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Sunset

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Sunset

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*For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Sixteen years ago, at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the BCTS in Boston, *The Journal of the Black Catholic Symposium* was born. It was an historic occasion. For years – since the birth of the BCTS – the idea of our own publication was an aspiration. For historian Fr. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., a charter member of our organization, preserving the history, research and scholarship of Black Catholics had been a driving passion.

When [Fr. Cyprian] would visit Black parishes, fundamentally the people wanted to know “What is our history in the Church?” Their questions became his as well. ... When *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* was published in 1990 by Crossroads, it offered what so many Black Catholics had been waiting for – the opportunity to understand from a historical point of view their ancestors’ places in and contributions to the Church.¹

As an historian, Fr. Cyprian deeply understood the urgency of preserving our work through publication. So many of us were producing quality scholarship that was being rejected by mainstream journals whose editorial boards either preferred work that reflected the concerns and experiences of mainstream scholars, or couldn’t understand or appreciate the significance of the issues fueling Black Catholic research. If our work was never published, our knowledge would die with us. Fr. Cyprian, like so many others in the BCTS, felt that establishing our own *Journal* and publishing our work was one of the most important and impactful actions we could take as an organization. He wanted us to leave our own historical record for future generations. So, when I first joined the BCTS in 1997, the concept of the *Journal* had already been formed. And when Fr. Thaddeus Posey, O.F.M. Cap.² produced *Theology, A Portrait in Black: Proceedings of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium, Number One*, he set the stage for us. In fact, by adding “Number One” to the title, he made it clear that additional volumes were anticipated. At first, we reached out to several presses in hopes that one would take on the work of a *Journal* or *Proceedings*. We contacted Orbis, Crossroads, and University of Notre Dame Press, among others. No one was interested at that time, however. So we made the decision

¹ Cecilia Moore and Kimberly Flint-Hamilton, “Cyprian Davis, O.S.B.: To Walk a Path, To Be Transformed, and To Transform.” *The Journal of the Black Catholic Symposium* 4 (2010): p. 48.

² See Kimberly Flint-Hamilton and Cecilia Moore, “In Memoriam: Father Thaddeus Posey, O.F.M. Cap.” *The Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium* 7 (2013): 29-45.

to publish our own *Journal* at that historic Boston meeting. Fortuity Press – owned and operated by affiliate member Steven Hamilton – would become our publisher.

Fr. Cyprian agreed to serve as editor of the *Journal*. A few months after the meeting ended, he called me and requested that I serve with him on the editorial board. And so Fr. Cyprian became editor-in-chief and I became editor. For the next two years we worked together. It wasn't long before Cecilia Moore joined our editorial team. A few years later Diana Hayes joined us as book review editor. Steven eventually joined the editorial board as well. Our most recent edition to the board is Joseph Flipper.

The *Journal* has been an important part of our lives for nearly two decades. It has been a source of great pride for us to have supported Black Catholic scholars and scholarship and created a quality product, a lasting record of our work for all generations. Sixteen years is a long time, however, and the time has come for new and fresh approaches.

So Volume 14 marks the sunset of our editorial board's work on the *Journal*. And like all sunsets, a new dawn is right around the corner. We pass the torch on to a new editorial board with new vision and fresh ideas and approaches to this essential work. Even as we step back and focus on other projects, we are eager to see how that new vision manifests and what it produces, secure in the faith that it rests in good and capable hands.

