Strategic Plan of Action for the Pastoral Care and Evangelization to the Diaspora of the Black Catholic Community

"I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. "Mere administration" can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be “permanently in a state of mission”.”

- Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, November 24, 2013

In response to Pope Francis’ “Call for the Conversion of the Church in our Time,” the Diocese of Providence’s Office of Black Catholic Ministry and its Advisory Board developed this strategic plan, offering suggested guidelines for priests, lay ministers and parish assistants in fostering pastoral care to the varied ethnic communities within our unique parishes. We believe that with the changing landscape of our Church, we are called to provide parish leaders with the tools and training to support evangelization and formation for all disciples.

It is our hope that this Pastoral Plan will help strengthen Black Catholic leadership and assist in building a more inclusive and welcoming faith experience for all of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ.
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

And people will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God. (Lk 13: 29)

With these words, our Lord Jesus indicated that diversity is one of the hallmarks of the Kingdom of God. And so it is with his Church as well. From its very beginning, and continuing even today, the Catholic Church has been enriched by the faith, the history, and the unique cultural experiences of people from all over the globe.

And yet with this amazing diversity, it is the Church that brings people together to the Lord’s table to form one body, the Body of Christ. There is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all,” St. Paul reminds us. (Eph 4: 5)

Throughout its history, the Diocese of Providence has been blessed by the twin gifts of unity and diversity, forming a beautiful mosaic of faith that continues, and is even growing, today. The Strategic Plan for the Pastoral Care and Evangelization of the Diaspora of the Black Catholic Community, which is now before you, has the goal of “strengthening Black Catholic leadership and assisting in building a more inclusive and welcoming faith experience for all of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ.”

I commend and thank the members of our diocesan staff, the Black Catholic Ministry Advisory Board, and all who have collaborated so effectively to produce this important statement. I encourage our pastors and all pastoral leaders in the Diocese of Providence to welcome this document warmly and to implement it enthusiastically throughout the Diocese. There is no doubt that the whole Church will be enriched by welcoming and sharing the faith, the abundant gifts and talents of the Black Catholic Community.

May God bless our Church as together we celebrate the blessings of the past and embrace the challenges of the future. With renewed confidence and zeal may we look forward to that day when all of us, together, “will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God.”

Sincerely yours,

Thomas J. Tobin
Bishop of Providence
We seek to serve our God through truth as we pledge to carry on as disciples commissioned by Jesus Christ to “Go out into the World and preach to all creation” - Matthew 16:15

We hold ourselves accountable to our baptismal commitment to witness and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Because of this belief, we are working to help bridge the gap for building a more inclusive and welcoming faith experience for all of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ.

We commit ourselves to support our Church, communities and Catholic schools at all levels, while working to preserve our unique cultural heritage as members of the Catholic Church through evangelization.

We commit ourselves to reaching out to our youth and young adults, to invite in, listen to, and respond to their needs as we continue to share the rich history and legacy of our Catholic faith. (Psalm 78:3-4)

We commit ourselves to address the challenges of racial injustice, promote human dignity in all forms, and live out our Catholic faith with love and respect for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.
Mission Statement
In accordance to the word of God (Luke 10:2) we seek to offer a Strategic Pastoral Plan of Action for fostering pastoral care and evangelization to the diaspora of Black Catholic Communities throughout the diocese. We aspire to create vibrant and flourishing faith communities and provide opportunities for building visible leadership (Romans 12:6-8). We seek to inform, educate and share our rich spiritual heritage by reaching out to our ethnically unique parish communities. We hold ourselves accountable to our baptismal commitment to witness and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Who & What
The Office of Black Catholic Ministry has developed this pastoral plan of action, and is also sharing national resources, to serve as a practical set of guidelines to assist parish priests, deacons, pastoral assistants, parish leaders, lay ministers, youth and young adult groups seeking to create a vibrant faith experience within their diverse communities.

How
This Strategic Pastoral Plan of Action will serve as a guide to assist in:
- Creating opportunities to motivate existing leaders and invite parishioners to undertake leadership positions in lay ecclesial ministries.
- Promote opportunities for faith formation and provide leadership trainings at all levels in local parishes and communities throughout the diocese.
- Affirm and celebrate parish leader’s culturally diverse identities by establishing a unified pastoral council for the collaboration in constructing an inclusive, flourishing and vibrant parish faith experience.

With thoughtful planning, research and outreach, this guide will provide great assistance in all forms of pastoral planning, offering positive and productive faith experiences to our unique and culturally diverse faith communities.

Helpful Resources
- Pastoral Plan of Action, The National Black Catholic Conference XII, November 2017
- Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2018

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