



IBCS SUMMER SESSION 2026 JUNE 28 - JULY 17, 2026

2026 Master of Theology Degree Program Associate Director, C. Vanessa White, D.Min.

The Master of Theology Program (Th.M.) is the one graduate theology program in the USA taught from Black Catholic perspectives. Its interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on Black approaches, critiques, and contributions to systematic and pastoral theologies, ministries, aesthetics, philosophy, and education. Established in 1980 on the campus of Xavier University of Louisiana, the IBCS is dedicated to scholarship, prayer, worship and community-building. The ThM program forms students for theologically and culturally competent service as ordained, religious or lay ecclesial ministers in the Black community, church and community at-large. The Degree program welcomes scholars seeking ongoing religious study, visiting graduate students and ministers who desire to enhance their general theological studies by exploring the Catholic tradition and its particular meaning for the social and spiritual experiences of Black people in the U.S. and beyond.

MORNING COURSES

IBTH 5030 Black Approaches to Scripture. Presents Black history, culture, and experience as a locus for responding to the Word of Scripture. Methods and tools of biblical exegesis are introduced; similarities between biblical mentality and Black mentality, and problem texts are also

discussed. **Mark Enemali, C.S.Sp., Ph.D.** (M-F, 8:45am - 11:45am) **Core Course.** (3 units).

IBTH 5081 Christology. Studies the Kingdom of God as announced in the teaching, healing ministry, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, particularly as these are understood in the African American community from the perspective of liberation and black theologies. **Byron Wratee, Ph.D.** (M-F, 8:45am - 11:45am) **Area Requirement.** (3 units).

IBTH 5430 Spirituality of Black Literature. Uses selected works of African American literature as a resource for the study of the spirituality of a people. It attempts to understand and articulate the spirituality expressed in the words, songs, prayers, relationships, and daily lives of Black people, as they are found in imaginative works. **Ernest Gibson, Ph.D.** (M-F, 8:45am - 11:45 am) **Area Requirement.** (3 units).

AFTERNOON COURSES

IBTH 5010 Black Approaches to Theology. Stresses the nature, methods and sources of Black Theology; the reasons justifying its existence and its relationship to other theologies within the Roman Catholic Tradition. **Cary W Dabney, Ph.D.** (M-F, 1:45pm - 4:45pm) **Introduction.** (3 units).

IBTH 5600 Moral Questions in the Black Community. Intends to establish a dialogue (a mutual critique and enrichment) between African American and Roman Catholic approaches to ethical issues, focusing on matters of particular concern to African Americans. **Nicole Symmonds, Ph.D.** (M-F, 1:45pm - 4:45pm) **Core Course.** (3 units).



IBCS SUMMER SESSION 2026

Institute for Black Catholic Studies

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www.xula.edu/ibcs



"...those who wait on the Lord will
renew their strength..." ~ Is 40:31



Greetings!

The Institute for Black Catholic Studies is a school of pastoral theology and ministry established in 1980 at Xavier University of Louisiana. The

Institute's mission is to form Christian disciples for evangelization in today's Church and society. Participants are immersed in the faith through graduate and continuing education scholarship supported by a rich community life of prayer, worship, and cultural activities. In 2026, the Institute will focus on Catholic principles of synodality, promoted by the late Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV to form a more inclusive Church, a more collaborative people of God. Consider joining us this summer in historic New Orleans where together, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will learn and practice synodal values of communion, mission and participation to build up the 21st century Body of Christ. Use the QR code to learn more. Ashé!

**Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, D.Min.,
IBCS Director**



XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA ~ INSTITUTE OF BLACK CATHOLIC STUDIES

Week 1: June 29 - July 3, 2026

Week 2: July 6 - July 10, 2026

Week 3: July 13 - July 17, 2026

CORE 0006A Black Catholic Ethics: Social Justice and the Christian Experience. Examine Catholic Social Teaching in relationship with contemporary ethical issues of Black and Brown communities. Engage theology and spiritual narratives to navigate moral dilemmas in the light of Jesus Christ, the epistemological and ethical starting point **Ms. LaShaunda Reese, Ph.D.** (M-F 8:45am - 11:45am).

CORE 0003I The Pauline Letters and Synodality in Black Church. Study the intersection of 21st century synodality and the letters of St. Paul, reaching back into the New Testament to imagine Black Catholic approaches that highlight social justice, digital evangelization and leadership development, concerns of Gen X and Gen Z Catholics. **Fr. John Segun Odeyemi, Ph.D.** (M-F 8:45am - 11:45am).

CATF 24 Tie Up a Lion: Catholic Social Teaching and the Nguza Saba. Kwanzaa celebrates African American family and culture. Although not expressly religious, Kwanzaa principles echo holy Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching. Using these and other spiritual resources, students will create action plans that support effective pastoral ministry and bold Christian discipleship. **Ms. Charlene Howard, M.A.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

CORE0001J Synodality: What Does It Mean for the Black Church? Synodality, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, fosters communion, co-participation, and mission among all the Catholic faithful. Explore how Black Catholics across generations are called to transform the church to meet the complex challenges of our parishes and times. **Ms. Trimiko Melançon, Ph.D.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

CORE 0008D Eulogy or Paschal Mystery?: A False Dichotomy. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) advises that the funeral homily at Mass focus exclusively on the Paschal Mystery: eulogies are to be avoided. This class will assert that both can be accomplished with integrity in the same homily. Study techniques and homilies which celebrate the homegoing of the deceased in Christ's life, death and resurrection. **Fr. Manuel Williams, C.R., Th.M.** (M-F 8:45am - 11:45am).

CORE 0034L Lift Every Voice: Synodality in Black Catholic Liturgy. Enter into African American liturgy through the lens of synodality, highlighting the role of the assembly as full and active participants. Experience communal song, preaching, gesture and prayer that embodies synodality and celebrates God's liberating presence in worship. **Ms. Lauren Warner, Ph.D.Cand.** (M-F 8:45am - 11:45am).

CORE 0005C Rome to Home: Black Catholic Spirituality. Reflect on the richness of Black spirituality through Fr. Lee's 2025 pilgrimage experiences in Italy and Montgomery, AL. He will connect culture, memory, suffering, and hope—affirming both spiritual experiences as deeply Black and authentically Catholic. **Fr. Roy A. Lee, Ph.D.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

CORE 0002J Lord, Teach Us to Pray. In African American tradition, prayer unites God and humanity to bring about change. But many Christians panic when invited to lead prayer. In this course, gain confidence in praying aloud by leaning into the fundamentals of the ministry, learning different approaches and practicing under the leadership of an experienced prayer leader. **Rev. Dwight Webster, Ph.D.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

LDER 0040 Local and Parish Histories for Black Catholic Evangelization. History lovers will learn how to use their communities' histories to evangelize by 1) identifying and conserving Black Catholic resources; 2) workshopping ideas for local and parish-based historical pieces; and 3) planning ways to use Black histories to spread the good news of Jesus Christ today. **Ms. Cecilia A. Moore, Ph.D.** (M-F, 8:45am - 11:45am).

CATF0023 The Fire This Time: An Introduction. Join an editor of *The Fire This Time: A Black Catholic Sourcebook* to explore key cultural and liturgical resources related to the faith journey of the African American community. Guided reflections and discussions will provide invaluable information, spiritual formation and practical insights for pastoral ministry in these times. **Ms. Kim Harris, Ph.D.** (M-F, 8:45am - 11:45am).

CORE 0002H Sexuality, Gender, Race and a New Theology of Black Embodiment. Participants will engage a number of questions: How are the experiences of LGBTQ+ persons changing our understanding of God and ministry formation? On these questions, what does a welcoming Church look like to Gen Z? What difference does our shared Blackness make when we are divided on these topics? **Mr. Craig Ford, Ph.D.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

LIMU0003 Music Ministers Formed and Fashioned. Ministers will find safe space for experimenting and developing new skills to lead African Americans – choir and assembly - in sacred song. Explore the rich history of music ministry and its relevance to biblical teachings, perspectives that are fundamental to creating worship experiences that form the people to follow Christ in their everyday walk. **Mr. Meyer Chambers, M.L.M.** (M-F 1:45pm - 4:45pm).

SREP 0001 Elders Retreat: Renewed - Revived-Ready! African American Elders (age 62+) spend the week in prayer, reflection, discussion and recreation. Come celebrate the legacy of eldership in the Black Catholic community. Let the Spirit renew, revive, and get you ready in the spirit of wisdom that continues to sustain our community. Limit 15 retreatants. **Chaplain Thelma Lucas, Th.M.** (M-F, 9am - 11am and 2pm - 4pm).



CONTINUING EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT (C&E) COURSE OFFERINGS

Ms. Valerie Shields, M.A.R.S.,
Interim Associate Director

JUNE 28 - JULY 17, 2026

C&E Programs provide lifelong learning and spiritual formation for the faithful, pastoral leaders, administrators, teachers and others who minister with Black communities or serve in multi-cultural settings. C&E courses offer unique opportunities to grow in understandings of Black Catholicism and its impact on ministry, community and the Church at-large.

Students are assessed on a pass/fail basis and receive 1.5 CEUs for each course successfully completed. There is a limit of 15 students per class unless otherwise noted.

