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# REVERENCE FOR LIFE



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 U.S.

NBCAL's president, Rev. James E. Goode was totally surprised when he was presented the Gold Medal Award for his unwavering service to the Black Community during the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Knights of Peter National Convention in Houston, Texas, July, 2006.

*A Publication of the National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life*  
***Pray, Proclaim, and Promote the Gospel of Life***

## NBCAL Welcomes New Board Members

It is the tradition of NBCAL to maintain two seats on the Board for Knights of Peter Claver members. We extend our gratitude to Supreme Knight Arthur C. McFarland and Supreme Lady Mary L. Briers for their service as Board Consultants. They have been a tremendous asset to this ministry. They have been replaced by Supreme lady Geralyn C. Shelvin, a Registered Nurse and member of St.

Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Lafayette, Louisiana where she serves as Eucharist Minister and Lector. Supreme Knight Gene Phillips, Senior resides in Tomball, Texas and is a member of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Houston, Texas. He has served in several positions in the Knights of Peter Claver. We look forward to their participation in NBCAL.



**Supreme Knight  
Gene Phillips, Sr.**

## A Different Perspective on the Abortion Issue

In an article written sometime ago on "June Abortion Awareness Month," the Brooklyn dioceses' Office of Black Ministry Administrator John Baynes wrote about the often forsaken relationship between the father and infant. While acknowledging the highly respected kinship of mother and child, he enumerated the emotions and various factors experienced by the father, pre-child birth and thereafter. He reminds us "Although the father's

seed leaves his body and is carried for nine months by the mother, that umbilical cord exist joining the father and baby if only telepathically." John feels there is a need for greater visibility of Outreach programs and support groups addressing this issue.

The agony of some of these men becomes unimaginable when the child is not yet born and they have no way of protecting the life they helped to create. There is a need to balance the

rights of the father with those of the mother, putting the focus on the child and creating the most equitable law possible. Depriving fathers of a meaningful voice only adds to the problem.

The attitude of the prospective father is an important factor in the stress, anxiety or depression of the pregnant woman. The pro-life movement acknowledges their pain and a strong affirmation of the value of fatherhood.



**Supreme Lady  
Geralyn C. Shelvin**

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## Closing the Health Gap

For the past several years NBCAL has participated with other National and local organizations in educating and informing communities of color about the need to adopt healthier life styles by obtaining access to health care. The third Tuesday of September (the day on which we focus exclusively on this issue) was a success in terms of the number of health care

professionals whose services were available free of charge. In one of the large west coast cities a vacated warehouse was leased for the day and used to provide health services and information. A national retail store sponsored three mobile units in different areas of the U.S.A. which offered health screenings and addressed health concerns. Pledge cards

were distributed in parts of Illinois urging individuals to exercise more regularly, eat healthier, schedule a check-up or have a HIV test. Several proclamations were announced in commemoration of the day. Research has demonstrated that despite the gains made in life expectancy, gaps in health outcomes persist among the African American community.

## Minor's Pregnancy Initiative on California Ballot

This proposition amends the California Constitution to require, with certain exceptions, a physician (or his/her representative) to notify the parent or legal guardian of a pregnant minor at least 48 hours before performing an abortion involving that minor. The measure does not require a physician or a minor to obtain the consent of a parent or guardian. The measure

applies only to females under the age of 18, not married, not on active duty in the armed services and remains in the legal custody of parents or a guardian. The Catholic Church urges a "yes" vote on the measure to allow parents to care for and protect their minor daughters' well-being, health, and safety. Polls show most people support parental notification.

## Statistical Data on Latchkey Kids

The 2002 Census survey reveals that 6.8 million (15%) of all children between the ages of 5 and 14 come home to an empty home an average of 6.3 hours per week and 65% of those children spent between 2-9 hours

home alone. The effects of being a latchkey child differ according to age and socio-economic conditions. White non-Hispanic children are more likely to be left home alone than children of other races.

### **NBCAL Board of Consultants**

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