

Black Catholics to Rally Here to Focus on Failure of Church

By Rosemary Kovacs

Black Catholics of Ohio will hold a statewide convention at St. Adalbert Catholic Church, 2345 E. 83d Street, on Sept. 26-27, it was announced yesterday.

The Black Lay Catholic Convention intends to organize black parishioners on a local and state level and focus on what is considered the failure of the church to relate to their needs, according to Robert L. Pitts.

Pitts made the announcement yesterday at a news conference with four other black Catholics, all members of the Black Task Force of the Cleveland Commission on Catholic Community Action. They head the forming of a Black Catholic Caucus here, one of the convention's sponsors.

PITTS IS director of the

Martin de Porres Center and chairman pro tem of the Ohio State Black Lay Catholic Caucus. He attended the first national convention of black Roman Catholic laymen last weekend in Washington D.C.

Pitts read a letter sent Tuesday to Bishop Clarence G. Isenmann of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese which urged his study of demands made by the black lay convention.

The national conference called for authority to elect four regional black bishops, an Afro-American liturgy, black youth programs at parish and national levels and increased concerns for the education of black Catholics.

NO LOCAL demands were drawn up, Pitts said, because the problems of

Cleveland are parallel to those throughout the nation. The bishop was not available for comment.

"It's pretty hard to say what we're going to do if the demands aren't met," Pitts said. "Nothing can be changed overnight, and we'll be patient, but if we don't hear from the bishop by the September convention... well.

"We consider ourselves blacks first and Catholics second," he said. More blacks will leave the church unless something is done," he said.

PITTS SEES as the most urgent the demand for more black pastors. There are some 165 black diocesan priests in the nation and only one in Cleveland, an order priest.



He is the Rev. Eugene R. Wilson, Co-Pastor of St. Adalbert, who cited personal experience in discrimination for seminary training.

Also appearing at the news conference were John B. Gardier, vice chairman of the Black Task Force, Robert A. Decatur, member

of the Catholic Board of Education and Joseph F. Richardson, Black Task Force member and member of St. Aloysius Church.

Bellefaire Fest Set for Sunday

Bellefaire's annual festival will be Sunday, from 2 to 6 p.m., on the grounds of the children's home at 22001 Fairmount Boulevard, Shaker Heights.

Everything from corn on the cob to ice cream will be sold by youths at the fair.

A highlight of the afternoon will be a grand auction. Proceeds of the fair will be used for special recreational and group work activities for the children. Last year about 800 persons attended the festivities.

Bellefaire, a residential

center for mentally handicapped children, will open a new day treatment facility next month. Bellefaire is affiliated with the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and receives partial support from United Appeal.

PETITION CHURCH—Urging Bishop Clarence G. Isenmann of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to consider demands of Black Catholics are: From left, Robert A. Decatur, Catholic school board member; Robert L. Pitts, chairman pro tem of the Ohio Black Lay Catholic Caucus; the Rev. Eugene R. Wilson, pastor of St. Adalbert Catholic Church, and John B. Gardier, vice chairman of the Black Task Force. Plain Dealer photo (Charles Morris)

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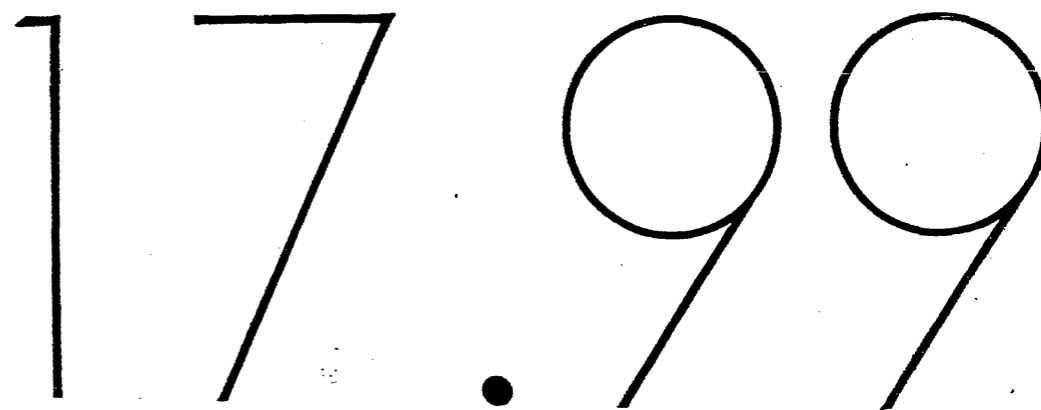
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C. The princess tunic top pantsuit with notched jewel neckline by Holly Hill. Green or camel rayon knit. Sizes 10 to 20 or 14 1/2 to 20 1/2.

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