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Appreciation for Fr. Cyprian Davis

I first became acquainted with Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB in 1993 when I read his seminal work, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*. I was a graduate student at the time in search of a dissertation topic. It seemed to me that Fr. Cyprian had written this book with graduate students particularly in mind, because he indicated areas of black Catholic history that required further research and where promising archival materials existed. I considered his pronouncement, “There is no adequate history of any of the black Catholic sisterhoods [115],” a commission—if not a mandate—to pursue my study of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. I contacted Fr. Cyprian by mail and he graciously suggested possible directions and sources for my research.

I first met Fr. Cyprian in person at the ACHA meeting in New York in 1997. When I revised my dissertation into a book manuscript, he agreed to serve as one of my readers, again offering valuable insights and suggestions. As a member of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium since 2001, I had the pleasure of interacting with Fr. Cyprian during our annual meetings both intellectually and socially. Throughout our association, he impressed me as a masterfully erudite scholar and a generous and supportive human being. Knowing Fr. Cyprian has enriched my faith, my intellect, and my consciousness as an African American Roman Catholic. He will always remain for me the consummate role model of a scholar, mentor, and pioneer in the discipline of history.

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