

# *Acacia*

the annual newsletter of



*2025 Year in Review*

Issue #4, January 2026



Memories



*Entering our 36<sup>th</sup> year!*

## **Colorado Springs Council for Black Catholics**

Diocese of Colorado Springs, CO

In 1990 the Colorado Springs Council for Black Catholics (CSCBC) formed under the direction and endorsement of Bishop Richard C. Hanifen as a council to enhance our identity as Afro-American Catholics doing God's work, and to give one another strength, encouragement, and fellowship. As such, we have become involved in several activities which allow us to share in accomplishing our mission more actively and to experience the spiritual growth we continually seek.

In 2022 the council implemented its Junior Membership for individuals 13-17 years old.

We are blessed to be a recipient of a grant from the Black and Indian Mission Office to pursue our evangelization and outreach efforts.

The council is diocese-wide.

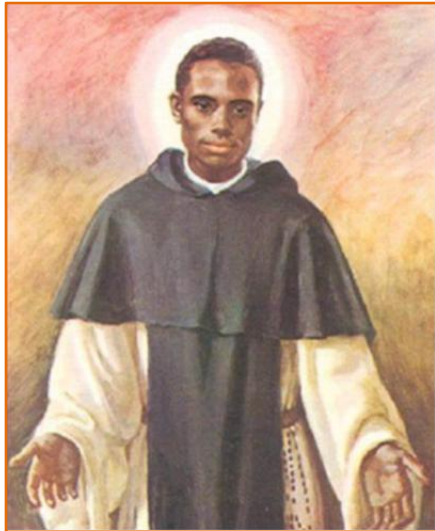
### **Mission Statement**

- † With Christ as our model, provide fellowship and share His word.
- † Share talents as we bring new life into the Catholic church.
- † Provide positive role models.
- † Share resources and network with other organizations to provide services.
- † Advocate for Social Justice issues within the diocese.

Our motto is **"BE SEEN"**

(**B**uilding, **E**nlightening,  
**S**ervice, **E**ducating, **E**vangelizing, **N**etworking)

Our patron saint is St. Martin de Porres.



**Beatification**

1837 by Pope Gregory XVI

**Canonization**

1962 by Pope John XXIII

**Feast Day**

November 3

-- Please join us --  
We would love to have you as a member!

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Welcome to the 2026 edition of our annual newsletter, “Acacia”, reviewing the CSCBC activities of 2025. It was a full year that truly tested our resilience but with God’s help, we got through it and we’re still here.

Thanks to the generosity of the Black and Indian Mission and the kind people who contribute to it, the council was able to continue its evangelization and outreach efforts.

## Quarterly Community Masses

*Celebrating Black and African American culture  
in the Catholic Liturgy*



The quarterly community masses that began in 2024 continued in 2025.

The masses alternated between two parishes – one in the northern area of the city and one in the southern area.

Vincent, our Mass Chairperson, works very hard to ensure everything is in order for each of the masses as well as working with the choir.



Our Spiritual Advisor, Deacon CJ, coordinates with the chairperson and the celebrant on the readings and the music for the masses.

Fr. Akujobi was the celebrant for all of the masses. He enjoys mingling with the congregants after Mass.





The newly-formed choir sang for the first time at the second quarter mass in June, and again in December. All choir members and the director/pianist are volunteers.



*We need more choir members.*

Anyone who is interested in joining the choir is welcome. Call or send an email and the chairperson will contact you.



We were delighted to have choir members from the African Catholic Association of the Archdiocese of Denver sing at the September mass.

The music, sung in Swahili, French, and English, was wonderful!



Our own volunteer choir director, Mara, (far left) was the accompanist.

## Retreats

*Rest – Reflect – Renew*

### **Black Catholics Retreat**

One council member attended the weekend Black Catholics Retreat in Sedalia, Colorado in May.

The annual retreat is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Denver's Office of Black Catholic Ministry.

### **Bishop's Retreat for Priests**

In October, CSCBC reached out in support of this retreat by assisting with providing snack bags for the participants. Printed material included CSCBC brochures and bookmarks.





# Lent

## *Prayer and Fasting*

Council members led a session of the Stations of the Cross at St. Francis of Assisi in Colorado Springs.

Family members and friends assisted as readers and candle-bearers.



Group with pastor, Fr. Kochivar.

## **“Catholic Fire”**

### *Mass and Fellowship with College Students*



Twice a year CSCBC attends Mass with and sponsors a meal for college students at the Newman Center, adjacent to the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Council members fellowship with the students during the meal.

## Annual Commemoration of our Patron Saint

Every year in November we celebrate the life of St. Martin de Porres by having a light dinner for parishioners and guests at different parishes throughout the diocese.

In 2025 the dinner was held at St. Peter Catholic Church in Monument, Colorado.



St. Peter parishioner (left) accepts  
Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the parish.

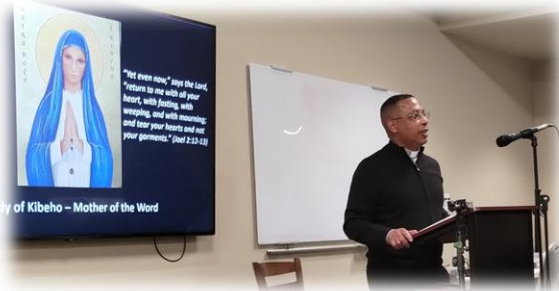
## Teaching - Learning - Informing - Networking

### NBCC Regional Conference

Two members attended the one-day conference held in Denver in February.

### "Tapping into Theology"

Council members were in Monument in March at St. Peter Catholic Church's monthly "Tapping into Theology" to hear our Spiritual Advisor speak on the Our Lady of Kibeho apparitions, the Seven Sorrows Rosary, and the effects of the Rwandan genocide.



## **National Association of Black Catholic Administrators (NABCA)**

Our Spiritual Advisor represented Colorado Springs at the annual meeting held in Denver in September.



## **African Catholic Association, Archdiocese of Denver**

In October the council accepted the invitation to Denver's African Catholic Association's annual "Africa Day".

Mass was followed by a delicious dinner of cultural foods.





## Published Information

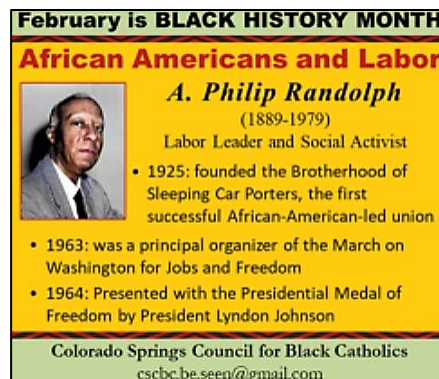
The council publishes evangelical and informative articles and ads in the diocese's publications.

### Printed articles in 2025:

- "National Black Catholic Congress comes to Colorado"
- "Our Lady of Kibeho – The Modern-Day Marian Apparition in Rwanda, Africa"
- "Celebrating Black Catholic History Month – An African-American Journey to Canonization"

### Ads in 2025:

- Black History Month – *African Americans and Labor*
- Easter – *1 Cor 6:14*
- Juneteenth – *Luke 4:18-19*
- Black Catholic History Month – *Black Catholics on the Canonization Journey*



## Other Media

The council was represented on one of the diocese's podcasts, "The Summit", in February. Discussion focused on the council as well as African-Americans with open causes for canonization.

## Catholic Education

Almost since its inception in 1990, the Colorado Springs Council for Black Catholics (CSCBC) has had a particular interest in Catholic education.

Donations, and proceeds from fundraisers are used to assist families with the cost of expenses for their children in Catholic schools through the "Mary Aurelia De Witt Memorial Scholarship". The scholarship is independent of any similar program and requires completing an application and an essay written by the student.

CSCBC is extremely grateful to everyone who donated to its scholarship fund, not only in 2025 but also in years prior.

***Thank you very much!***

*Please let CSCBC know if you donate to its scholarship fund so we can ensure the money is credited accurately.*

CSCBC is enrolled in the King Soopers (Kroger Company) Community Rewards Program to help finance the council's scholarship fund.

If you are interested in using your King Soopers loyalty card for this fundraising effort, instructions are at this link:

<https://www.diocs.org/Portals/0/DNNGalleryPro/uploads/2024/4/11/KingSoopersRewardPgm.pdf>

(Black and Indian Mission grant funds are not used for this scholarship.)

### **Book Outreach**

As part of its outreach to Catholic education, CSCBC continued its tradition of providing books and other material related to Catholicism and people of color to the Catholic schools in the diocese:

- Six K-8 schools
- Two high schools
- Newman Center for college students

Additionally, one parish library received a book.

### **Support**

Four council members attended the annual gala at one of the Catholic high schools.

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith,  
we have peace with God through  
our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Through him we have obtained access  
to this grace in which we stand,  
and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.*

*More than that,  
we rejoice in our sufferings,  
knowing that suffering produces endurance,*

*and endurance produces character,  
and character produces hope,*

*and hope does not disappoint us,  
because God's love  
has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Romans 5:1-5

## Black Catholics on the Canonization Journey



*Venerable  
Pierre  
Toussaint*



*Venerable  
Augustus  
Tolton*



*Venerable  
Mary Lange*



*Venerable  
Henriette  
DeLille*



*Servant of God  
Julia Greeley*



*Servant of God  
Martin Maria  
de Porres Ward*



*Servant of God  
Thea Bowman*

Colorado Springs Council for Black Catholics