



Daniel Rudd was born in Bardstown, Kentucky on August 7, 1854 to former slaves, and his ministry began a mere 20 years after slavery. While Christianity was powerless against the rising tide of white supremacy, causing many denominations to split over race, Rudd rose to proclaim that the Catholic Church welcomed African Americans. Rudd began publishing the American Catholic Tribune, in 1886, to share his message even though black literacy was low.

Daniel Rudd's paper, however, was but a precursor to his larger vision. In 1889, after traveling the country to preach to black Catholics, his efforts culminated in the first ever National Black Catholic Congress, held in Washington, D.C.

"Gather them [black Catholics] and let them exchange views on questions affecting their race," Rudd said a year before the conference. "Then uniting on a course of action, behind which would stand the majestic church of Christ, they must inevitably become... the bearer of their race."

This July, black laypeople, priests, teachers, and theologians will gather at the 12th National Black Catholic Congress, which has met every five years since 1987 to expand upon Rudd's pioneering work.

Attendees return to their parishes energized and empowered, ready to educate and tutor black youth, evangelize their community, enhance black liturgies, and take on other work. As it did in Rudd's day, the congress inspires black leaders with a renewed sense of what it means to be black and Catholic.

From <http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2011/02/civil-writer>