

Q4

OCT-DEC 2025

THE VILLAGE DRUM

FALL 2025



Office of Black Catholic Ministries
Sr. Jane Nesmith, Director



Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland



@BlkCatholicsCLE

USCCB Statement: Hurricane Katrina

On August 29, 2005, the world's attention was drawn to New Orleans, Louisiana, and the surrounding Gulf Coast region due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. This disaster changed the lives of many from the area, and the lives of the communities across the country in which people sought shelter and stability.

Read more at
usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church



MEET OUR NEW DIACONATE CANDIDATE

BY SR. JANE NESMITH, SBS

Congratulations to Walter Morris, III, who has been accepted into the Diaconate of the Diocese of Cleveland. He is attending St. Mary Seminary and graduate School of Theology while he is employed as an Accredited Financial Counselor, reflecting his dedication to doctrinal service and leadership.

As an alumnus of Benedictine High School, Walter's calling to serve was recognized early as he was honored as a student with the Renaissance Christian Witness Award. His wife Melissa (Morris) is a librarian and is an alumnae of St. Aloysius and Beaumont Schools and holds a Masters in Library Sciences from Kent State.

He and Melissa were married at St. Aloysius/St. Agatha Church in 2021. They and their three wonderful children continue to be active members of St. Aloysius/St. Agatha Church. Walter supported Melissa in her journey of discernment as she completed the RCIA and was confirmed Catholic in 2022.

Walter holds a BA in international Relations from Cleveland State University and pursued advanced studies in Public Policy at Universidad Internacional (UNINTER) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. During his time there, he collaborated with local residents and policymakers to foster stronger ties between Mexican and American communities, supported by the U.S. Department of State and Mexican Government.

He is a Financial Therapy Association Member, Brother Knight of Cleveland Council #733 of Knights of Columbus and has most recently accepted my invitation to join the Advisory Committee to represent his parish for the Office of Black Catholic Ministries. He joins fully recommended by his Parish Life Coordinator, St. Mary Jean Raymond, OSU.

Let us keep Mr. Morris and his family in our prayers as they respond to God's call to serve as a Deacon in the Catholic Church. To God be the glory!

SEPTEMBER

September 7, 10 am
St. Peter Claver Day
Holy Spirit Church,
Garfield Heights

September 13, 9am-4pm
Prayer Warrior Women's
Retreat
Holy Spirit Church, Garfield
Heights

September 19, 7-11pm
Motown Night
St. Agnes / Our Lady of
Fatima, Cleveland

OCTOBER

October 19, 4pm
Sacred Music Concert
St. Aloysius/St. Agatha
Church, Cleveland

October 24, 4-8pm
Fall Raffle and Spaghetti Dinner
St. Aloysius/St. Agatha Church,
Cleveland



BLACK AND HISPANIC CATHOLIC MINISTRIES' INITIATIVE!

BY SR. JANE NESMITH, SBS

It was during the Eucharistic Congress in 2024 that Hortensia Rodriguez, Director of Hispanic Ministries, and I decided that we would continue to work together to add just a little more unity in diversity. Since then, we have brought our Ministries to the Underground Railroad in Cincinnati and the Ark Encounter in Kentucky, as well as the Juneteenth celebration. Little did we know that our thoughts would lead us on a Marian Pilgrimage.

Thirty-four pilgrims from the Cleveland Diocese and beyond just returned from a spiritually dynamic, inspiring and adventurous Marian Pilgrimage from Lisbon Portugal to Spain and ending at the Rosary and Candlelight Procession on the final evening in Fatima, Lourdes. Those who attended from the Black Catholic Community were Betty Smith, her sister Jeanette Goggins and Michael Bussey from St Agnes/Our Lady of Fatima Church, Brunilda Vegas from Holy Spirit Church and Sr. Hyasinta Kimaro, Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, and Keith Jackson, Musician at St. Adalbert/Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church.

Special thanks to Fr. Damian Ference, Vicar for Evangelization, who did a dynamic and inspiring job as the Pilgrimage Chaplain.

DIOCESE HONORS SR. MARY JEAN

BY SR. JANE NESMITH, SBS

What a Surprise for Sr. Mary Jean Raymond, OSU as I was able to present her, on behalf of Bishop Malesic, with a surprise bouquet of flowers and a desk plaque highlighting some of the ways that she has been present to the people of St. Aloysius Parish and School over the past 44 consecutive years of Servant Leadership. The Church was "kicking off" the celebration of its 125th Jubilee with a 2 PM Open House, and grand tour, and a 4PM liturgy followed by a reception of her d'oeuvres on Sunday, June 21, 2025. Thank you, Sr. Mary Jean for your faithful and generous leadership at St. Aloysius as former teacher, principal, mentor, and currently, Parish Life Coordinator. She has demonstrated what it means "To Serve With Love."





NOVEMBER

Black Catholic History Month

November 1, 8:00am-12:00pm

Annual Breakfast Fundraiser
Fatima Family Center,
Cleveland

November 15, 9:30am-3:30pm

Thea Bowman Day of Retreat
Center for Pastoral
Leadership, Wickliffe
Presenter: Dr. Valerie Lewis
Moseley

DECEMBER

December 18, 6-8pm

Live-Nativity of Jesus Christ
St. Aloysius/St. Agatha Church,
Cleveland

3RD ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

BY BETTY SMITH, ST. AGNES/OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH

The 2025 OBCM Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom was held June 19, 2025 at St. Agnes Our Lady of Fatima Parish. It was a collaborative effort of SAOLF, St. Adalbert/Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Aloysius/St. Agatha, St. Dominic, and Holy Spirit Parishes, and Catholic Charities. The day began with a Mass of Unity celebrated by Bishop Martin Amos and Fr. John Judie, from Louisville, KY., as the homilist for the liturgy. The Diocesan Gospel Choir, youth liturgical dancers and youth soloist provided a jubilant spirit to the Eucharistic celebration.

Though rain dampened most of the outdoor activities, it was still a wonderful celebration enjoyed by many. Mass was followed by a luncheon for approximately 400 people in the church hall and an additional 200 youth campers were served lunch at the Fatima Family Center. There were also activities for the children at the Family center and a video presentation, DJ, live music, and bingo for adults in the church hall and auxiliary rooms.

This year's Juneteenth Celebration was a success thanks to all the efforts of the collaborating parishes and Catholic Charities volunteers.

WELCOME FR. PAUL!

BY SR. JANE NESMITH, SBS

Fr. Paul Dressler, OFM Cap. was recently charged with the pastoral leadership of St. Agnes/Our Lady of Fatima Church. He entered the Capuchin Franciscans in 1992, was ordained in 1999, and received His MDiv. from Washington Theological Union. Because he has served God's people as a speaker, retreat master, and chaplain, he has become well known for his spirituality and preaching.

Thank you for hosting the Diocesan Youth Advisory Committee next month. Welcome to Cleveland, Fr. Paul!





KUJENGA VIONGOZI BLACK CATHOLIC YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREAT

BY ANTOINETTE SMITH, ST. AGNES/OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH

Each year the Diocese of Louisville, KY sponsors this retreat under the leadership of Deacon Turner and Mrs. Annette Turner. The process is designed to help Black Catholic Youth develop leadership skills by learning more about their culture, faith and history. High School students are challenged with exploring their values and purpose in becoming followers of Christ charged with spreading the Good News within their homes, schools, parishes, and communities.

This year Kujenga was held at Mt. St. Francis Center for Spirituality in Indiana on July 18-20, 2025. Sr. Jane Nesmith was able to take twelve youth and two chaperones from the Diocese of Cleveland to participate in the retreat.

We participated in team building activities to help build trust, strategic planning, deep conversation on accountability and unity in a positive and nurturing atmosphere. Students enjoyed the challenge of working together with different scenarios as a family. Each family represented one of the values of the Nugo Saga. An open forum enabled them to share their views about "Why there is so little youth participation in their parish communities and what can be done to turn this around?"

How significant or providential it is that we were able to find twelve youth who could be available to the process which we hope to become a life-changing experience they were able to share with their peers and their respective parish communities. Perhaps we can gather more youth from around the Diocese to attend Kugenga Viongozi 2026 by hosting it here in the Diocese of Cleveland. Thank you for your support of Black Catholic Youth Ministries!

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

- 1 Timothy 4:12

LEARN MORE AT [DIOCESEOFCLEVELAND.ORG/BLKCATHOLICSCLE](https://dioceseofcleveland.org/BlkCatholicSCLE)

OPEN INVITATIONS

All are welcome!

St. Adalbert/Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church

*1st Sunday, Community meal after the 11am Mass

*2nd Sunday, Rosary, 10:30 am

*Every Thursday, Rosary, 6:30pm, via Zoom

*5th Sunday, Blackjack Alumni Sunday

St. Colman Church

*3rd Sunday, Swahili Liturgy, 1pm

Our Lady of Peace Church

*Last Sunday of the month, Nigerian Community Igbo Liturgy, 1 pm

Visit our website to learn more about our ministries and subscribe to receive our email newsletter.

dioceseofcleveland.org/BlkCatholicSCLE

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