



Subcommittee on African American Affairs

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC, 20017 - 1194
202-541-3350 • EMAIL diversity@USCCB.ORG • WWW.USCCB.ORG

January 10, 2024

Dear Brother Bishops,

September 9, 2024 (feast of St. Peter Claver) will mark the 40th anniversary of the pastoral letter of the Black Catholic bishops, [*What We Have Seen and Heard*](#). Following upon three workshops that the Subcommittee on African American Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sponsored at last summer's Black Catholic Congress XIII, we think it opportune to punctuate this anniversary by inviting Catholic communities to revisit this landmark statement.

There are a number of ways in which we can do this, including: special focus with homilies or speakers, small groups or days of reflection with the text of the pastoral; highlighting select quotes from the pastoral monthly on your local web pages and social media outlets; special paraliturgies, like prayer services; or focusing on select themes addressed in the pastoral, for example, the imperative topics of evangelization or Black Catholic history.

We enclose with this note a copy of the text of the pastoral along with the original [study-guide](#) to help with planning at your end. Feel free to contact Deacon Royce Winters of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at rwinters@catholicaoc.org or myself at: jperry@archchicago.org with any questions, inquiries for guidance, planning tips, etc.

Also included with this note is a link to a video of Bishop Terry Steib's [presentation](#) on the pastoral at Congress XIII.

May we take this opportunity during the year that barely begins to hear again the voice of our bishops leading us to fruitful pastures of ministry, education and ownership of our Catholic faith and traditions.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry
Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Chicago
Chairman, Sub-committee on African American Affairs Attachments:

- *What We Have Seen and Heard*, A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States (1984)
- *A Study Guide for What We Have Seen and Heard*