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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rev. Dr. John Segun Odeyemi joins Xavier University of Louisiana's Institute for Black Catholic Studies and Theology Department

New Orleans, La- The Rev. Dr. John Segun Odeyemi has joined Xavier's Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS) and is the newest member of the university's Theology Department. Dr. Odeyemi will collaborate with IBCS Director Kathleen Dorsey Bellow to establish an initiative devoted to the study of Black Catholic Holiness throughout the diaspora, highlighting the legacy of the six African American candidates for sainthood and traditions of Black Christian believers from ancient times to today.

Dr. Odeyemi is a Catholic priest ordained for the Diocese of Ilorin, Nigeria. He has an extensive scholarly background, including a bachelor's in philosophy and religious studies from Saints Peter and Paul Major Seminary in Bodija, Ibadan, Nigeria, affiliated with the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has also earned a post-graduate diploma in education (PGDE) from the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, and a master's in religion and religious education from Fordham University in New York City. In 2016, he earned his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"I am very happy to be joining the faculty in Xavier's Institute for Black Catholic Studies and theology program, a pioneer in the studies of the Black Catholic experience," **said Dr. Odeyemi**. "It is a great honor and privilege to be a part of Xavier University tradition, the nation's only historically Black and Catholic university, and I look forward to building on the vision of its founder, St. Katharine, by educating the dedicated students of these excellent programs as they go on to share their light and faith with the world."

Dr. Odeyemi is currently a parochial vicar at the St. Paul Cathedral Parish in Oakland, Pittsburgh, and an adjunct professor at Duquesne University's Theology Department. He has served in several parishes in Pittsburgh, New York, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria.

"We welcome Dr. Odeyemi, who brings a wealth of resources to the IBCS initiative to study Black Catholic Holiness," **said Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, Director of Xavier's IBCS**. "His cultural perspectives, theological scholarship and pastoral experience will bless Xavier students and colleagues across the Xavier community."

Dr. Odeyemi is a prolific author, having published multiple books, including: "Pentecostalism and Ecumenism in Developing Nations: West Africa as a Case Study for a Global Phenomenon"; "Understanding Human Sexuality in John Paul II's Theology of the Body: An Analysis of the Historical Development of Doctrine in the Catholic Tradition"; and four volumes published in Nigeria, "The Mass: Through Him, With Him and In Him"; "Friendship, Dating, and Engagement: A handbook for Young Catholics"; "Ruminations: A collection of Poems"; and Catholic and Human sexuality (2004). Dr. Odeyemi

has authored numerous journal articles and papers, contributed book chapters, and delivered speeches and addresses at international academic conferences.

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About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

*Established in 1925 by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African-American and Native Americans to receive a quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. **The winning Xavier formula provides students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all.***

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