

HARAMBEE

Banquet

REFLECT

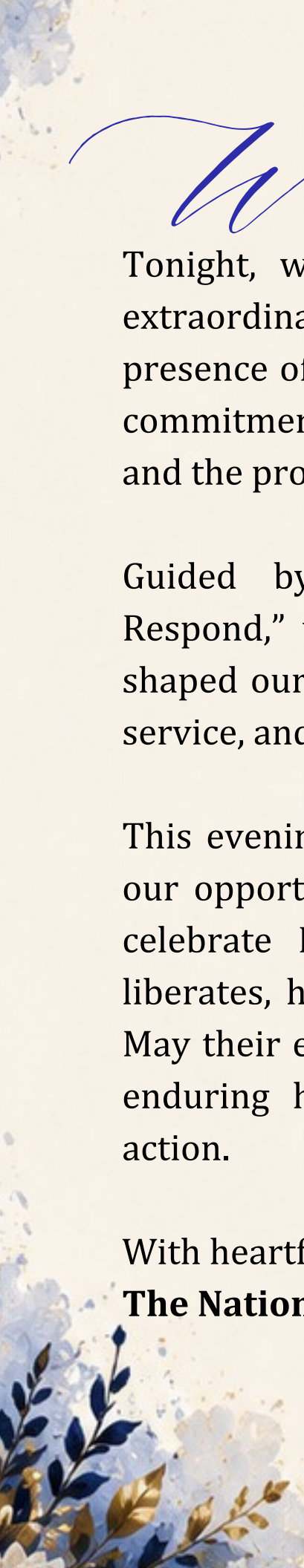
RENEW

RESPOND



— 2026 —

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY



Welcome

Tonight, we gather with grateful hearts to honor two extraordinary women whose lives and service reflect the presence of God among us. Their courage, faithfulness, and commitment remind us of the strength found in sisterhood and the profound difference one life can make.

Guided by our conference theme, “Reflect, Renew, Respond,” we reflect upon the faithful legacies that have shaped our journey, renew our commitment to justice and service, and respond with courage to God’s call.

This evening is about more than presenting awards—it is our opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude. As we celebrate Harriet and Julia, we honor leadership that liberates, heals, inspires, and strengthens our community. May their examples encourage us to live with radical faith, enduring hope, and a steadfast commitment to sacred action.

With heartfelt gratitude and abundant joy,
The National Black Sisters Conference



PROGRAMME

WORDS OF WELCOME

Sr. Rita Michelle Proctor, OSP

HOSTESSES OF CEREMONIES

Sr. Lakesha Church, CPPS

Ms. Tonya Taylor Dorsey

“LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING”

(ALL STAND)

Led by: Ms. Annie Torian

INVOCATION

Ms. Cassandra Holloway

SUPPER

AWARDS CEREMONY

REMARKS OF GRATITUDE

Sr. Barbara Spears, SNJM

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

1871 -1938

Verse 1

Lift every voice and sing, Till earth
and heaven ring, Ring with the
harmonies of Liberty; Let our
rejoicing rise High as the list'ning
skies, Let it resound loud as the
rolling sea. Sing a song full of the
faith that the dark past has taught
us, Sing a song full of the hope that
the present has brought us; Facing
the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Verse 2

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the
chast'ning rod, Felt in the days when
hope unborn had died; Yet with a
steady beat, Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our
fathers sighed? We have come over a
way that with tears has been watered.
We have come, treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, Till now we
stand at last Where the white gleam
of our bright star is cast.

Verse 3

God of our weary years, God of our silent
tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far
on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light, Keep us forever in the
path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the
places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the
world, we forget Thee; Shadowed beneath
Thy hand, May we forever stand, True to
our God, True to our native land

HARRIET TUBMAN AWARDEE



Sister Lynn Marie Ralph, SBS, is a member of the religious congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, founded by Saint Katharine Drexel. She has been a religious sister for 43 years. As an educator, Sister received her BA in English Literature from the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She received a Master's Degree in Catholic School Leadership from Seton Hall University as well as a Certificate of Participation in "Pastoring in the African American Community" from the Institute of Black Catholic Studies, Xavier University of Louisiana.

Sister Lynn Marie is a long-time member of the National Black Sisters Conference. An organization that supports the dignity and rights of women of color.

Sister Lynn Marie has ministered as a teacher and principal in Philadelphia, Harlem, Birmingham, Memphis, New Orleans, New Iberia, and Newark, NJ. Currently, Sister serves as the Pastoral Care Coordinator at Holy Redeemer Food Pantry in Meadowbrook, PA. She also oversees the Pastoral Care Department, which includes clergy of various denominations. She also works at the Holy Redeemer Food Pantry, which serves more than one thousand families per month.

Sister Lynn Marie has served as a retreat director in various churches and schools. Sister had the opportunity to serve as retreat director during a weekend for the Pierre Toussaint Scholars of the Archdiocese of New York Office for Black Catholics.

Sister Lynn Marie served as the Director of Religious Education at St. Martin de Porres Church in Philadelphia for 11 years. She had the opportunity to minister in the Office of Black Catholics for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Her philanthropic activities included serving as an editor on the Board of Trustees for the Tonya Dorsey and New Vision nonprofit foundation, which awarded scholarships to young African American music students.

In 2023, Sister Lynn Marie wrote the script for the Sacred Six on the road toward sainthood. It was performed by students from Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Academy in Washington, DC - SE at the National Black Catholic Congress XIII National Harbor, MD. This received rave reviews and national media coverage. She also served as the MC for the Gospel Concert along with her twin sister, which showcased the many talents of our youth.

Sister Lynn Marie is featured in the documentary, “The Total Gift,” the life of Saint Katharine Drexel. This documentary, filmed by Joyful Films, received an Emmy Award in 2025. She also shared with the Alumni of Xavier University the life of Saint Katharine Drexel entitled, “The Heart of Saint Katharine Drexel”. She has also written a reflection for a video presentation about Saint Katharine Drexel, which is featured on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia website.

Sister Lynn Marie was invited to give a reflection for the “Catholic Women Preach” website. March 30th (fourth Sunday of Lent – 2025): The Prodigal Son. The title was “The Prodigal Daughter from the perspective of a woman. This was based on the parable The Prodigal Son.

Sister Lynn Marie believes that it is important to Name, Claim, and Proclaim your journey of life. This means Naming the title of your written ongoing book of life, Claiming your story of who you are as called by God. Thus, having the opportunity to be a Proclaimer by giving witness to what God continues to do for you on your faith journey.

SPONSORS

The generous donation from Dr. Donna Baytop underwrote the banquet. She lovingly donated to honor and show appreciation for ***Sr. Josita Colbert, SNDdeN.***

Thank you, Dr. Baytop

A wonderful donation was received from the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, MN, for the purpose of transportation.

HOST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sr. Lynn Marie Ralph, SBS

Sr. Limètèze Pierre-Gilles, SSND

Sr. Rita Michelle Proctor, OSF

Sr. Josita Colbert, SNDdeN - Chair



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