

Obama's election should inspire black Catholics, nun says

President Barack Obama's election should inspire black Catholics to work to break down racial barriers, end discrimination and celebrate diversity, said Sister Addie Lorraine Walker.

Sister Addie Lorraine, a School Sister of Notre Dame and a longtime educator and author, brings her message to the St. Mary's Spiritual Center & Historic Site on Feb. 7.

"I think what Obama has invited the nation to be, to do, to see are in fact the very same things, even though he doesn't necessarily use religious language - to see the dignity of the human person, to see that all of us are created" in the likeness of God, said Sister Addie Lorraine, who is black.

Sister Addie's talk, titled "The Black Catholic Experience," celebrates Black History Month and the 200th anniversary of the dedication of the St. Mary's Historic Seminary Chapel. Mother Mary Lange - who founded the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first religious order for African-American women - prayed and taught children in the chapel.

Sister Addie Lorraine said she hopes to show how the principles developed by 19th-century black Catholics can apply today.

"If you're going to be a Christian, you've got to show up, speak up and stand up," she said. "Your head, your heart and your hands have to be engaged in application of the Gospels."

Sister Addie Lorraine, 59, helped found a catechist program for people serving in black Catholic communities and taught in the master's degree program at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies of Xavier University of Louisiana.

Since June 2002, she has served as provincial leader of the Dallas Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, an international congregation of Catholic sisters. She

ministers to and with 130 other sisters in a seven-state region in the Southwest.

Sister Addie Lorraine Walker will speak at 1 p.m. Feb. 7 in the Historic Seminary Chapel at St. Mary's Spiritual Center & Historic Site, 600 North Paca St. The lecture is free and open to the public. For information, call 410-728-6464.