

# SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

to engage

## BLACK CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULTS

# PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

**D**R. ANSEL AUGUSTINE is an Emmy-nominated producer and an award-winning author. He is presently the Director of the **Office of Black Catholic Ministries for the Archdiocese of New Orleans**; on the faculty of the **Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana**, the **Graduate Theological Foundation**, and the **Loyola University New Orleans' Institute for Ministry**. Dr. Augustine also serves on the Board of Trustees of **St. Michael's College** (Burlington, Vermont) and the Board of Directors for the **Congo Square Preservation Society**.

Previously he served as the Area Director for **Vagabond Missions**; Executive Director of **Cultural Diversity and Outreach for the Archdiocese of Washington**; Associate Director / Coordinator of **Black Youth & Young Adult Ministry for the CYO Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office**; Campus Minister at **Xavier University of Louisiana**, **Loyola University New Orleans**, and **St. John's University** in Queens, NY. Ansel has also served on the Board of Directors for the **National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA)** and the **National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)**.

He began his career in ministry over 20 years ago when he became the youth minister at his home parish of **St. Peter Claver** in the Treme area of New Orleans, which he helped to rebuild following Hurricane Katrina. He has presented workshops and keynotes around the country and has written various pieces related to ministry including **The African American Catholic Youth Bible** and **Leveling the Praying Field: Can the Church we Love, Love us Back?** Dr. Augustine also produced the documentary "**Black Faith Matters**".

Ansel has worked in prison ministry for over 25 years in various capacities. He volunteers with the **Mardi Gras Indian Council** and at **Backstreet Cultural Museum**. He is a member of **Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.**, the **Knights of Columbus**, the **Knights of Peter Claver**, and the **Wild Tchoupitoulas** (Black Masking) Mardi Gras Indians. He is also an Associate Member of the **Sisters of the Holy Family** in New Orleans, LA.

**C**HRISTIAN BENTLEY is a resident of the City of Alexandria and member of the historic Parker, Dogan and Bentley Families - a mixture of enslaved and freedman devout Catholics. For over 6 years, Bentley has been a noteworthy advocate for mental health and social justice within Virginia and the Catholic Church using his own experiences with managing a Bipolar 1 diagnosis and how faith, community and proper care can lead to a fulfilling life. Bentley currently serves as the Regional Mental Health Representative for **VOICE**, an interfaith social justice community advocacy group; on the **National Catholic Partnership on Disability, Council on Mental Illness and Wellness**; as the Chair of the **Bishop's Advisory Council on Racism**; on the **Diocesan Pastoral Council for Arlington**, and as an active participant with the **USCCB** in young adult and multicultural project in addition to many other roles within the Church. A connector of people and a passionate person of faith, his life motto is based on the old gospel song, "**If I can help somebody**".

**JAMES CONWAY** is a 36 year-old born to military parents. Through marriages, faith adoptions, and other means that God saw fit, he has 9 siblings (5 brothers, 4 sisters). His mother **Bridget**, a Catholic by faith, got him in the church early. When he and his family moved back to the United States, he was baptized at **St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church** in Baltimore, MD and has been a member since. He was told that during his baptism he wiggled out of his mother's arms and hit his head on the baptismal font. Because he didn't cry, it was and continues to be the congregation's consensus that God was and continues to look out for him - keeping him to do God's work.

Although the Army brat moved around to many places with his family, he received most of his education and spiritual upbringing in the City of Baltimore. He graduated from **Dunbar High School** in 2005 and gained employment at **Johns Hopkins Hospital**. Throughout the entirety of his life, James has maintained a strong connection to his church - serving as a lector, Eucharistic minister, youth minister, choir member, and soloist. He also sits and has sat many committees. God has also used him to visit with, minister to, and pray with the sick and afflicted. His life journey has seen him through many trials from surviving domestic violence and being homeless to blessed to travel to **Vatican City** and experience seeing the **Sistine Chapel** and attending an audience with the Pope. The Lord has blessed James so many times over and has brought him through his trials.

James has been an advocate for social justice for years as a youth and young adult minister and as an uncle and mentor. He believes that with God and hard work this generation can unite and heal the ills of racism.

James looks forward to continuing to spread God's message wherever He sends him to share God's Good News!

**RUDY DEHANEY** is Baltimore native, born to Jamaican parents and a graduate of **Morgan State University** in Baltimore. He currently serves as the **Blessed Sacrament** and **St. Matthew** parishes in Baltimore and part-time campus minister of **Notre Dame Maryland University**.

In addition to professional work, Rudy serves as the chairperson for the **National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry** anti-racism project team, the co-chair for the **USCCB Journeying Together Post Event Committee** with young adults and various other regional and national committees.

**ALI MUMBACH** is from Houston, TX. She attended **Texas State University** where she received her Bachelor in Sociology. After graduating, she spent two years doing college ministry with **Saint Paul's Outreach** at **Seton Hall University** in New Jersey. As a Black Catholic, Ali is aware of the lack of diversity within Catholic circles. Working in ministry, engaging in conversations about race, and ministering to minority students sparked Ali's heart for evangelization, especially within Black and minority communities. She's currently pursuing her Master of Sociology at **Howard University**, where she is the Catholic Campus Minister. Ali is also pursuing a Master of Theology at the **Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University** in the summers. Ali is a board member for the **Catholic Evangelical Missionary People of Color (CEMPOC) Grant**, which assists POC missionaries in their fundraising efforts to go on mission.