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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two Xavier University of Louisiana Graduates Receive Master of Theology Degrees

New Orleans, La – Xavier University of Louisiana’s Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS) recently awarded Master of Theology (Th.M.) degrees to Joyce Jones and Natacha R. Brookshire during the Institute’s recent annual commencement. Cecilia A. Moore, Ph.D., professor of religious studies at the University of Daytona and esteemed member of the IBCS faculty, served as commencement speaker.

Brookshire, who delivered remarks for the ceremony, is a registered nurse with more than 25 years of service. A lifelong Catholic and veteran of the U.S. Army, she is the mother of two and grandmother of five. She received her bachelor’s in nursing from Florida Atlantic University. Brookshire’s culminating Th.M. research is entitled “The Impact of Haitian Catholics on Antebellum Savannah, Georgia.”

“IBCS offers a well-rounded, nuanced, and top-of-the-line education in Theology. Understanding the important contribution of African and Haitian Americans to Christianity in America is vital, and IBCS fills a crucial need for the effectual telling of the truth of our history,” said Brookshire. “The IBCS post-graduate degree is unique because it not only focuses on theology, but history, psychology, and ethics, thus shaping a well-formed graduate. The support, love, and prayers I received from the IBCS community were instrumental in helping me complete my degree.”

Jones, a native of St. Louis, directs the Office of Racial Harmony of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. A former nurse, Jones responded to the call to study Sacred Scripture by earning her bachelor’s in biblical studies and Christian ministry. She works locally with several service organizations and serves on various committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. A wife, mother, and grandmother, Jones is a member of St. Alphonsus Ligouri (The Rock) Church. Her research was titled “You Know My Name: Slavery, the Catholic Church, and the Archdiocese of St. Louis,”

“IBCS introduced me to Black theologians from around the country who brought with them a depth of knowledge regarding the Church and Black Catholics that I can without a doubt say is

not being taught anywhere else in the United States,” said Jones. “IBCS made me aware of the trials and tribulations that Black Catholics have endured in this country, and because of IBCS, I will not hesitate to lift the name of XULA to all potential college students.”

IBCS, an interdisciplinary and holistic pastoral theology program, forms lay women and men, religious, and clergy for more culturally competent, effective ministry in the 21st century. As a program of Xavier University, the Institute affirms the University’s purpose of promoting a more just and humane society and its mission of preparing students to assume roles of leadership and service in society.

For more information, contact the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at (504) 520-7691 or IBCS@xula.edu.



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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 (historically Black colleges and universities) 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 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 (2,749 undergraduates and 849 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 is to provide 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. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.xula.edu or contact Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5425 or rreyes@xula.edu.