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## **The Catholic heritage of Surgeon General nominee**

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

President Obama's pick for the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin, a family physician from Alabama, attended Xavier University as an undergrad and grew up attending Mass at the Shrine of Holy Cross Church in Daphne, Ala., which is in the Mobile archdiocese.

She is founder and CEO of Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic in Bayou La Batre, Ala., and in June was re-elected a three-year term on the board of the Catholic Health Association.

It's interesting to note that her bio includes the listing of an award called the National Caring Award, which was inspired by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (aka, Mother Teresa) and Pope Benedict XVI awarded Benjamin the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross, a papal honor, in 2006.

Msgr. Michael Farmer, chancellor of the Mobile Archdiocese and rector of the cathedral, said Benjamin was nominated for the papal honor because of "her commitment to her faith as well as for putting her faith into practice."

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