



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



February 14, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On September 12, 1987, during his apostolic visit to the United States of America, Pope Saint John Paul II addressed a gathering of African American Catholics in New Orleans with the following words, “It is important to realize that there is no black Church, no white Church, no American Church; but there is and must be, in the one Church of Jesus Christ, a home for blacks, whites, Americans, every culture and race. What I said on another occasion, I willingly repeat: ‘The Church is catholic... because she is able to present in every human context the revealed truth, preserved by her intact in its divine content, in such a way as to bring it into contact with the lofty thoughts and just expectations of every individual and every people.’”

These words of Pope Saint John Paul II describe the goals and fruits of the ***Black and Indian Mission Collection*** that for 137 years has provided the financial means for evangelization and education among the Native Peoples of America and Alaska and African Americans in a spirit of solidarity throughout the United States of America.

As the local Church of Fort Worth, it is our obligation to foster the development of these distinct communities within the one Body of Christ here in North Texas and throughout the Church Universal in the United States and throughout the world. Your past support has provided catechetical resources for education efforts among these communities to enable greater participation in the common good of the Church and our nation. Your past support has also provided tuition assistance to African American students attending Catholic schools right here in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Our contribution to this collection enables us to respond to the words of Pope Francis addressed to our Congressional representatives on September 24, 2015, “It is difficult to judge the past by the criteria of the present. Nonetheless, when the stranger in our midst appeals to us, we must not repeat the sins and the errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible, as we educate new generations not to turn their back on our “neighbors” and everything around us.” As your bishop, I prayerfully and respectfully ask that you join me in supporting the ***Black and Indian Mission Collection*** next weekend. With esteem and affection, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Michael F. Olson

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

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