



REVERENCE FOR LIFE

www.blackcatholicsforlife.org

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NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

February 1, 2009 - 20th Anniversary

WHY THIS SPECIAL DAY?

Africans brought to this country an inherent philosophical heritage. They encountered the most brutal form of slavery in human history. Since they were the first of their ethnicity in this country they created distinctive ways of addressing their concerns.

Many African American families live in a society that has rejected and discriminated against them. As a result of their struggle against oppression, historically they have identified a central truth from scripture that there is a God of infinite power who can be trusted to act mightily on their behalf.

African Americans have believed from their initial embrace of Christianity to the present day that prayer and the scriptures demonstrate the actions of God on behalf of the

marginalized and powerless people. This belief is deeply woven in the fabric of Black existence.

Unfortunately there are those who hate their African characteristics—the hair, the shape of the nose, the color of the skin. They hate the blood of Africa that is in their veins. In hating these features they end up hating themselves. Some feel their color is like a chain, like it holds them back. It makes them feel inferior or inadequate. This is an opportunity for those who have felt victims to their feeling of inadequacy or inferiority to reevaluate themselves and hopefully gain a sense of sombodiness, self respect.

There is a substantial number of middle-class Blacks who have “made it” and have assimilated into

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The National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life was inaugurated in the Fall of 1997, with The National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus and the Franciscan Solid Ground Ministry, as sponsors and with the support of John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York and the Archdiocese's Office of Black Ministry. NBCAL is supported by all the major National Black Catholic organizations in the United States.

*Through it all
We've got something
to celebrate.
We belong to God and
god belongs to us!*

Over 100 NBCAL Affiliates
in the
United States

National Headquarters

St. Clare Friary

440 West 36th Street

New York, NY 10018

Phone 212 868-1847

tnbcalf@com

Editor:

Clorice G. Walker

Why this day..? (continued)

mainstream society. However, they also suffer the trials of racial oppression, even though they have been more successful in achieving the American Dream than the less fortunate African American. The economic and societal conditions along with the ambiguity and marginality of living simultaneously in two worlds—the world of the Black community and the world of mainstream society, has contributed to the crisis in the Black family. On the 20th anniversary of this special day, it is essential that the incessant ringing of cell phones decline, and the internet hookups become inactive so that we can reinforce the values of the African American family by acknowledging God's work of redemption and healing through our family. ■

MLK Holiday 2009

Enthusiasm is increasing in the campaign to raise funds for the 28 foot statue depicting King emerging from a mountain of granite. This will be the centerpiece of a four-acre memorial on the national mall's tidal basin adjacent to the Franklin Roosevelt memorial. Over one hundred million dollars has been donated thus far. A concerted effort is underway to inspire others to participate. The holiday was observed for the first time January 20, 1986.

Come Celebrate NBCAL's Annual Kwanzaa for Life !!!

There has been some confusion in the past about Kwanzaa replacing the traditional Christmas celebration. Professor Karenga, the originator of the holiday states, "Kwanzaa was not created to give people an alternative to their own religion or religious holiday. It is not an alternative to people's religion or faith but a common ground of African culture...Kwanzaa is not a reaction or substitute for anything. In fact, it offers a clear and self-conscious option, opportunity and chance to make a proactive choice, a self-affirming and positive choice as

distinct from a reactive one." A growing number of African American families celebrate Kwanzaa along with Christmas and the New Year. They decorate their households with objects of art, colorful African cloth and display fresh fruits that represent African idealism.

Professor Karenga's recent interpretation emphasizes that: "Any particular message that is good for a particular people, if it is human in its content and ethical in its grounding, speaks not just to that people, it speaks to the world."

Happy
Kwanzaa!

