

Bring god to the  
negro, bring the  
negro to god.

[Religion](#), [God](#)



This book is 80 pages written by Keith R. Claridy, it focuses on the works of Archbishop Thomas Toolen in the racist stricken Alabama. The Archbishop being at the centre of growth of the Catholic Church in Alabama, particularly along the gulf coast in the twentieth century was instrumental in bringing the gospel to the African-Americans (Claridy 1). At the time when the Archbishop is in office, civil rights movement activities start being witnessed in the state beginning with Rosa Parks, the church is therefore left with no option but to intervene.

At this point in time, the Catholic Church in Alabama is seen as the church of the minority and has a sole mission, to expand and reach out hence it functions as a missionary centre. There's also the formation of the black panthers movement to advocate for rights of the African Americans. The archbishop is in fact in a very difficult position since the white as well as black Catholics are not relating well with white Catholics denying entry of black Catholics during masses in white parishes (Claridy 5). The author entirely focuses on the works of the Archbishop in trying to resolve this seemingly sarcastic conflict.

The author chooses the title which stands out, it is satirical in that the church is at the epicenter of it, its teachings are supposed to shape the African Americans in following the principles of God including not using violence in their quest for equality. At the same time the Catholic Church in Alabama is divided, with parishes being for blacks and whites and there is no mixing of the races (Claridy 16). The author thus sees the work of Archbishop Thomas as bring God to the African Americans in order to create individuals who are

God fearing and abide to his principles so that they would not act in ungodly manner (Claridy 48).

The subject matter is timely owing to the fact that racism is still alive in many parts of the United States and the entire world. It is worth revisiting the issue with the calling to re-awaken the modern day Church to tackle racism in the manner in which people like Archbishop Thomas did. The book is rich in content in that author imposes the subject matter in the current context, calling for modern time heroes who can come out strong against vices, not necessarily racism but any other ills affecting the society and advocate for peaceful approach to the subject matter at hand (Claridy 72).

The author chooses no better time than this when the United States is experiencing a presidency that is African American and was marred by racism in the campaign trail, the author therefore draws the audience back in time to see what the Americans and especially in this context the residents of Alabama have achieved against all odds in the fight against the ills affecting the society. There is no better State than Alabama where the author sets up his story being the mother of civil rights movements in the United States. In a nutshell the author is on point and the subject matter is very relevant.

In a simple, clear but firm way, the author has so well connected the main themes in this book. The reader is kept glued to the pages with his or her curiosity being aroused with every following line. The author has thoughtfully used the right language and given the story life in a manner that is mind puzzling. The reader feels like the story is in context with what is happening current, thus the book is worth reading for a meaningful gain. The non-

confrontational means by which the Archbishop chooses to use in his work of religious guidance to appeal to the African Americans, they see him as accommodative as well paternalistic (Claridy 33).

Serious lessons are therefore learnt from this approach, the Archbishop is even compared to Booker T. Washington in his approach by the Encyclopedia of Alabama. This book is worth spending money on, it leaves you enriched, challenged and with a desire to change the society by making it better just like Archbishop Thomas Toolen.

## **Works Cited**

1. Claridy, Keith. Bring God to the Negro, Bring the Negro to God: Archbishop Thomas Joseph Toolen & Race in