



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

to host the

2027 CROSS CONFERENCE

Introduction

Catholic Religious Organizations Studying Slavery (CROSS) is seeking a partner to host the third biannual CROSS Conference. CROSS held two highly successful conferences first, at the Cardinal Rigali Center in St. Louis, MO in partnership with the Archdiocese of St. Louis October 30-31, 2023 and, second, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in partnership with the Center for the Study of Slavery and its Legacies on November 13-14, 2025.

In furtherance of the purpose of CROSS, we hold biannual conferences to promote engagement and understanding of Catholic slaveholding and restorative justice in the United States. Scholars, archivists, descendants, religious order and diocesan staff will come together to discuss this work and learn from others engaged in similar projects.

CROSS seeks a partner to assist in hosting a conference in late 2027 or early 2028. The conference, with approximately 150 attendees (plus partner affiliated invitees), will be held over two days at the host's facility. More details about the conference are included in this document.

What is CROSS?

Catholic Religious Organizations Studying Slavery (CROSS) was established in 2021 by twelve men and women representing nine dioceses and three religious organizations, convened to study the records of enslaved peoples in Catholic archives.

It is the embodiment of a discussion that has been ongoing for over a decade in the Catholic archives and history communities, where questions have been raised about access to records of the enslaved.

Our Mission

Recognizing that slavery is a sin, it is our mission to promote open and honest access to the historic record in order to achieve a more comprehensive and truthful telling of enslavement within the Catholic Church in the United States.

Our Purpose

Members of CROSS work collectively to improve access to the records of the enslaved and those who enslaved them. Additionally, in consultation with descendants of the enslaved, we promote active engagement with this subject, encourage discourse on the many legacies of slavery in the United States, and advocate for institutional responses, to a greater effect than would normally be beyond the limited means of each individual member.

Many descendant communities have ancestors who were enslaved to more than one religious order, individual, or institution. Within the past decade, several Catholic dioceses and religious orders have begun examining their histories of slaveholding to acknowledge more fully their participation in the evil of slavery and to work toward repairing the damage wrought by its enduring legacies.

We envision that, in partnership, diocesan organizations, religious orders, schools, and congregations, we can work to effect greater institutional responses that address the legacies of slavery, benefit descendant communities, and eradicate racism within our respective institutions.

Relationship with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

CROSS sends reports on its work to the USCCB Subcommittee on for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation.

The CROSS Conference

For the first conference in 2023 held at the Cardinal Rigali Center at Archdiocese of St. Louis, the theme was *Open Wide Our Archives: Truth, Transparency and Access*, which focused on research and access for collections and documents related to those enslaved the Church. The second conference held in November of 2025 in coordination with the Georgetown Center for the Study of Slavery and its Legacies and its theme was *Catholic Archives and Slavery: Research, Collaboration and Hope*. This second conference showcased not only a pilot project being undertaken by CROSS but also a series of projects from across the country, in archives, education, and archaeology that are working to uncover the past and make this information available.

The vision for the third conference is “Digging Deeper into Dialogue and Understanding.” In this third CROSS conference we hope to continue our work in showcasing projects from across the United States that look at the Church’s legacy of enslavement. But also we hope to center the perspective of the descendant community and to listen and learn from them.

In this era of the first American Pope whose own Louisiana family include both those who were enslaved and enslavers, the work of CROSS is more important that ever. In his first encyclical letter Pope Leo XIV acknowledged and apologized for the Catholic Church’s role in both the slave trade and chattel slavery. We must continue to seek a full understanding of these sins of the Catholic Church and bring them to light. It is only in the light of the Holy Spirit that the Church can atone for its sins.

The conference is aimed at bishops, diocesan staff, leaders of religious orders, archivists, the descendants of those who have been enslaved, researchers and historians, members of Black Catholic organizations, and anyone interested in racial justice and healing.

Conference Requirements

What CROSS will provide:

- The conference program, including speakers and content
- Programs for all worship and/or prayer services and presiders or leaders for all services
- Advertising for the conference
- Registration for all attendees
- Communications with conference attendees and speakers
- Staff registration table, provide names badges, and conference materials
- Conference insurance
- Free admission to the conference for a limited number of partner staff and/or students.

What the partner will provide:

- A single room that will hold at least 150 attendees
- Room capacity for holding a concurrent session for a group of up to 50 attendees
- A separate room/area for sponsor or exhibitor space
- Registration area
- Chapel or worship space for Mass or prayer service
- Access to catering services that can provide continental breakfast option, box lunches, coffee breaks
- Wi-Fi access for attendees and speakers
- Audiovisual and recording equipment in conference rooms (CROSS will provide laptop computers)
- Technical staff who can assist with onsite technology
- Facilities contact person.

Proposals

All proposals should include:

1. Information on items the partner can provide according to the “Conference Requirements;”
2. Information on nearby accommodations for conference attendees
3. Information about local public transportation and ADA accessibility at the facility
4. Description of the partner’s interest in promoting the discussion of slavery and its lasting legacies in the U.S. May include inclusivity statement, if applicable.

Timeline

The CROSS Planning Committee will evaluate the proposals received.

Step 1: Call for expressions of interest open (June - October 2026)

Proposals should be submitted by **Monday, November 2, 2026**, to admin@catholicstudyingslavery.org. Please enter CROSS 2027 Expression of Interest in the email subject field. Prospective hosts are encouraged to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Step 2: Proposal Discussion (November 2026 – December 2026)

The Planning Committee will meet with all prospective hosts to discuss their proposals.

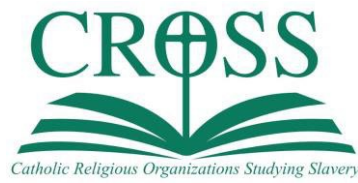
Step 3: Final Decision (January 2027)

The Planning Committee will make a recommendation to the CROSS Steering Committee, which will decide which proposal to accept.

Step 4: Notification (January 2027)

The successful and unsuccessful candidates will be advised of CROSS's decision.

The CROSS Planning Committee will begin in depth planning discussion of arrangements and timelines with the partner selected.



Open Wide Our Archives: Truth, Transparency, and Access

Cardinal Rigali Center, Archdiocese of St. Louis

October 30-31, 2023

DAY 1

8:00am-9:00am **Registration/Continental Breakfast**

9:00am-9:30am **Welcome and Introduction to Conference**

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Archbishop of St. Louis

9:30am-10:00am **Keynote Address**

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre, Archbishop of Louisville

10:00am-10:15am **Break**

10:15am-12:15pm **Session 1: Researching Enslavement within Catholic Institutions**

Speakers:

Reverend David Endres, Academic Dean and Associate Professor, The

Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary's Seminary of the West

Emilie Gagnet Leumas, PhD, Consultant

Pre-recorded Descendent Testimonials

Description:

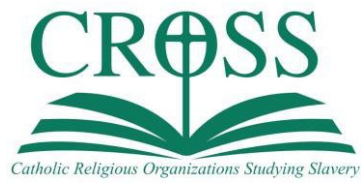
This session will address various sources found within Catholic archives that contain information about enslaved people and communities. Rev. David Endres and Emilie Leumas will discuss their own researching efforts to broaden the narrative on the Catholic Church's participation in slavery. Additionally, the audience will hear pre-recorded testimonials from descendants who have researched their own family histories and how Catholic archives played an essential role in their discoveries.

12:15pm-1:30pm **Lunch**

1:30pm-1:45pm **Remarks**

Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, Chairman, USCCB's Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism and Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, Archdiocese of Chicago

All sessions are held in the Fleur-de-Lis Room unless otherwise specified.



1:45pm-3:00pm **Session 2: CROSS Best Practices Manual Overview**

Speakers:

Stephanie A.T. Jacobe, PhD, Director of Archives, Archdiocese of Washington, DC

Thomas Lester, Director Archives and Library, Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts

Description:

This session introduces the *CROSS: Best Practices Manual*. This manual assists Catholic institutions and their archives in identifying records of enslavement, promoting access to these documents for research, and encouraging engagement and discourse within the institution and its wider community.

3:15pm-4:15pm

St. Vincent de Paul Chapel

Mass

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Archbishop of St. Louis

Reverend Patrick McDevitt, CM

6:00pm-7:30pm

Clifton Ballroom at Drury Inn & Suites

Reception

Please join us for appetizers and conversation in the Clifton Ballroom. Cash bar available. Drury Inn & Suites St. Louis Forest Park is located at 2111 Sulphur Ave, St. Louis, MO 63139

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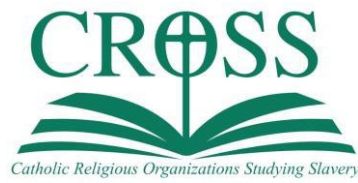


Archdiocese of Boston



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

All sessions are held in the Fleur-de-Lis Room unless otherwise specified.



DAY 2

8:00am-9:00am **Registration/Continental Breakfast**

9:00am-9:30am **Prayer Service**
St. Vincent de Paul Chapel Danielle Harrison, President, Mission, Faith, Equity Consulting, LLC

9:30am-11:30am **Session 3: Reconciling with the Past: Programs on Enslavement within the Church**

Speakers:

Sister Eleanor Craig, SL, Loretto Community Historian
Eric Fair, Director of Archives, Archdiocese of St. Louis
Reverend Tim Kesicki, SJ, Descendants, Truth & Reconciliation Foundation

Description:

This session provides three case studies of Catholic religious communities and dioceses who have initiated and executed an investigation into their involvement with slavery and how they communicated their findings to their communities and the wider public.

11:30pm-12:30pm **Lunch**

12:30pm-2:30pm **Session 4: Outreach and Dialogue with Descendant Communities**

Speakers:

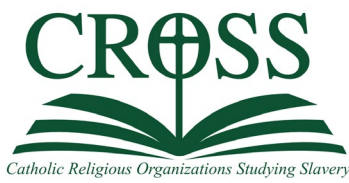
Rashonda Alexander, MBM, City Planning Executive, Descendant of Jack & Sally Queen, Cradle Catholic and Member of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish
Rita Hollie, JD, NSW, MAPS; Advisor to Slavery, History, Memory, and Reconciliation Project
Kelly Schmidt, Reparative Public Historian, WashU & Slavery Project, Washington University in St. Louis; Lead Researcher, Georgetown Visitation History of Enslaved People Project

Description:

This session focuses on ways to foster healing and reconciliation by building partnerships with descendant communities. It will offer insights from an institutional perspective as well as host an open dialogue from descendants of those enslaved by Catholic institutions.

2:30-3:00pm **Closing Remarks with Reflection and Prayer**

Dr. Amelia Blanton-Hibner, Dean of Mission Integration, Visitation Academy of St. Louis



***Catholic Archives and Slavery:
Research, Collaboration, and Hope***
Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
November 13-14, 2025

DAY 1

8:30am-11:00am **Registration**

9:00am-11:00am **Tours**

Archives of Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation

Visit Georgetown University's Booth Family Center for Special Collections on the 5th floor of Lauinger Library to view original materials documenting the history of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus and Georgetown University's historical ties to slavery, as well as the lives of enslaved people who lived on the Jesuit plantations in Maryland, labored on Georgetown's campus, and worshipped at Holy Trinity Church.

Times: 9:00am, 9:30am, 10:00am

Location: Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Lauinger Library (5th Floor), 3700 O St NW, Washington, DC 20057

Walking Tour of Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation at Georgetown

Join Professor Adam Rothman, Director of Georgetown's Center for the Study of Slavery and Its Legacies, for a 75-minute walking tour of sites on Georgetown University's campus connected to the school's historical ties to slavery, the landscape of historical memory, and the process of reckoning and reconciliation. Meet at the statue of John Carroll. Locations will include Isaac Hawkins Hall, Anne Marie Becraft Hall, Georgetown's Civil War Centennial Plaque, and Healy Hall.

Time: 9:15am-10:30am

Location: John Carroll Statue, Healy Circle, Washington, DC 20057

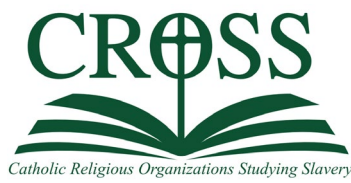
Tour of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School

Enslaved people lived and labored at Georgetown Visitation from its founding, in 1799, through the end of slavery in Washington, DC, in 1862. Visitation invites conference participants to visit sacred places on campus, such as the site of living quarters identified in 2024, and learn about enslaved people who lived and labored there. As part of the program, a special pop-up exhibit will feature archival materials offering deeper insight into the stories of enslaved people at Visitation. Please note Visitation is about a 10-minute walk from the Healy Center, and parts of this tour may not be ADA-accessible. Contact elizabeth.silver@visi.org with any questions.

Time: 9:15am-10:45am

Location: 1524 35th St NW, Washington, DC 20007

Registration and all sessions will be held in the Healey Family Student Center - Social Room - unless noted otherwise.



DAY 1

11:15am-11:30am **Welcoming Remarks and Opening Prayer**

Speakers:

Joseph A. Ferrara, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff,
Georgetown University
Emilie Gagnet Leumas, Consultant, EGL Consultants, LLC
Joyce Jones, Director of the Office of Racial Harmony and Black
Catholic Ministries, Archdiocese of St. Louis

Description:

Joseph A. Ferrara will open the conference by welcoming attendees to the Georgetown campus for this year's conference. Following the welcome, Emilie Leumas will briefly introduce CROSS to those who are first-time attendees and share a few key updates on CROSS's progress since its inaugural conference in 2023. Joyce Jones will then lead the opening prayer.

11:30am-12:45pm **Session 1: Pilot Projects**

Speakers:

Emilie Gagnet Leumas, Consultant, EGL Consultants, LLC
Eric Fair, Director of Archives, Archdiocese of St. Louis
Tricia Pyne, Director, Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary &
University

Moderator:

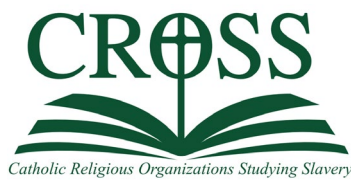
Ann Boltin, Chancellor and Archivist, Diocese of Baton Rouge

Description:

This session will highlight the work that CROSS and its partner organizations have undertaken since the inaugural conference in St. Louis in 2023, including the development of several pilot programs designed to test the "CROSS Best Practices" guide. In Louisiana, diocesan collaborations have explored the breadth of archival collections documenting the enslaved and slavery within the Church, employing specific research methodologies and survey techniques to identify these records both within diocesan archives and external repositories. Tricia Pyne's presentation, Recovering the History of Black Catholics from the Records of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, will provide an overview of the project it has initiated, highlighting opportunities for collaboration with Catholic institutions, religious communities, and regional dioceses.

12:45pm-1:45pm **Lunch**

Registration and all sessions will be held in the Healey Family Student Center - Social Room - unless noted otherwise.



1:45pm-3:00pm **Session 2: Community Archives**

Speakers:

Peter Fitzmaurice, Historical Researcher, Sacred Heart Church
Caroline Richard, Museum Director and Archivist, Academy of the Sacred Heart

Adrian Vaagenes, Woodstock Librarian, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University Libraries

Moderator:

Patrick Hayes, Archivist, Redemptorist Archives

Description:

This session will center on three types of Catholic archives--university, parish, and high school--which can serve as models for similar "communities." Panelists hope to explain the nature of their archival work (from traditional paper collections to digital repositories), the kinds of research that this work can yield, and the public-facing outcomes of historical work already done, especially with descendants of the enslaved.

3:00pm-3:30pm **Closing Remarks**

Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, Chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Chicago

4:00pm-5:00pm **Mass**

Dahlgren Chapel
of the Sacred
Heart

Celebrants:

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre, Archbishop of Louisville
Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, Chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation; Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Chicago

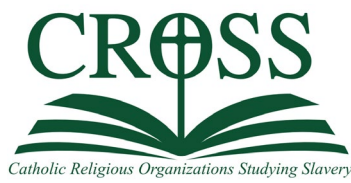
5:30pm-7:00pm **Keynote Address: *Meeting the Moment: Reckoning with Catholic Slaveholding* by Rachel Swarns**

Healy Hall
3rd Floor
Gaston Hall Room

7:00pm-8:00pm **Reception**

Healy Hall
2nd Floor

Registration and all sessions will be held in the Healey Family Student Center - Social Room - unless noted otherwise.



DAY 2

8:00am-9:00am **Registration**

9:00am-9:15am **Opening Remarks**

Speaker:

Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell, Jr., Auxiliary Bishop of Washington

9:15am-10:30am **Session 3: Understanding Catholic History and Catholic Cemeteries through Archaeology**

Speakers:

Dr. Laura Masur, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Catholic University of America

Garrett Ternent, Graduate Student, American University

Dr. Lynn Locklear Nehemiah, DDS, Loyola University Maryland Slavery and Reconciliation Task Force and Implementation Team, Member of the East Coast Jesuit Antiracism Sodality

GU272 Mahoney Descendant, Untold Truths - Exposing Slavery and its Legacies at Loyola University Maryland, Co-Chair of the Sacred Heart Cemetery

Kevin Porter, President of the White Marsh Historical Society

Moderator:

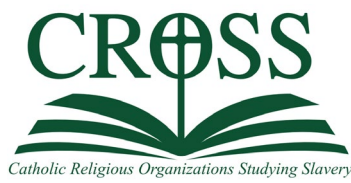
Stephanie A.T. Jacobe, Director of Archives, Archdiocese of Washington

Description:

Archaeology can provide information about the past that is otherwise absent from the historical record. It can help us understand what has been left behind by those who lived and died in the specific place. This session will look at the archaeology of several Catholic sites in Maryland, including the cemetery at White Marsh Plantation and the early Jesuit Mission on Port Tobacco Bay. Descendants whose ancestors were among the native Piscataway and those enslaved on Jesuit Plantations will speak about the importance of this work.

10:30am-10:45am **Break**

Registration and all sessions will be held in the Healey Family Student Center - Social Room - unless noted otherwise.



10:45am-12:00pm **Session 4: Resources and Research**

Speakers:

Mary Beth Corrigan, Librarian, Collections on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University Libraries
Morgen MacIntosh Hodgetts, Archivist, Congregation of the Mission Western Province, DePaul University
Claire Marshall, Digital Archivist, DePaul University
Annie Stevens, Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, Webster University

Moderator:

Reverend David Endres, Academic Dean and Professor, The Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary's Seminary of the West

Description:

This session explores research completed to enhance the understanding of and access to primary sources documenting the history of enslavement by Catholic religious organizations. Presenters will highlight tools and initiatives designed to support scholars, descendants, and the public in uncovering and engaging with these critical historical materials.

12:00pm-1:00pm **Lunch**

1:15pm-2:30pm **Session 5: Education**

Speakers:

Ed Donnellan, Social Studies, Gonzaga College High School
Elizabeth Silver, J.D., History of Enslaved People Program Coordinator, and Clare O'Connell, Georgetown Visitation '28, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School
Abigail Jefferson, Carlos Wayne Scott, and Toni Ann Semple, Engaging History Through the Arts

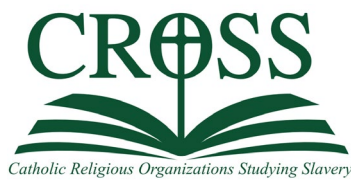
Moderator:

Adam Rothman, Director, Center for the Study of Slavery and Its Legacies, Georgetown University

Description:

How do we bring archival material into the classroom to facilitate historical understanding in responsible and empathetic ways? This panel will feature courageous and innovative pedagogical projects at the secondary-school level, and foster discussion of teaching "hard history" at a challenging time.

Registration and all sessions will be held in the Healey Family Student Center - Social Room - unless noted otherwise.



2:30pm-3:00pm ***Concluding Remarks and Prayer***

Speaker:

Joyce Jones, Director of the Office of Racial Harmony and Black Catholic Ministries, Archdiocese of St. Louis

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GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
***Center for the Study of
Slavery & Its Legacies***



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