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STATEMENT OF BLACK CATHOLIC CLERGY CAUCUS
APRIL 18, 1968

The Catholic Church in the United States is primarily a white racist institution, has addressed itself primarily to white society and is definitely a part of that Society. We feel her primary though not exclusive work is in the area of institutional, attitudinal and societal change. Within the ghetto, the role of the Church is no longer that of spokesman and leader, but apart from a more direct spiritual role, must now be that of supporter and learner. This is the role that White priests have not been accustomed to playing and are not psychologically prepared to play.

The Catholic Church apparently is not cognizant of changing attitudes in the Black Community and is not making the necessary meaningful and realistic adjustments. The present attitude of the Black Community has developed to one of Black people controlling and making decisions for the people in the Black Community. This does not mean that Black leadership is to be exercised only in the Black Community, but must function throughout the entire gamut of ecclesial society.

It is imperative that the Church recognize this change. White persons working in the Black

Community must be educated to these changing attitudes, and must be prepared to accept and function in conjunction with the prevailing attitudes of the Black Community.

One of these changes must be a reevaluation of present attitudes towards Black militancy. The violence occurring in the Black Communities has been categorically condemned and has called forth a wide variety of response, from "shoot to kill" to the recommendation of the Kerner Report. Such violence has even been specified as "Negro violence," as though there were a substantial or significant difference between violence in the Black community and that which has occurred consistently throughout the history of the United States and of the world. Black people are fully aware that violence has been consciously and purposely used by America from its fight for independence to its maintenance of White supremacy. Black people are encouraged to fight abroad for White America's freedom and liberty. We are now asking why it is not moral to fight for his liberty at home. We go on record as recognizing:

1. the reality of militant protest;
2. that non-violence in the sense of Black non-violence hoping for concessions after White brutality is dead;

3. that the same principles on which we justify legitimate self-defense and just warfare must be applied to violence when it represents Black response to White violence.
4. the appropriateness of responsible positive militancy against racism as the only Christian attitude as against any social evil.

"Because of its past implicit and active support of prevailing attitudes and institutions of America, the Church is now in an extremely weak position in the Black Community. In fact, the Catholic Church is rapidly dying in the Black Community. In many areas, there is a serious defection especially on the part of Black Catholic youth. The Black Community no longer looks to the Catholic Church with hope. And unless the Church, by an immediate, effective and total reversing of its present practices, rejects and denounces all forms of racism within its ranks and institutions and in the Society of which she is part, she will become unacceptable in the Black Community.

We, the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, strongly and deeply believe that there are few choices left to the Catholic Church, and unless it is to remain an enclave speaking to itself, it must begin to consult the Black members of the Church, clerical, religious and lay. It must also begin to utilize the personnel resources of Black

Catholics in leadership and advisory positions in the whole Church and allow them to direct, for the most part, the mission of the Church in the Black Community. It is especially important that the financial resources channelled [sic] into the work of the Church in the Black Community be allocated and administered by Black Catholic leadership.

To this end, in charity, we demand:

1. That there be Black priests in decision-making positions on the diocesan level, and above all in the Black Community.
2. That a more effective utilization of Black priests be made. That the situation where the majority of Black priests are in institutions be changed; that Black priests be given a choice of assignment on the basis of inclination and talent.
3. That where no Black priests belong to the diocese, efforts be made to get them in, or at least consultation with Black priests or Black-thinking White priests be made.
4. That every effort be made to recruit Black men for the priesthood. Black priests are better qualified for this recruitment at a time when the Catholic Church is almost irrelevant to the young Black man.
5. That dioceses provide centers of training for White priests intending to survive in Black communities.
6. That within the framework of the United States Catholic Conference, a Black-directed department be set up to deal

with the Church's role in the struggle of Black people for freedom.

7. That in all of these areas Black religious be utilized as much as possible.
8. That Black men, married as well as single, be ordained permanent deacons to aid in this work of the Church.
9. That each diocese allocate a substantial fund to be [used] in establishing and supporting permanent programs for Black leadership training.

