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Kimberly Flint-Hamilton
Stetson University

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A Year Of Commemorations

Kimberly Flint-Hamilton, Senior Editor
Stetson University

The year 2010 is a very special one for the BCTS. This year we commemorate a number of very significant events, all of which have contributed to making our organization what it is today.

Thirty years ago, in 1980, The Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS) first opened its doors. Born out of the passion of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus and refined during that first meeting of the BCTS in 1978, the IBCS has been instrumental in the formation of adults committed to an authentically Black and Catholic ministry. The Institute has produced dozens of Masters in Theology, several of whom have gone on to earn doctorates in Theology. Who can say how many lives have been enriched by the Institute? Upon completion of their certification programs and Masters Degrees, students return to their communities with a renewed appreciation for and understanding of the Word of God and the needs of the Black Catholic community. Thousands may already have been touched by the Institute. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow and C. Vanessa White reflect on the Institute's thirty years of ministry.

Sadly, just ten years following the opening of the IBCS's programs, we lost one of its founders, Sr. Dr. Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A.. Sr. Thea's vision illuminated the paths of many. We celebrate life of this remarkable woman who inspired so many people by commemorating the twentieth anniversary of her passing with reflections by Cyprian Davis O.S.B. and Maurice J. Nutt, C.Ss. R.

This year the Journal launches a new initiative. The Journal's *Archival Project* is dedicated to preserving the histories of our senior members by a day or two of interviews, followed by an

essay in the Journal that summarizes the highlights of our colleagues' accomplishments, inspirations, and experiences. In this year's Journal we begin the *Archival Project* with our first essay which celebrates the life of one of our founding members, Dom. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. – a fitting start as Fr. Cyprian celebrated his 80th birthday on September 9, 2010! We hope to continue the *Archival Project* with an essay published in the Journal every year. Additionally, a tribute to Fr. Cyprian and his contributions to Black Catholic scholarship are offered by guest contributor Christopher J. Kauffman, editor of *U.S. Catholic Historian*. Kauffman dedicated the Winter issue of *U.S.C.H.* Volume 28 (2010) to Fr. Cyprian and his groundbreaking work.

This year's articles include M. Shawn Copeland's paper reflecting on 40 years of black theological scholarship (*The Role of the Black Catholic Theologian and Scholar in Today's Context*), Diane Batts Morrow's article on the agency shown by black Catholics in their parishes between the years 1817 and 1941 ("*Righteous Discontent:*" *Black Catholic Protest in the United States of American, 1817-1941*), Nathaniel Holmes' paper engaging the debate on the redemptive nature of suffering in African American religious thought (*Redemptive Suffering and Christology in African American Christian Theology*), and Kwame Assenyoh's analysis of racism in the Catholic Church and its role in the current decline of Black Catholicism (*The Decline of Black Catholicism: What's Racial Slavery To Do With It?*). We also review three books: *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* by our convener, Bryan Massingale; *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* by founding member and former convener M. Shawn Copeland; and, in honor of Sr. Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A. *Thea's Song: The Life of Thea Bowman* by Charlene Smith, F.S.P.A. and John Feister.

Volume 4 of the Journal of the BCTS continues to break new ground and promises to engage and stimulate. You won't be able to put it down!