message of the Pastoral Letter.

## OUTLINE FOR GUIDE

### SESSION I

Encouraged and Empowered is the starting point of our dialogue; for if adults sense that by virtue of their Baptism they are called forth, then they will continue their journey of unfolding their own personal and corporate uniqueness as Black people within this faith community.

- A.- Introduction to the Pastoral (pp. 1-3)
  - 1. Sharing the "Word of Life"
  - 2. The Meaning of Evangelization
  - 3. Grateful Remembrance for our own Evangelization
- B.- Perspective (pp. 17-18)
- C.- Black Initiative (pp. 18-19)
- D.- Authorization and Encouragement (pp. 19-21)

### SESSION II

Strengthened and Nurtured, we are thrust upon our roots....the faith that maintained and sustained our ancestors. As Black people we know within us that "if the Lord had not been on our side" we truly would not have survived. Our faith, our spirituality, is the cornerstone of our encouragement and empowerment.

- A.- Black Culture and Values, Informed by Faith (Part I, p. 4)
- B.- Scripture (Part I, pp. 4-5)
- C.- Our Spirituality and Its Gifts (Part I pp. 8-11)
  - 1. The Contemplative Dimension
  - 2. Holistic
  - 3. Gift of Joy
  - 4. Community

### SESSION III

Called to Serve, we draw upon the reality that we are grounded in the Lord. Strengthened and nurtured by our faith we are encouraged and empowered to live out our Baptismal commitment in and through a particular vocation.

- A.- The Family (Part I, pp. 11-15)
  - 1. The Extended Family
  - 2. The Role of Black Men
  - 3. The Role of Black Women
  - 4. Abortion and Black Values
- B.- Vocations to the Priesthood and to the Religious Life (Part II, pp. 21-24)
- C.- Permanent Deacons (Part II, pp. 24-25)
- D.- The Laity (Part II, pp. 25-27)

### SESSION IV

Responding in Love is the result of our recognition and acceptance of the gift of our own unique vocation. The experience of the Lord's love for us motivates us to share His love with those around us. Thus, we become a people who "act justly and walk humbly" with our God.

- A.- Our Gift of Freedom (Part I, pp. 5-6)
- B.- The Gift of Reconciliation (Part I, pp. 6-8)
- C.- The Social Apostolate (Part II, pp. 33-34)
- D.- Opportunities for Evangelization (Part II, p. 21)
  - 1. Youth (Part II, p. 27)
  - 2. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (Part II, pp. 27-28)
  - 3. Catholic Education (Part II, pp. 28-30).

## SESSION V

Celebrating in Freedom is the response of the believer. Gathering in joy to celebrate the Lord's goodness and mercy is not only the beginning of the Black Catholic's journey, but it is also the sustaining influence along the way. As authentically Black people, who are truly Catholic, we join with the universal Church in giving praise to our God.

A.- Liturgy (Part II, pp. 30-33)

1. Authentically Black
2. Truly Catholic
3. Proper Preparation and Excellence  
in Execution

B.- Ecumenism (Part I, pp. 15-16).

C.- Exhortation (Part II, pp. 34-36).



## SESSION I

### ENCOURAGED AND EMPOWERED

#### 1.- Enrichment Component

The following are key concepts in the document which you may wish to highlight in your presentation.

#### A.- Introduction to the Pastoral

##### 1. Sharing the "Word of Life"

###### a) The call of the mature believer

*Within the history of every Christian community there comes the time when it reaches adulthood. This maturity brings with it the duty, the privilege, and the joy to share with others the rich experience of the "Word of Life."*

###### b) The call of the Bishops

(1) *We the ten Black Bishops of the United States chosen from among you to serve the People of God, are a significant sign among many other signs that the Black Catholic community in the American Church has now come of age. We write to you as brothers that "you may share this life with us."*

(2) *We write to you, Black brothers and sisters, because each one of us is called to a special task. The Holy Spirit now calls us all to the work of evangelization.*

##### 2. The Meaning of Evangelization

a) "Evangelization is both a call and a response."

b) Evangelization means:

(1) Preaching and Witnessing

(2) Conversion and Renewal

(3) Entry into the Community and the Building up of the Community by:

(a) Hearing the Word

(b) Sharing the Word

3. Grateful Remembrance for Our Own Evangelization

a) The role of missionaries who assisted in bringing us to new birth within the Faith.

b) The role of our Black ancestors whose steadfastness and personal conviction assisted in bringing us to new birth within the Faith.

*If we have reached adulthood in the fullness of the age of Christ, it is most of all thanks to our fathers and mothers and all our ancestors who kept alive an unflagging commitment to Christ and to His Church throughout the bitter days of slavery and the troubled times of racial segregation.*

B.- The Perspective

1. Black people have played a significant role in the growth of America.

2. *What is true of our national history is even truer of American Catholic history, recognizing the personal witness of such Black people as:*

a) Jean-Baptiste Point du Sable

b) Pierre Toussaint

c) Elizabeth Lange

d) Henriette Delille

e) Augustus Tolton

3. Black Catholics must now reclaim and respond to their heritage.

a) We have a responsibility to our own people. To them "...we owe this witness of faith as well as the unstinting labor to denounce racism as a sin and to work for justice and inner renewal.

C.- Black Initiative

1. In and through our Baptism we have the responsibility to:
  - a) Proclaim our faith
  - b) Actively participate in the building up of the Church
2. Because of our history and ancestry, Black Catholics have the responsibility for taking the lead in the Church's work within the Black community. ... *The Black presence within the American Catholic Church is a precious witness to the universal character of Catholicism.*

D.- Authorization and Encouragement

1. In order to use their competencies and to further develop their expertise, leaders within the Black Catholic community need encouragement and authorization through an increased:
  - a) Awareness of and fight against racism
  - b) Representation on the decision-making level of the Church
  - c) Support of inner city schools
  - d) Support of Black vocational recruitment
  - e) Awareness of the priority of evangelization within Catholic schools
2. Subtly masked racism within our Church and society continues to be a major impediment to evangelization. *This stain of racism on the American Church continues to be a source of pain and disappointment to all, both Black and white, who love her and desire her to be the Bride of Christ, "without stain or wrinkle."*
3. *Our demand for recognition, our demand for leadership roles in the task of evangelization, is not a call for separation but a pledge of our commitment to the Church and to share in her witnessing to the love of Christ...*

## II.- Reflection Component

1. What are my unique gifts? What do I, as an individual, bring to those with whom I share my life (my family, my friends and neighbors)? What gifts do I bring to this faith community?
2. What gifts do we, as Black people, bring to society? What gifts and contributions do we bring to this particular faith community, which we call Church?
3. What persons and events in the history of Black people make me feel proud and encouraged in the beauty of my Blackness?
4. How can I encourage other Black people in recognizing their gifts? How can I strengthen and support my Black brothers and sisters in using their gifts for building up the Church?
5. How can we, today, be involved in the process of encouraging and empowering other Black people to accept their Baptismal responsibility in sharing the Good News of Jesus, the Christ? Can we name one concrete action that this local (parish) faith community could do which would encourage other Black people to share their gifts within the Church?

## III.- Celebration Component

Leader: As we prepare to enter into this time of celebration, let us pause and reflect upon the words of our Bishops.

Reader: *We write this letter to you, our brothers and sisters, strong in the faith and in the knowledge that what has begun in you will be brought to perfection in the Day of Our Lord Jesus Christ... We ask that you heed the opportunities that are ours today. Let us not deprive the Church of the rich gifts that God has granted us.*

*For this reason, we write to you, brothers and sisters, in the many parishes across our country. We urge the Black people of these parishes to take to heart our words of encouragement to spread the message of Christ to our own and to those of all other ethnic and racial groups. We ask pastors, co-pastors, pastoral assistants, classroom teachers,*

*and directors of religious education and indeed all who are staff and board members in the parish and in the diocese to speak the Good News clearly in the idiom and expression of our people. Let it be the responsibility of every parish council and every parish team to ponder the meaning of Black evangelization and the burden of this pastoral letter in each respective community.*

What We Have Seen and Heard (Conclusion).

- Leader: We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- All: Amen.
- Leader: Grace and peace be to you.
- All: As we gather in the name of the Lord.
- Leader: Our God calls us to be people of faith.
- All: Our God calls us to be people of courage who express the beauty and goodness of our Blackness.
- Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
- All: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- Leader: Those who have sown in tears shall reap rejoicing.
- All: Those who have sown in tears shall reap rejoicing.

Psalm 126

(The People's Prayer for Full Restoration)

- Men: When the Lord brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with rejoicing.
- Women: Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.
- Men: Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the torrents in the southern desert. Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.

Women: Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown. They shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

All: Those who have sown in tears shall reap rejoicing.

#### Psalm-Prayer

Leader: O God of our ancestors, maker of heaven and earth and of all created things, you have freed us from the bondage of sin and you have called us into the rich experience of the Word of Life. Open our hearts so that we might sing your praises and announce your goodness and mercy.

All: Amen. Amen.

Reading: I Peter 2: 4-10

(Pause for a period of reflection)

#### Responsory

Leader: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

All: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Leader: The one rejected by men.

All: Has become the cornerstone.

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Leader: Let us pray in the words Jesus has taught us.

All: Our Father...

Leader: Let us pray.

All: May our Heavenly Father perfect us, His Church, in faith and love, that we might be always and everywhere faithful witnesses to the power of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

## SESSION II

### STRENGTHENED AND NURTURED

#### 1.- Enrichment Component

The following are key components in the document which you may wish to highlight in your presentation.

##### A.- Black Culture and Values, Informed by Faith

1. Catholic means universal.
2. Thus, the richness of our Black experience must be shared with the entire People of God, as well as with the Black community at large.
3. *These are gifts that are part of an African past. For we have heard with Black ears and we have seen with Black eyes and we have understood with an African heart.*

##### B.- Scripture

1. African American Spirituality is deeply rooted in the Sacred Scriptures.
  - a) *In the dark days of slavery, reading was forbidden; but for our ancestors the Bible was never a closed book.*
  - b) *The stories were told and retold in sermons, Spirituals, and shouts.*
2. *For Black people the Bible story is our story; the Bible promise is our hope.*
3. *Scripture is part of our roots; the Bible has sunk deep into our tradition; and the Good News of the gospel has been enmeshed in our past oppression and pain. Still the message was heard and we learned to celebrate...*

##### C.- Our Spirituality and Its Gifts

There are four major characteristics of Black Spirituality: the contemplative, the holistic, the joyful and the communitarian.

## 1. The Contemplative Dimension

- a) Within the Black tradition prayer is central. ....*By this we mean prayer is spontaneous and pervasive in the Black tradition.*
- b) *Black Spirituality senses the awe of God's transcendence and the vital intimacy of His closeness.*
- c) Black people have learned to surrender to God's love, which means that we have let God work His power through us.
- d) This sense of God's power is what calls us to the work of evangelization.

## 2. Holistic

- a) Black Spirituality is not dualistic. It involves the entire person:
  - (1) intellect and emotion
  - (2) spirit and body
  - (3) action and contemplation
  - (4) individual and community
  - (5) sacred and secular
- b) ....*In keeping with our African heritage, we are, not ashamed of our emotions. For us, the religious experience is an experience of the whole human being, both the feelings and the intellect, the heart as well as the head.*
- c) Black Spirituality is in accord with the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Incarnation. Thus, the holistic dimension of our spirituality is reflective of our belief that Jesus, the Christ, is both divine and human.
- d) Through its restoration of that which is human and its reaffirmation of the grandeur of God, the holistic dimension offers a solution to ... *the progressive dehumanization brought about by a technocratic society.*



### 3. Gift of Joy

- a) Joy means celebration; as it is expressed in:
  - (1) movement and song
  - (2) rhythm and feeling
  - (3) color and sensation
- b) *We celebrate the presence and proclamation of the Word.*
- c) *This joy is a result of our conviction that "in the time of trouble, He will lead me..." This joy comes from the teaching and wisdom of mothers and fathers in the Faith...*
- d) *If the message of evangelization is the "Good News" about Jesus, we must react with joy... we are thus enabled to share our Good News."*

### 4. Community

- a) *The sense of community is a major component of Black Spirituality.*
  - (1) *In African culture the "I" takes its meaning from "we."*
  - (2) *....individual identity is to be found within the context of community.*
- b) *The communal dimension of Black Spirituality breaks down the barriers of competition, which are so pervasive in our society today.*
- c) *The communal dimension of Black Spirituality permeates our experience of Liturgy and worship. ....Worship is always a celebration of community.*
- d) *Community means social concern and social justice. Black Spirituality never excludes concern for human suffering and other people's concerns.*

## II.- Reflection Component

1. As I look upon my relationship to the Lord, when do I recall first hearing the Word of the Lord? Who shared it with me? How old was I? Did the person or persons who shared the Word of the Lord do so intentionally, or did it seem to flow from who they were?
2. How have I responded to having heard the Word of the Lord? Has it in some way made me who I am? Has it caused me to feel that I share more deeply in the struggles and joys of my Black brothers and sisters?
3. How have the Scriptures been a source of consolation in my life? How have the Scriptures been a source of challenge in my life? How have I responded to the challenges they call for?
4. How do we, as a faith community, continue to pass on the story, the salvation story? How do we do this in a formal way? How do we do this in an informal way?
5. How can we, today, undertake a direct action which would strengthen and nurture our sisters and brothers, especially our younger brothers and sisters, in our uniquely Scriptural and Sacramental Spirituality? How can this faith community (parish) encourage, maintain, and sustain the faith of our people in such a way that it respects the whole person, heart and head?

## III.- Celebration Component

Leader: We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: Grace and peace be to you.

All: As we gather in the name of the Lord.

Leader: The deeply penetrating Word of the Lord.

All: Has made us a people dedicated to the service of the Gospel.

Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

All: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Psalm 124

(The Lord the Rescuer of His People)

Reader #1: Had not the LORD been with us,

All: Let Israel say,

Reader #2: Had not the LORD been with us-When men rose up against us,

All: then would they have swallowed us alive.

Reader #1: When their fury was inflamed against us,

All: then would the waters have overwhelmed us;

Reader #2: The torrent would have swept over us,

All: over us then would have swept the raging waters.

Reading: Hebrews 4: 12-16

(Pause for a period of reflection)

Leader: As a people, we know that the Lord has been the very source of our lives. However, as individuals we also know that the Lord has been on our side. Those who wish may now share their recollections of a time in their lives when the Lord was clearly there strengthening and supporting them.

(An appropriate hymn or meditation song may be sung to end this time of witnessing).

Leader: As believers, let us call upon the Father in the words of our brother, Jesus.

All: Our Father...

Leader: Let us pray.

All: May our Heavenly Father perfect us, His Church, in faith and love, that we might be always and everywhere faithful witnesses to the power of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

## SESSION III

### CALLED TO SERVE

#### I.- Enrichment Component

The following are key concepts in the document which you may wish to highlight in your presentation.

#### A.- The Family

##### 1. The Extended Family

- a) In the Black community the family has always been understood to be *the extended family*, which includes relatives and close friends.
- b) *In practice, the extended family often goes beyond kinship and marital relationship to include persons who having no family of their own have been accepted into the wider family circle.*
- c) *In its Christian setting, this family sense enhances the role of god-parents and other relatives... for passing on the Faith and strengthening the religious values of the young.*
- d) *Moreover, there is more than one priestly or religious vocation among us that was nurtured by the support and encouragement of some adult in the extended family.*
- e) *Evangelization for Black Catholics is a celebration of the family, a renewal of the family, and a call to welcome new members into the Family of God.*

##### 2. The Role of Black Men

- a) We must look at the role of the Black Man as:
  - (1) Husband
  - (2) Father
  - (3) Co-provider
  - (4) Co-protector

- b) As a result of racism and economic repression, the Black man has too often been:
- (1) *Barred from access of decent employment.*
  - (2) *Stripped of his dignity and manhood.*
  - (3) *Forced into a stereotype that was a caricature of his manhood.*
  - (4) *Depreciated and relegated to the margins of family life and influence.*
  - (5) *Forced into an artificial rivalry between himself and Black women.*

- c) Words of encouragement and re-evaluation of the vocation of fatherhood in the Black community:

- (1) *In our cultural heritage, the father provides the courage and the wisdom to help maintain the family and to insure its growth.*
- (2) *We call upon Black men to become what their fathers were, even when an evil institution sought to destroy their individuality and their initiative, that is models of virtue for their children and partners in love and nurturing with their wives.*
- (3) *Without a father no family life can be truly complete.*
- (4) *Let the Black father find his model in the Fatherhood of God, who by His providence nourishes us, who by His wisdom guides us, and who by His love cherishes us and makes us all one and holy in His family of grace.*

### 3. The Role of Black Women

- a) Black women in society

- (1) *The social inequalities of our day, in a special way, weight most heavily on Black women and other women of racial minorities.*

- (2) Traditionally within society Black women have had to assume responsibilities within the community out of necessity.
- (3) As a result, Black women historically have been not only sources of strength, they have also been examples of courage and resolution. This strength and courage is for us a source of power and a powerful gift that we as a people can share with the larger society.

b) Black Women in Black History

- (1) The role of Black women within the context of Black history, however, has not been a subordinate role to Black men but a complementary role.
- (2) Three women who stand as examples of this are:

- (a) Sojourner Truth
- (b) Harriet Tubman
- (c) Mary McLeod Bethune

c) Black Women in Black Catholic Tradition

- (1) Before there were Black Catholic priests in the United States, there were Black women religious.
- (2) The challenge of evangelization was met by such women as:
  - (a) Elizabeth Lange and the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore, Maryland.
  - (b) Henriette Delille and the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, Louisiana.
  - (c) Mother Theodore Williams and the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary in Savannah, Georgia.
- (3) These Black women religious leaders and the sisters they formed were not only witnesses of Faith they were also a sign

*of that Faith which many Black Catholic families had who, even in the dark days of slavery, gave not only support but even their daughters and sisters in the service of the Gospel.*

- (4) Today, Black women continue to be active in the various ministries of the Church, in:
  - (a) Parishes
  - (b) Diocesan offices
  - (c) Schools
  - (d) The Social Apostolate
- (5) *Black women can and should be considered as collaborators in the work of evangelization.*

#### 4. Abortion and Black Values

- a) *Black cultural tradition has always valued life and the mystery of its transmission and growth.*
- b) *Historically, even children conceived outside of marriage were cherished and given a place in the extended family....The loss of this perspective is a cultural and spiritual impoverishment for us as a people.*
- c) *From our point of view as Catholics and as Black people, we see the efforts made "to provide" low-cost abortions as another form of subjugation.*
- d) *It is equally our duty, however, to show practical concern and honest compassion for the many mothers-to-be who are too often encouraged to seek an abortion by the conventional wisdom of our society today.*
- e) Lastly, it must be stated that if today's society truly valued life, there would be:
  - (1) Day Care Centers
  - (2) Jobs
  - (3) Good Schools

- (4) *and all else that a just society should offer its people.*

B.- Vocations to the Priesthood and to the Religious Life

1. From its earliest roots the Church has had indigenous clergy
2. In later years ....*the way to a fully indigenous clergy and religious was blocked by an attitude that was paternalistic and racist.*
3. The practice of encouraging indigenous clergy was resumed through the efforts of:
  - a) Pope Benedict XV's encyclical, Maximum Illud, in 1919
  - b) the Second Vatican Council
4. It is the responsibility of the entire Black Catholic community to encourage men and women to enter the priesthood and religious life, especially:
  - a) Those who work with youth
  - b) the Black family, by:
    - (1) *placing before young people the value of service to Christ in ministry to others...*
    - (2) *passing on the truths of the Catholic religion and the spiritual values of our African heritage.*
  - c) Teachers and educators, by:
    - (1) *being attentive to the signs of interest in priesthood and religious life;*
    - (2) *encouraging those mature men and women who, touched by grace, follow a religious vocation as a second career.*
  - d) Black Sisters, Brothers and Priests, by:
    - (1) *being role models*
    - (2) *fostering and nurturing vocations*



- (3) *being a positive influence even if in their own lives of service they have had to struggle because of racial discrimination.... let them show forth the joy that comes to those who leave all to follow the Crucified King.*
5. It is the responsibility of the entire American Church to encourage Black men and women to enter the priesthood and religious life, by:
    - a) making the recruitment of minority youth for the priesthood and religious life the highest priority;
    - b) diocesan vocation directors' and formation personnel of religious congregations' collaboration with leaders in the Black community for purposes of planning for recruitment in the Black community.
      - (1) *Care should be taken to know and understand the attitudes and concerns of Black young people in order to show how ministry would be relevant to their lives and experience.*
      - (2) *Above all it is necessary for those engaged in recruitment programs...to go where Black young people are found.*
    - c) *...the use of vocational materials that portray Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and other racial or ethnic groups.*
    - d) Encouraging Black men and women already in houses of formation and seminaries *...to maintain contact with the Black community and to renew contact with Black culture, Black history, and Black theological studies.*

C.- Permanent Deacons

1. The combination of their family lives and secular jobs often provide permanent deacons *... access to opportunities for evangelization in places where a priest or religious might find entry difficult.*
2. *Incorporated into the hierarchy through the Sacrament of Orders and yet part of the community in whose life he shares, the Black deacon has a role of mediator which is truly unique.*

3. *The Black deacon especially must synthetize in his life and in his understanding not only faith but also his cultural and racial heritage.*
4. The reflections concerning priestly and religious formation also apply to the permanent diaconate.

#### D.- The Laity

1. The work of evangelization is also the responsibility of the laity.
2. *Within the history of the Black Catholic community, at a time when the Black clergy were few, many lay persons provided leadership, such as:*
  - a) Daniel Rudd of the Black Lay Catholic Congress in the 19th century
  - b) Thomas Wyatt Turner of the Federated Colored Catholics in the period prior to the Second World War
3. It is the responsibility of the clergy to:
  - a) *facilitate, inspire and coordinate the work of the whole Christian community;*
  - b) *call upon lay women and lay men to join in the work of spreading the Good News and authorizing and encouraging them to do so;*
  - c) *involve laity in the formulation and execution of programs.*
4. It is the responsibility of the laity to:
  - a) *become more aware of their responsibilities and their opportunities for furthering the mission of the Church;*
  - b) *not passively wait for directions or even an invitation from the clergy;*
  - c) *seize the opportunity for initiative and creativity in place of complaining about what can not be done.*

#### II.- Reflection Component

Note: The acceptance of a particular vocation is often taken for granted within our community. We affirm

the need for more Black priests, sisters and brothers, but we would generally prefer that the Lord call someone else's child. We also note within the Black community, as well as the broader community, a real need to remind lay-adults that marriage is also a particular call, vocation, from the Lord. For this reason the method used for this section is somewhat different from the previous two sessions.

**Facilitator:** Ask the adults to move into groups, preferably not more than five adults in each group. The size of the group may warrant some adjustments, e.g., more than one group may be given the same task, or if there are only a small number of adults present for the session you may choose to follow this process with the group as a whole, moving from one section of the document to the next.

Each group is to be given a section of the document with the accompanying task/reflection sheet.

After each group has completed their sharing, ask a member of the group to share with the whole body their suggested actions for addressing the issues given. Members of the whole body may ask questions for clarification or request adjustments on what is proposed.

When this process is completed ask the larger group how they can directly begin to implement the suggestions that have come from the small groups. The purpose of this exercise is not only to become more familiar with the document, but also to actually motivate the local faith community into direct evangelization activities.

**Group 1:** The Family

1. Do we believe that the reality of the extended family is not only affirmed, but strengthened by our local faith community? Do we offer opportunities for the broader family to participate in our Eucharistic celebrations, or in our celebrations of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist? How can we make the extended family more a part of these key times of celebrations within our parish community?
2. During the Liturgical Seasons of Advent and Lent, what kinds of assistance do we offer the extended family unit in making these seasons

holy? Do we offer booklets or programs which are more geared to the concept of the "nuclear family?" Do we offer opportunities for our elders to pass on the story of salvation to their children?

3. Is our local faith community truly a place of hospitality where all are welcomed and made to feel that their presence is an essential part of our celebration as a faith community? How can our parish be more of a "family gathered before the Lord?"

Group II:

The Roles of Black Men and Women

1. There are those who would say that within every Black family there is a "matriarch or patriarch of the faith," one who has been the nurturer and the preserver of the faith. Who was this person in your family? Is this reality continuing in our modern Black culture? Are there younger women or men who have accepted this role within the Black family? How can we support them in this role within their families?
2. By the same token, how can we support the faith of the men of our community? For as the Bishops have stated the relationship between Black females and Black males is one of complementarity. How do we, as a faith community, assist them in more fully understanding the meaning of Genesis 1:27, "God created man in the image of Himself, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them?"
3. How does our local faith community offer support to single mothers? How can we better support them in their roles of passing on the faith to their children and their children's children?
4. How can we re-build and restore the image of the Black father?

Group III:

Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious

Life

1. Do I believe that the Lord is actually calling Black men and women to become priests or religious?

2. Would I be supportive of my own son or daughter who expressed a desire to enter priestly ministry or the religious life?
3. The limited numbers of Black priests, nuns and brothers are such that many Black youth and/or adults may never be ministered to by a Black priest, brother or sister. Therefore, they may not actually have a Black person as a role model for these vocations. How do we, as laity, encourage, support and present priesthood and the consecrated life to young people as a viable means of serving the Lord?
4. How can our local faith community nurture and encourage Black women and men to enter into priesthood and religious life?

Group IV:

Permanent Deacons

1. Do the members of our local faith community understand the role of the permanent Deacon? How can we make their role better understood by the members of the parish community?
2. How can our parish call-forth its "natural leaders" to enter into the Permanent Diaconate? How can we assist these men of mature age in accepting this unique vocation to serve the people of God within their parish?
3. How can the permanent deacons of our parish be more directly involved in the work of evangelization? How can the parish, as a family of faith, encourage, strengthen and support these men in following the Lord?
4. Are there concrete ways in which our Black permanent deacons may serve as role models for young Black men and women who may be considering the life of a priest, brother or sister?

Group V:

The Role of Laity

1. Who do we understand ourselves to be as laity within this particular faith community? Are there any qualities which are unique to the lay members of the Church?
2. In the light of our Baptism and Confirmation,

what privileges and responsibilities are uniquely ours as laity? How do I concretely express those in my daily life within this local faith community?

3. How do we assist our lay adults in: a) recognizing their gifts, and b) sharing their gifts with the parish community?
4. In what ways can the leadership of our parish encourage, empower and support laity to share their gifts in the task of evangelization?
5. Are Black, lay leaders in need of any kind of training which may assist them in sharing their gifts? If so, what might your parish offer to assist them in the development of such skills?

### III.- Celebration Component

NOTE: In a dimly lighted room, with a candle and Bible prominently positioned, invite the adults to be seated for a brief period of silent reflection. A gentle or soft piece of recorded liturgical music may assist them in entering into silence. As this period of silence draws to an end, the following reading may be proclaimed.

Reading: Ephesians 4: 11-13

Leader: As believers, let us call upon the Father in the words of our brother, Jesus.

All: Our Father....

Leader: Let us pray.

All: May our Heavenly Father perfect us, His Church, in faith and love,, that we might be always and everywhere faithful witnesses to the power of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, deliver us from evil and bring us into everlasting life.

All: Amen. Amen.

## SESSION IV

### RESPONDING IN LOVE

#### 1.- Enrichment Component

The following are key concepts in the document which you may wish to highlight in your presentation.

##### A.- Our Gift of Freedom

1. *The Good News of the Gospel is the message of liberation. "You will know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth will make you free."*
2. *Black people know what freedom is because we remember the dehumanizing force of slavery, racist prejudice, and oppression....freedom is therefore, a cherished gift.*
3. *We carry with our freedom the responsibility to share with others our interior, or spiritual freedom, without which all other freedoms would not be possible.*

##### B.- The Gift of Reconciliation

1. *The gospel message is a message that liberates us from hate and calls us to forgiveness and reconciliation.*
2. *True reconciliation arises out of:*
  - a) *A commitment to the Gospel*
  - b) *Mutually perceived equality*
  - c) *An abiding sense of justice*
  - d) *A respect for the cultural values of others*
  - e) *Mutual recognition and mutual respect*
3. *The desire for reconciliation is...the fruit of liberation. Our contribution to the building up of the Church in America and in the world is to be an agent of change for both.*

4. We are members of a *truly universal Church*; therefore, our focus must not be solely limited to the minds of this country, but rather it must be inclusive of the whole world.
5. Above all, we must be *instruments of peace*, which is the fruit of justice.

#### C.- The Social Apostolate

1. ....*the cause of justice and social concern are an essential part of evangelization.*
  - a) *Our own history has taught us that preaching to the poor and to those who suffer injustice without concern for their plight and the systemic cause of their plight is to trivialize the Gospel and mock the Cross.*
  - b) *To preach to the powerful without denouncing oppression is to promise Easter without Calvary, forgiveness without conversion, and healing without cleansing the wound.*
2. If we are sincere in our desire for social justice, we must examine and reflect upon our own actions and intentions.
  - a) *As Black people in a powerful nation we must have concern for those who hunger and thirst for justice everywhere in the present world.*
  - b) *As a people we must have the courage to speak out and even contribute our efforts and money on behalf of any people or any segment of the human family that the powerful may seek to neglect or forget as a matter of policy.*

#### D.- Opportunities for Evangelization

1. Youth
  - a) The work of evangelization is not limited to the adult population.
    - (1) Youth also carry a responsibility to respond to the challenge of evangelization.
    - (2) Youth can be particularly effective in the evangelization of their peers.



b) Of course, dedicated adults and young adults are needed to inspire and motivate our youth.

c) Additionally, parishes and dioceses need to adapt their programs so that they address the needs of Black youth.

## 2. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

a) The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults needs to be adapted to the Black situation.

b) *....creatively adapted to the life and culture of the Black community, the Rite will serve as a powerful instrument of evangelization among our people.*

## 3. Catholic Education

a) In the Black community the Catholic school represents:

(1) Quality education

(2) Character development

(3) A sign of stability in an environment of chaos and flux

(4) A source of religious and moral values

b) *The Catholic school has been and remains one of the chief vehicles of evangelization in the Black community.*

c) *Cost effectiveness should never be the sole criterion for decisions regarding the continuation of a Catholic school in the Black community.*

d) Since the Catholic school plays such a central role in the ministry of evangelization, concern for our schools must be shared by everyone, even those who do not have children.

e) *.... These schools must be thoroughly Catholic in identity and teaching.*

11.- Reflection Component

Invite members of the following parish and/or diocesan agencies to dialogue in small groups with the participants. (For your assistance starter questions, with their corresponding section of the Pastoral, are provided).

Possible Parish/ Diocesan Personnel	Topic from the Pastoral	Reflection Questions
- Evangelization Team/Office for Black Catholics	- <i>Our Gift of Freedom</i>  - <i>The Gift of Reconcilia- tion</i>	1) It is good to reflect upon the fact that our freedom is a gift, but how do we bring that sense of spiritual freedom to brothers and sisters who live each day with a sense of oppression and bondage?  2) How do we concretely assist them in dealing with their anger and resentment so that reconciliation can be a real part of their lives?
- Peace and Justice Committee/Office for Social Justice/ Catholic Charities/ St. Vincent de Paul Society	- <i>The Social Apostolate</i>	1) For you, what is the relationship of social justice to evangelization?  2) How can we assist our parish/diocese in addressing the needs of "those who hunger and thirst for justice?"

Possible Parish/ Diocesan Personnel	Topic from the Pastoral	Reflection Question
-Liturgy Committee/ Director of the Catechumenate/ Office for Religious Education (DRE)	<i>-Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults</i>	<p>1) How do you see the RCIA in relationship to the ordinary life of the parish?</p> <p>2) In what ways can assist the members of our parishes in better understanding, and being involved with RCIA?</p>
-Director of Youth Ministry/Director of CYO or Teen Club/Office for Youth Ministry	<i>-Youth</i>	<p>1) How can we really address the needs of our youth?</p> <p>2) How can we motivate our youth to become more involved in the parish?</p>
-Board of Education/ Office of Catholic Schools/Office for Religious Education	<i>-Catholic Education</i>	<p>1) How can we make Catholicism more available within the Black community?</p> <p>2) With the increasing numbers of non-Catholic students in our schools, how can our schools be "Catholic in identity and teaching" without violating our sense of ecumenism?</p>

### III.- Celebration Component

NOTE: Gather the participants and invite them to enter into a brief period of silence. Without any words of introduction proclaim the following reading from the Pastoral.

Leader: ....It was in chains that our parents were brought to these shores and in violence were we maintained in bondage. Let us who are the children of pain be now a bridge of reconciliation. Let us who are the offspring of violence become the channels of compassion. Let us, the sons and daughters of bondage, be the bringers of peace.  
*(What We Have Seen and Heard, "The Gift of Reconciliation")*.

All: "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You did not receive a spirit of slavery leading you back into fear, but a spirit of adoption through which we cry out, 'Abba!' The Spirit Himself gives witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Romans 8: 14-16).

Leader: Father, we place before you our burning desire for reconciliation among the peoples of our world.

All: Lord, grant us your peace.

Leader: For the Church, that she will continue to be the beacon of your truth, we pray.

All: Lord, grant us your mercy.

Leader: For our Holy Father and the Bishops of our Church, that filled with your Spirit they will continue to be bearers of the Good News, we pray.

All: Lord, grant us your mercy.

Leader: For the peoples of the world, that they will be open to the spirit of reconciliation and truth, we pray.

All: Lord, grant us your mercy.

Leader: Those who wish may share their own petitions.

Response: Lord, grant us your mercy.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: May our Heavenly Father perfect us, His Church,  
in faith and love; that we might be always and  
everywhere faithful witnesses to the power of  
the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through  
whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy  
Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, deliver us from evil and  
bring us into everlasting life.

All: Amen. Amen.

## SESSION V

### CELEBRATING IN FREEDOM

#### I.- Enrichment Component

The following are key concepts in the document which you may wish to highlight in your presentation.

#### A.- Liturgy

##### 1. Authentically Black

##### a) Our liturgical heritage

- (1) African American people carry a strong sense of community
- (2) This naturally gives rise to an equally strong valuing of communal worship
- (3) In Black Catholic heritage *the moment of celebration has always been a time for praise and thanksgiving and the affirmation of ourselves as God's children. It is a moment of profound expression not a flight from reality (as some have suggested), but an expression of God's power and love.*
- (4) *From the standpoint of evangelization in the Black community, the liturgy of the Catholic Church has always demonstrated a way of drawing many to the Faith and also of nourishing and deepening the faith of those who already believe.*

##### b) The essence of liturgy

- (1) At the very essence of liturgy is simultaneously:
  - (a) *...a ritualization of the divine reality which transcends all human limitations.*
  - (b) *...an expression of what is most intimate and personal in the participants.*

- (2) *What is expressed is the Mystery of Christ which transcends all human limitations.*

c) Liturgy and Culture

- (1) The manner in which this Mystery of Christ is expressed is *mediated by the culture and traditions of the participants.*

- (2) All people should be able to:

(a) *...recognize themselves when Christ is presented.*

(b) *...experience their own fulfillment when these mysteries are celebrated.*

- (3) Within this context one can speak of a unique African-American cultural expression in:

(a) Preaching

(b) Music

(c) Bodily expression

(d) Artistic furnishings

(e) Vestments

- (4) As Black Catholics we must encourage:

(a) Our scholars and artists to continue to study and develop their skills in liturgy.

(b) Our liturgical scholars and artists to *mutually contribute to a Black Catholic liturgical critique.*

- (5) *....An authentic Black Catholic liturgy need never be confined to a narrowly based concept of what is truly Black.*

(a) *The cultural idiom of American Black People has never been uniform but has varied according to region and ethos.*

(b) *African, Haitian, Latin and West Indian cultural expressions also continue to this day to nurture the Black American cultural expression.*

- (6) The norms established in the revised Roman liturgy offer the opportunity for the expression of cultural richness in the liturgy.

2. Truly Catholic

- a) *Black Catholic liturgy should express not only our African American cultural heritage but also our Catholic faith.*
- b) *....Unlike some other Christian communities, in the Black community, our worship is not confined to preaching the Word alone; but it also includes the Sacrament as celebration.*
- c) *For this reason neither the preaching nor the music nor any other ritual action have exclusive domain at liturgical celebrations.*
- d) *Both the liturgical preaching and the music should invite the worshipping community to a more profound participation in the total sacramental experience.*
- e) *Neither preaching nor music should overwhelm the liturgical worship and prevent it from exhibiting a balanced unified action.*

3. Proper Preparation and Excellence in Execution

- a) *In the liturgy, preparation begins with prayerful reflection and is completed and perfected by an execution that culminates in a total prayer.*
- b) *We urge that this prayerful preparation and prayerful performance and execution be the result of a collaborative effort of many gifted people each Sunday in our parishes.*

B.- Ecumenism

- 1. *The Black Church is a reality which crosses denominational boundaries and is without a formal structure.*
  - a) *....It is a reality cherished by many Black Christians, who feel at ease joining in prayer and in Christian action with one another.*



- b) The Black Church, a result of our common experience and history, *has made it possible for many Blacks to understand and appreciate each other.*
2. The Reality of the Black Church Does Not Negate Nor Deny:
- (a) The distinctions of various denominations.
  - (b) The loyalty of Black Catholics, as well as all Black Christians, to their respective faith communities.
3. *....Because we as a people have been a deeply religious people, we as Black Catholics are in a special position to serve as a bridge with our brothers and sisters of other Christian traditions.*
4. The interfaith sensitivity of Black Catholics must also be inclusive of our non-Christian brothers and sisters, in particular those who are Muslim and Jewish.

C.- Exhortation

NOTE: The beauty and the message of the Exhortation can only be experienced; therefore, it would seem appropriate to conclude this work with the closing reflections of our Bishops.

*... Last of all, we turn to Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of the African American community. She is the Poor Woman and the Bearer of the Word, the first to believe and the first to proclaim the Word. We entrust to her powerful intercession this work within the Black community.*

*May Our Heavenly Father perfect us, His Church, in faith and love, that we might be always and everywhere faithful witnesses to the power of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.*

(What We Have Seen and Heard, "Conclusion)

## II.- Reflection Component

- A.- This reflection exercise is designed for use with the large group of participants.
- B.- Invite the participants to record their responses to the following questions on a sheet of paper.
1. What is your earliest recollection of a "communal experience of worship?" Can you remember how you felt during that liturgy?
  2. How does your present understanding of liturgy relate to your earlier experiences of it? How is your understanding similar? How is it different?
  3. As a result of this session do you feel that your understanding of liturgy has been enhanced? How could your understanding be further enhanced?
  4. Recalling that *...neither the preaching nor the music nor any other ritual action have domain at liturgical celebrations*, how can we assist our parishes in maintaining their sense of the liturgy as a *balanced unified action*?
  5. How can we encourage our parishes and those working in pastoral ministry to *introduce the African American idiom into the expression of the Roman liturgy*?
- C.- Invite participants to share their responses with the larger group. You may wish to record their responses on newsprint.

## III.- Celebration Component

- Leader: Grace and peace be to you.
- All: As we gather in the name of the Lord.
- Leader: Through God's mercy we are given our ministry.
- All: And we do not give in to discouragement.
- Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
- All: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: May the words of my mouth find favor before you,  
O Lord.

All: May the words of my mouth find favor before you,  
O Lord.

Psalm 19: 1-5, 15

(God's Glory in the Heavens and in the Law)

Women: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the  
firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Men: Day pours out the word to day, and night to night  
imparts knowledge;

Women: Not a word nor a discourse whose voice is not  
heard; Through all the earth their voice resounds,  
and to the ends of the world, their message.

Men: Let the words of my mouth and the thought of  
my heart find favor before you, O LORD, my rock  
and my redeemer.

Leader: May the words of my mouth find favor before you,  
O Lord.

All: May the words of my mouth find favor before you,  
O Lord.

Reading: II Corinthians 4: 1-7

(Pause for period of reflection)

Antiphon: My spirit takes joy in God my savior.

Luke 1: 46-55

(Mary's Canticle)

Side I: My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit finds joy in God my savior. For he  
has looked upon his servant in her lowliness;  
all ages to come shall call me blessed.

Side II: God who is mighty has done great things for me,  
holy is his name; His mercy is from age to age  
on those who fear him.

Side I: He has shown might with his arm; he has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts.

Side II: He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. The hungry he has given every good thing, while the rich he has sent empty away.

Side I: He has upheld Israel his servant, ever mindful of his mercy; Even as he promised our fathers, promised Abraham and his descendants forever.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Antiphon: My Spirit takes joy in God my savior.

Leader: Let us pray in the words Jesus has taught us.

All: Our Father...

Leader: Let us pray.

All: May our Heavenly Father perfect us, in His Church, in faith and love, that we might be always and everywhere faithful to the power of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom be all the honor and the glory in the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, deliver us from all evil and bring us into everlasting life.

All: Amen. Amen.

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD, a Pastoral Letter on  
Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United  
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SUGGESTED RESOURCES TO FURTHER IMPLEMENT

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD

- *Come and Go - Black Catholic Evangelization (Five filmstrips with Manual);*
  - *Full color prints based on scenes of The Life of Jesus, as dramatized by African Christians;*
- and additional copies of this*

STUDY GUIDE

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