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## A Vision for the Future

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# A Vision for the Future

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Nearly thirty years ago, a group of young Catholic scholars gathered together to start what would be a long journey. The Reverend Thaddeus Posey convened them in 1978, and they met once again in 1979. They began meeting at that time because they all shared the same vision, to form a theology “that is authentically Black and truly Catholic,” as stated in what would become their Constitution.

More than a decade passed. Then, in 1991, Jamie T. Phelps, O.P., reconvened the group. Since then, the Black Catholic Theological Symposium has met almost every year, developing their vision together and offering mutual support, creating a forum that has allowed them to share ideas, critique each other’s work, find solutions to problems of pedagogy and pastoral concerns, and meet other like-minded scholars with whom they might collaborate. In short, these young Black scholars went about forming their own surrogate academic community, one that could provide all the support that their real academic communities were often failing to do for them.

Jamie Phelps, O.P. led the BCTS from 1991 until 2001 when Shawn Copeland took the reins. In 2005 Copeland stepped down as convener and passed the leadership role to me.

One goal of the BCTS has consistently been to disseminate the work of its membership. Even today, thirty years later, Black scholars still sometimes struggle to find

validation in academic circles. Research by Black scholars is often overlooked and ignored on the grounds that it is non-canonical, or because it challenges the existing canons. The Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium represents a step toward changing what has been a prevailing, and flawed, ideology.

The Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium showcases the research of some of our best scholars. It also serves as a way to record valuable research and approaches for scholars of all background.

The BCTS editorial committee hopes to produce a volume of the Journal on a regular basis, perhaps annually or every other year. By so doing, we not only allow those who cannot attend annual meetings to keep apprised of the work of fellow members. We make our discoveries and observations available to all others with similar interests and approaches. We record and codify our history. And we're helping to shape the future of Catholic scholarly discourse for generations to come.