

## [News](#)



Holy Family of Nazareth Sr. Josephine Garrett — an author, sought-after speaker and licensed mental health counselor — will speak on the third day of the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. (OSV News/Courtesy of Josephine Garrett)



by Brian Fraga

Staff Reporter

[View Author Profile](#)

[\*\*Join the Conversation\*\*](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

Indianapolis — July 19, 2024

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Holy Family of Nazareth Sr. Josephine Garrett says she has been invited to speak at some Catholic conferences where the organizers told her they needed a Black perspective for purposes of diversity.

When she received an invitation to be a keynote speaker at the [National Eucharistic Congress](#), Garrett said the organizers told her that they believed she had spiritual gifts and insights that would benefit her audience. She appreciated the sentiment behind the invitation.

"This invitation had some consideration," Garrett told reporters during a July 18 press conference in Indianapolis, a day before she was scheduled to deliver a keynote address during an evening "revival" session in Lucas Oil Stadium.

[Garrett, an author and sought-after speaker](#) who is also a licensed mental health counselor, said she has been praying about what she will speak on during the session, which organizers have themed "Into Gethsemane." She was to speak on the third day of the National Eucharistic Congress. The five-day gathering in Indianapolis is presented by the U.S. Catholic bishops, who hope the event will spur a spiritual revival in the church.

**[Related: Organizers hope for spiritual revival with US bishops' National Eucharistic Congress](#)**

A counselor for a Catholic grade school in Tyler, Texas, who also runs her own practice, Garrett was also scheduled to present a July 21 breakout session titled, "Healing Community: Encountering Brokenness in the Body of Christ."

Speaking on the need to integrate the spiritual life with mental health, Garrett told reporters she has seen "a neglect of human formation" in Catholic spaces. Some healing ministries, she said, have taken to telling people that they have spiritually failed when they are still struggling with psychological wounds.

"That doesn't match what the Gospel says," Garrett said. She is just as opposed to the "constant navel-gazing" that some mental health professionals would have their clients do, which she said leads to people being "mopey" and inactive.

"Stop limiting the places where God can reign, stop creating blocks to what God is about, where his grace can be about at work," Garrett said.

'I'm worried we'll leave here thinking ourselves so devoted that we forget we still need to continue to grow, and that requires the cross.'

—Sr. Josephine Garrett

[Tweet this](#)

That is a familiar message to anyone who has Garrett speak or read her book, [Hope: An Invitation](#).

Raised in Houston as a Baptist, Garrett entered the Catholic Church in 2005. She has been active in vocations ministry, hosts a [podcast](#) and serves on the boards of Life Teen and the Laboure Society.

A former banker who was once a Bank of America vice president in its home loans division, Garrett in 2011 began her formation to be a religious sister. She professed her final vows as a Sister of the Holy Family of Nazareth in 2020.

With a social media following that includes almost [12,000 followers on X](#) — the platform previously known as Twitter — Garrett has emerged as a leading voice on several issues about Catholic life, including spirituality, mental health and wellness.

Regarding divisions in the church, Garrett quipped, "We love to entertain ourselves with them. They give us a break from the Cross."



Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, president of the U.S. bishop's conference, during the July 19 youth Mass at the National Eucharistic Congress. (OSV News/Gretchen R. Crowe)

She expressed concern that many of the estimated 50,000 people who are attending the National Eucharistic Congress will fall into the trap of Catholics in the "Holy Huddle" — those who become too comfortable and satisfied with their level of personal piety and devotion.

"I'm worried we'll leave here thinking ourselves so devoted that we forget we still need to continue to grow, and that requires the cross," Garrett said. "Love is about sacrifice. If there isn't anything going on in my life that's asking a sacrifice of me, then something may be off base."

Commenting on the importance of relationships to spiritual and psychological health, Garrett said she is proud of and impressed with Generation Z — people born from the late 1990s to the early 2010s — for how they approach relationships.

"They have a strong desire for relationship, for longing," she said. "They're more welcoming of differences. They show genuine interest. They're not alarmed by differences as we are. If someone approaches them, they will respond."

## Advertisement

Garrett said she prays Catholics will leave the National Eucharistic Congress with a renewed devotion to the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation, and that they will stay focused on carrying out the saving mission of Jesus in the world.

As for the discomforts and hunger that often accompany pilgrimages such as the congress, Garrett said, they should be a reminder that "we're supposed to remain hungry until the day we die."