

***Some Highlights of Black Catholics
in the United States:***

A Resource for Black History Month
for Catholic Schools and
Religious Education Programs



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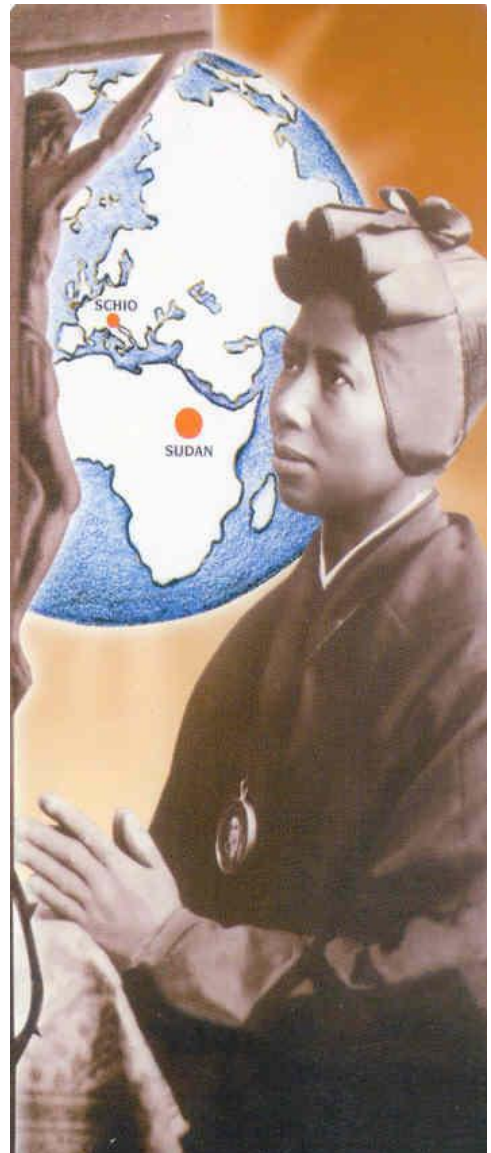
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Saint Martin de Porres and Saint Josephine Bakhita, pray for us, that we may follow your example of firm faith, unrelenting hope and universal charity as Brothers and Sisters of Jesus. Amen.

Photos: Saint Martin de Porres by Father Lawrence Lew, O.P.; used with permission; Saint Josephine Bakhita, courtesy of Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, Albuquerque, NM; used with permission

Introduction

This resource is designed as an aid to teachers and catechists in planning activities and/or content for Black History Month. The focus is, as the title indicates, the role of African American Catholics in the Catholic Church in the United States. There is a Black Catholic History month celebrated in November annually, and, while this could certainly be useful then as well, it has a broader purpose of being part of history-in-general, that is, our nation's history that belongs to all of us irrespective of race.

It is hoped that this will be the beginning of the development of a more varied and robust resource for this topic. We welcome suggestions for future resources in this and in other areas.

God bless you and your efforts for Catholic education.

Sincerely,

Sister Elizabeth Anne, O.P., Ed.D.

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People of Faith

Part 1: On the Road to Sainthood!

The persons included in this section are at some stage in the canonization process of the Church. This process has as its purpose to determine if that deceased person lived a life of heroic holiness and fidelity to the doctrine of the Church. The stages are:

Servant of God: This phase occurs usually after a minimum period of five years after the death of a person. Then the bishop of the diocese in which the person died can petition the Holy See to begin the canonization phase. If the Holy See judges that there is nothing that stands in the way of this, permission is given to the bishop to begin the process. Then the person is known as the Servant of God. (For example, the Servant of God Julia Greeley).

Venerable: After having permission to begin, the local bishop begins gathering information about the life of the Servant of God. This includes testimonies from persons who knew him/her, if that is possible; letters written to the person; items, public and private, written by the person; in short, anything that would help the person to be known better and the degree of virtue shown be judged as well. These documents are compiled, presented to the bishop and the diocesan tribunal who then present it to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in Rome. The Congregation reviews the documents and votes. If the vote is in favor they submit a Decree of Heroic Virtue to the Holy Father who makes a decision. If he accepts the Decree, the person is named a Venerable. (As, Venerable Pierre Toussaint).

Blessed: A miracle, unexplained by science, is attributed to the intercession of the Venerable. The miracle must have occurred after the Venerable's death and is thoroughly investigated by the scientific commission and then the theological commission. When the Pope approves the Decree of Miracle, the person is beatified and is known as "Blessed" and may be honored in the liturgy in the sponsoring diocese, and on occasion in other areas served by the Blessed, but not by the universal Church.

Saint: A second miracle, which undergoes the same process of examination, is required for the Blessed to be considered for the final step in the process. When the Holy Father consents to the Decree of Miracle for the second miracle, the Blessed will be declared a Saint and can be honored by the universal Church. (For example, Saint Martin de Porres).



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Words from her to us:



“Remember who you are and whose you are.”



“I think the difference between me and some people is that I’m content to do my little bit. Some people think they have to do big things in order to make change. But if each one would light a candle, we would have tremendous light.”



“God is present in everything. In the universe in creation, in me and all that happens to me, in my brothers and sisters, in the church, everywhere.”



“Part of my approach to my illness has been to say that I want to choose life. I want to keep going. I want to live fully until I die.”



“I try to make sense of life. I try to keep myself open to people and to laughter and to love, and to have faith.”

Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black Catholic Congress; Used with permission

- ❖ **Sister Thea Bowman** was born in 1937 in Canton, Mississippi and was named Bertha Elizabeth.
- ❖ Her father (Theon) was a physician and her mother (Mary Esther) was a teacher.
- ❖ Although the Bowman family was not Catholic, she attended Catholic schools and later became Catholic.
- ❖ She entered the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who had taught her, although she was the only African-American sister.
- ❖ She chose the name “Sister Thea” after her father and to honor Mary, the Mother of Jesus.
- ❖ She became a teacher, earned her doctorate degree and taught college.
- ❖ She taught and worked to end racism and died in 1990 after a struggle with cancer, still full of light and joy till the end.
- ❖ She wanted people to remember that “I tried to love the Lord and I tried to love them.”



- ❖ **Henriette Delille** was born in New Orleans in 1812 to a wealthy Frenchman and to a free Creole Mother. Her great-great grandmother had been a slave.
- ❖ She had been trained in French literature, dancing, nursing and music so that she would be prepared to be the companion of a wealthy white man as the three generations of women in her family had been before.
- ❖ Henriette, however, although always Catholic underwent a deeper conversion in her early 20s and became firmly committed to the sanctity of marriage.
- ❖ She was active in teaching black children, both free and slave, although it was not legal to teach slaves in Louisiana at the time.
- ❖ She wanted to be a sister, but because of her African heritage, the communities of European sisters would not accept her and the laws of Louisiana would not permit communities with blacks and whites together.
- ❖ After much struggle and many encounters with racism, she founded the Sisters of the Holy Family who served as teachers, opened orphanages and opened a home for elderly Black women, some of whom had been slaves. It was the first nursing home sponsored by the Church in the United States.
- ❖ She died in 1862.

Venerable Henriette Delille



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black Catholic Congress; Used with permission

“I believe in God.



I hope in God.

I love.

I want to live and
die for God.”

-Venerable Henriette Delille



Servant of God

Julia Greeley



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black Catholic Congress; Used with permission

The Sanctity of Julia Greeley:

As others saw her

“Overall, Greeley stands as an example of how ordinary people can become saints. When looking at her, she was an ordinary person who did extraordinary things.... All of us have that same opportunity.” –*Mary Leisring, President, Julia Greeley Guild*

“Her charity was so great that only God knows its extent.” – *Denver Register, June 10, 1918*

- ❖ **Julia Greeley** was born a slave in Hannibal, Missouri around 1835 and was freed in 1865.
- ❖ Her right eye was blinded when her slave master was beating her mother and the whip caught her in the eye.
- ❖ She worked as a servant and moved to Denver with a family she served. There she became Catholic.
- ❖ She was dedicated to the Sacred Heart and to love for the poor, although she herself was very poor.
- ❖ She walk around Denver pulling a red wagon full of things she had begged for the poor or bought out of her meager earnings. She usually worked secretly and at night to avoid embarrassing the families she helped.
- ❖ Every month she walked to every firehouse in Denver to distribute Sacred Heart badges and leaflets to the firefighters.
- ❖ She died on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. 1918 and was mourned by thousands of people.
- ❖ She is called *Denver's Angel of Mercy*.



The only known photo of Julia Greeley holding Marjorie Ann Urquhart, whose birth she foretold. Courtesy of the Julia Greeley Guild; public domain



Servant of God

Mother Mary Lange



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black Catholic Congress; Used with permission

★ *“When prayers go up
blessings
do come down!”*

*“Our sole purpose
is to
do the will of God.”* ★

*-Servant of God
Mother Mary Lange*

- ❖ **Mother Mary Lange** was born in Cuba around 1794 and was named Elizabeth Clarisse. 1794. Her parents were Haitians who had fled to Cuba during the revolution.
- ❖ Elizabeth came to the United States in 1813, living in Baltimore where there was a large Haitian Settlement in the Fell's Point area of the city.
- ❖ She saw firsthand the plight of the French-speaking Haitian children who had no free public school to attend. She and her friend, Marie Madeleine Balas, operated a school in her home from 1818 to 1828 to educate Haitian children.
- ❖ In 1828, she, with the backing and support of Father James Hector Jourbert, a Sulpician priest, began formation of the Oblate Sisters of Providence and opened Saint Francis Academy in 1828. (It is the oldest continuously active Catholic school for African Americans in the country).
- ❖ In 1829, the Oblates Sisters of Providence were officially formed and Mother Mary was elected Superior.
- ❖ Mother Mary died in 1892 and is known for her deep faith and dependence on God's providence.

- ❖ **Augustus Tolton** was born into slavery in 1854 in Brush Creek, Missouri. His parents, Martha Jane Chisley and Peter Paul Tolton were Catholic and had him baptized.
- ❖ When the Civil War broke out, Mr. Tolton ran away to join the Union army, but soon after died of dysentery. Martha bravely escaped with her 3 children to Quincy, Illinois.
- ❖ At age 9, Augustus began working in a tobacco factory. Later he enrolled in Saint Boniface School, but left soon because of local reaction to a Black child being in the school. Even the staff of the school was harassed and threatened. The School Sisters of Notre Dame tutored him privately.
- ❖ The parish priests were convinced that Augustus had a vocation and prepared him for college, but no seminary in the United States would accept him because of his race. He was sent to Rome and was intended to be ordained for ministry to Africa.
- ❖ When he was ordained in Rome, the Cardinal reportedly said to him, "America needs Negro priests. America has been called the most enlightened nation, we will see now whether it deserves the honor. If the United States has never seen a Black priest, it must see one now. Can you drink from this cup?" Tolton replied in Latin: "Posso." "I can."
- ❖ He becomes the first recognized Black priest in the United States.
- ❖ He labored zealously for the faith and faced much prejudice, even from fellow priests. Among those who supported his efforts was Saint Katharine Drexel. He established the first black parish in Chicago where he served all of the African-Americans in that city.
- ❖ He died of heat stroke in Chicago in 1887 at age 43.

Venerable Father Augustus Tolton



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black
Catholic Congress; Used with permission


*"As I look back on my life,
I realize that every time I
thought I was being
rejected from something
good, I was actually being
redirected to something
better." -Venerable Father
Augustus Tolton*



Venerable Pierre Toussaint



Photo: Courtesy of the National Black Catholic Congress; Used with permission

“I have enough
for myself, 
but if I stop work,
I have not enough
for others.”

–*Venerable Pierre Toussaint*

- ❖ **Pierre Toussaint** was born in Haiti in 1766 and was a slave on the sugar cane plantation owned by the Berard family. He died in 1853 a free man in New York and was so generous in his charity that some people today call him the founder of Catholic Charities in New York.
- ❖ He came to New York with his master when the revolution broke out in San Domingo (Haiti). He was apprenticed to a hairdresser and became one of the most sought-after hairdressers by many of New York’s richest citizens.
- ❖ When Berard died, Pierre stayed on and took care of his widow who would grant him his freedom on her deathbed. He could have purchased his own freedom at any time, but, instead, he purchased freedom for others including the woman he would marry and his own sister.
- ❖ He attended the early morning Mass at Saint Peter’s Church and raised funds for the building of the original Saint Patrick’s Cathedral (where he was once asked to leave because of his race. Someone else told the usher who he was).
- ❖ He gave financial support to individuals and to a number of charities including Mother Lange’s Oblate Sisters of Providence.
- ❖ He is the only lay person buried in the crypt of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.





People of Faith

Part 2: Faith in Action

The brief biographies in this section represent laity, religious and clergy who have made a difference by living out and witnessing to the faith.

You will find educators, priests, religious, journalists, philanthropists, scholars, humanitarians, people who were given honors for their efforts and people who were overlooked. They all shared a zeal for their faith and a love and respect for their racial heritage.

They have contributed to the mission of the Church in the United States, ordinary people who did extraordinary things for the love of God and neighbor.

This is what each of us is called to do!



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Mother Mathilda Beasley (1832-1903)

- **Mathilda Beasley** was born in New Orleans to an enslaved mother and was orphaned at an early age.
- Eventually, she went to Savannah, Georgia where there was a community of free people of color.
- While working as a seamstress and a waitress, she also ran a secret school for black children in her home for over ten years. It was against the law in Georgia at that time to teach black children to read and her punishment, if she had been discovered would have been severe.
- Mathilda converted to Catholicism while in Savannah and married Abraham Beasley who owned the restaurant where she had worked. When he died in 1877, he left her a considerable amount of money along with businesses and land. She turned all of this over to the Church.
- She went to England and entered the Franciscan Order and then returned to Georgia and established the first religious community for African-American women in that state. She opened Saint Francis Home for orphaned black children.
- Mother Mathilda was named a Georgia Woman of Achievement in 2004.



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Father Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. (1930-2015)

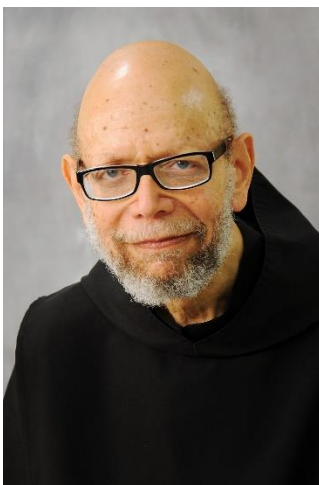


Photo Courtesy of
Saint Meinrad
Archabbey.
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- **Clarence John Davis** was born in Washington, D.C. where he converted to the Catholic faith. He entered the Benedictine Order at the Archabbey of Saint Meinrad, the first African-American member of that community.
- He was educated at the Catholic University of America and at the Catholic University of Belgium, Louvain.
- A church historian, he explained how he became interested in the African –American experience in the Catholic Church in the United States. “People began to come and ask me about being black and Catholic: ‘What is my place in the church?’ That’s when I began to realize that this is important. ... That’s when I began to do my own research.”
- His *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* was groundbreaking research in this area and a research award in Black American Catholicism bears his name.
- He was also a founding member and archivist of the National Black Clergy Caucus.



- **Lena Edwards** was born in Washington, D.C. and graduated from both Howard University and Howard University Medical School, where she would later return and teach obstetrics.
- She and her husband, also a physician, moved to Jersey City to open their practices so that they would have integrated Catholic schools for their six children to attend. The clinic she opened there served largely poor and immigrant workers.
- She became the first African-American female doctor to be a Board-certified gynecologist. Her awards in the medical field are numerous.
- Always an avid, pro-life supporter, at age 60, she moved to Hereford, Texas and opened Our Lady of Guadalupe Maternity Clinic for Mexican immigrants.
- President Lyndon Johnson awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest peacetime honor.
- The Dr. Lena Academic Charter School in Jersey City is named in tribute to her.
- Her lifetime motto was "Lift as you climb."

Dr. Lena Edwards (1900-1986)



Photo: Public Domain



*Dr. Francis receives the
Medal of Freedom from
President George W. Bush
Photo: Public Domain*

Dr. Norman Francis (1931- present)

- **Norman Christopher Francis** was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, one of 5 children. Neither of his parents finished high school.
- He was educated by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and was given a scholarship to Xavier University in New Orleans.
- After graduating from Xavier, he attended Loyola Law School, the first African-American student accepted at the institution.
- On the day of Martin Luther King's assassination, April 4, 1968, Francis accepted the presidency of Xavier University of New Orleans, the first layperson to hold that position. He served in that capacity until 2015, making him the longest serving college president in the United States.
- He headed the Louisiana Recovery Authority after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006. Pope Saint John Paul II named him to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.
- He credits his parents for teaching him to "succeed despite obstacles, respect yourself, respect others, get a good education, and remember there is dignity in people at every level of work."
- On January 1, 2021, the highway near Xavier University in New Orleans was renamed the Norman C. Francis Parkway.

Dr. Francis's brother was **Most Reverend Joseph Francis, SVD**, who served as Auxiliary Bishop of Newark, New Jersey. Bishop Francis died in 1997.





*Photo: Courtesy of the
National Black Catholic
Congress
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Daniel Rudd (1854-1933)

- Daniel Rudd, journalist, editor, entrepreneur, pioneering civil rights advocate, and prominent Catholic Lay leader was born in Bardstown, Kentucky; and was one of 12 children born to Robert and Elizabeth Rudd, all of whom were slaves and Catholic.
After the Civil War, he moved to Ohio where he founded the *Ohio Tribune*, a newspaper for African Americans, which later became known as the *American Catholic Tribune*, the nation's first Black-owned newspaper.
- He established the Colored Catholic Congress Movement as a nation-wide initiative to both promote evangelization and to help Black Americans overcome obstacles especially in the working world. This is the forerunner of the National Black Catholic Conference.
- The first Congress was held in 1889 and over 200 delegates met the last day with President Grover Cleveland. This was the first national meeting initiated by lay persons within the Church in this country. Father Augustus Tolton, now Venerable Augustus Tolton, said the Masses at the Congress.

“We will do what no other paper published by colored men has dared to do—give the great Catholic Church a hearing and show that it is worthy of at least a fair consideration at the hands of our race, being as it is the only place on this Continent where rich and poor, white and black, must drop prejudice at the threshold and go hand in hand to the altar.” –Daniel Rudd

Llewellyn Scott (1892-1978)

- Born in Washington, D.C., Llewellyn Scott suffered from Rickets as a boy and was unable to walk until he was 10 years old. Brigadier General John Moore and his wife were responsible for securing medical attention for him and enrolled him in a parochial school. He became Catholic at Saint Augustine in D.C.
- He served in World War I and then worked as a clerk at the Pentagon, but, after hearing Dorothy Day speak and with a \$5 donation from her, he opened “Blessed Martin de Porres Hospice” for black men in need of shelter and food. The hospice operated from 1935-1967.
- He never married and all of his salary went to the support of the hospice.
- He attended daily Mass and there was a chapel in the hospice, but, he did not force religion on his guests. He was known for his listening and compassion.
- He was also active in the Civil Rights Movement, marching with Dr. King shortly before King’s assassination.
- Father Cyprian Davis knew Scott when Father was a teenager. At a lecture given in Georgia in 2006, he observed, “To my young eyes it seemed very funny because he was a man so simple, a man with nothing pretentious about him,” he said. “I had no idea he touched millions of lives.”

***“I never
turned a
man
away.”***

***- Llewellyn
Scott
on a 1955
television broadcast
at which he was
honored on an
episode of
“This is Your
Life.”***





*Photographer unknown
Howard University
Public Domain*

Thomas Wyatt Turner, Ph.D. (1877-1978)

- **Thomas Wyatt Turner** was born in Maryland, the 5th of 9 children. His parents were sharecroppers.
- He recalls attending Mass as a child, but having to sit in the area reserved for African-Americans and he promised himself he would work to change such practices.
- He graduated from Howard University and was the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. from Cornell University.
- He taught at Tuskegee Institute, Howard University and Hampton Institute, where he also chaired the Botany Department.
- He was a founding member of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and of the FCC (the Federation of Colored Catholics, an organization of which we served as president. He said that the FCC was "composed of Catholic Negroes who placed their services at the disposal of the Church for whatever good they were able to effect in the solution of the problems facing the group in Church and country".



Public Domain

Father Charles Randolph Uncles, S.S.J. (1859-1933)

- **Charles Randolph Uncles** was born in Baltimore where his family belonged to Saint Francis Xavier Church, the first exclusively black Catholic parish in the country.
- When he was 14, the fathers from Mill Hill, England, who were missionaries.
- After attending the Baltimore Normal School for Colored Teachers and teaching for three years, he, with the encouragement of his parish priests, entered Saint Hyacinthe Minor Seminary in Quebec, where he excelled in French, Latin and Greek becoming the class valedictorian.
- Deciding to join the Mill Hill fathers, he finished his seminary studies at their Saint Joseph Seminary. The Society of Saint Joseph, committed to teaching in African American communities, would form from the Mill Hill fathers.
- He was ordained in 1891 by Cardinal James Gibbons, becoming the first black priest to be ordained in the United States. (Father Tolton had been ordained in Rome).





People of Faith

Part 3: Black Catholic Bishops of the United States

Here is a challenge for you!

1. How many African-American Bishops are there now in the Catholic Church in the United States? (You can include those still in office and those who are retired).
2. How many can you name?
3. Do you know where they serve or served?
4. How many have there been **in total** during the history of the Catholic Church in this country?
5. Can you name all of the African-American Cardinals in the Church in the United States since the beginning?

Answers to 1,4, and 5 are on ***page 25.***



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Black Catholic Bishops in the United States: Currently Active

His Eminence

Wilton Daniel Cardinal Gregory

Cardinal Archbishop of the Archdiocese of
Washington, D.C.



“FAITH
challenges us
to risk
doing the right thing.”
-Cardinal Gregory

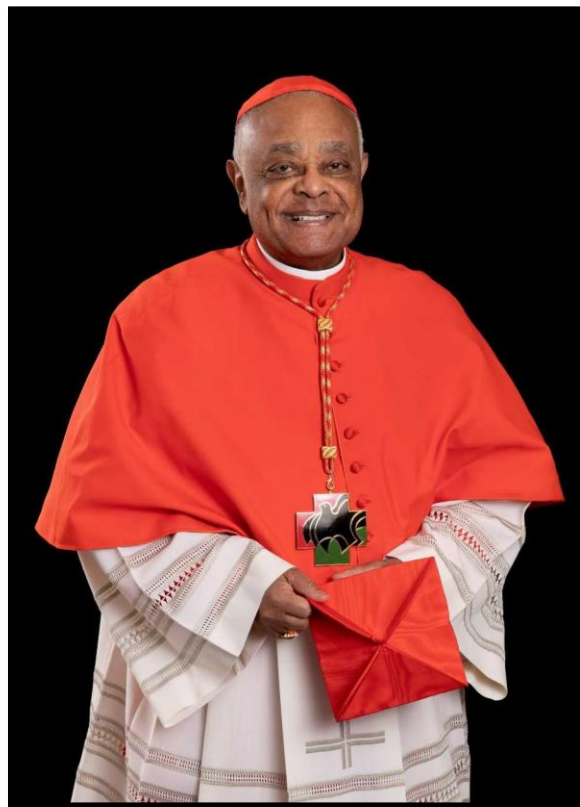


Photo: Courtesy of the Archdiocese of
Washington, D.C. Used with permission.

- He was born December 7, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois where he attended Saint Carthage School and became Catholic. He continued his education at Quigley Preparatory Seminary, Niles College of Loyola University, and Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary. He later received the doctorate degree in sacred liturgy in Rome.
- He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1973 by John Cardinal Cody. He was ordained a bishop just 10 years later by Joseph Cardinal Bernardine and served as auxiliary bishop of the Chicago Archdiocese.
- In 1993, he was named bishop of Belleville, Illinois and in 2004 as Archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, a post he held until 2019 when he was named Archbishop of Washington, D.C.
- On November 28, 2020, Pope Francis created him a Cardinal, the first African-American Cardinal in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.
- His episcopal motto is: ***“We are the Lord’s.”***





Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Currently Active

In addition to Cardinal Gregory, there are 4 other African-American Bishops in the this country who are currently serving in different dioceses.

The Most Reverend Roy Edward Campbell, Jr.:

- He was born November 19, 1947 in Pomonkey, Maryland.
- He wa ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. in 2007 by Archbishop Donald Wuerl, who also ordained a bishop at Saint Matthew Cathedral, Washington, D.C. in 2017 as Cardinal Wuerl.
- Is serving as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. and as president of the National Black Catholic Congress.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“Do whatever He tells you.”***

The Most Reverend Fernand Cheri, III, O.F.M.:

- Was born January 28, 1952 in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 1978 by Archbishop Philip Matthew Hannan, Archbishop of New Orleans
- Made solemn professional of vows in the Order of Friars Minor, the Franciscans in 1996.
- Was ordained a bishop by Archbishop Gregory Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans and was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans.
- Chose as his episcopal motto: ***“God is my strength.”***





Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Currently Active

The Most Reverend Shelton Fabre, V.G.:

- Was born in 1963 in New Roads, Louisiana.
- Was ordained to the priesthood in 1989 by Bishop Stanley J. Ott at Saint Joseph Cathedral, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- Was appointed Auxiliary of New Orleans in December, 2006 and ordained Bishop in February, 2007 by Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, Archbishop of New Orleans.
- Was made Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux (Louisiana) in 2015.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“Comfort my People.”***

The Most Reverend Joseph Nathaniel Perry:

- Was born in 1948 in Chicago, Illinois
- Was ordained to the priesthood in 1975 for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Was ordained Bishop by Francis Cardinal George in 1998 and was installed as Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago.
- Is serving as the Postulator for the cause of canonization for Father Augustus Tolton.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“Emitte me Domine” - “Send me Lord.”***



Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Retired

There are currently 7 Black American Bishops who are retired.

The Most Reverend Gordon J. Bennett, S.J. :

- Was born in 1946 in Denver, Colorado.
- Made first vows as a Jesuit in 1966, was ordained a priest in 1975 and professed final vows in 1983.
- Was ordained Bishop by William Henry Cardinal Keeler in 1998 and served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.
- Was installed as Bishop of Mandeville in Jamaica in 2004 and retired in 2006 to California due to health issues.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“Grace upon Grace”***

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton:

- Was born in 1944 in Chicago, Illinois.
- Was ordained to the priesthood for Diocese of Chicago in 1970 by John Cardinal Cody.
- Was ordained to the episcopacy by Justin Cardinal Rigali, then Cardinal Archbishop of St. Louis, and he served as Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis.
- Became Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Charles, Louisiana in 2000, and in 2005 he became Bishop of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois from which he retired in 2020.
- Chose as his episcopal motto: ***“Mane Nobiscum Domine” - “Stay with us, O Lord.”***

The Most Reverend Curtis Guillory, S.V. D.:

- Was born in 1943 in Mallet, Louisiana, the oldest of 17 children.
- Was ordained by Bishop Carlos Lewis Tullock, S.V.D. (Society of the Divine Word) in 1972.
- Was ordained a Bishop in 1988 by Bishop Anthony Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, Texas where Bishop Guillory would serve as Auxiliary Bishop.
- Was made Bishop of Beaumont, Texas in 2000 where he served until he retired in June, 2020.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“Dilegentibus Deum Omnia Cooperantur”- “For those who love God all things work together.”***



Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Retired

The Most Reverend Martin D. Holley:

- Was born in Pensacola, Florida in 1954.
- Was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassie, Florida in 1987
- Was ordained a Bishop in 2004 and served as Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.
- Became Bishop of the Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee in 2016, a position he held until 2018 when he became Bishop Emeritus.
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“In Aeternum Misericordia Eius” – “His mercy endures forever.”***

The Most Reverend John H. Ricard, S.S.J:

- Was born in 1940 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Was ordained a priest in the Society of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart (more commonly known as the Josephites) in 1968.
- Was ordained a Bishop and was made an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 1984. He also chaired Catholic Relief Services.
- Was made, in 1997, Bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassie, Florida, a position from which he resigned after suffering a stroke in 2011.
- He served as President of the United States Catholic Congress from its inception in 1987 until 2019.
- He was elected Superior General of the Josephites in June, 2019, a position in which he now serves.
- His episcopal motto is **“God is Gracious.”**



Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Retired

The Most Reverend Guy Sansaricq:

- Was born in Jeremie, Haiti in 1934 and knew even as a boy that he wanted to be a priest.
- Was ordained to the priesthood in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 1960 and was assigned to serve as the chaplain to Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas, after which he studied in Rome until 1971.
- Served, beginning in 1971, as the director of the Haitian Apostolate in the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York.
- Was selected in 1987 to head the National Haitian Apostolate.
- Was incardinated into the Diocese of Brooklyn in 1991.
- Was named Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn in 2006 and retired in 2010.
- Has as his motto: ***“Faithful Servant.”***

The Most Reverend J. Terry Steib, S.V.D.:

- Was born in 1940 in Vacherie, Louisiana, the oldest of 5 children.
- Remembers working on the sugar cane fields with his father and his episcopal coat-of-arms reflects this heritage with the image of sugar cane.
- Entered the Seminary of the Society of the Divine Word in 1953 and was ordained to the priesthood on January 6, 1967.
- Taught, served 3 terms as Provincial of the Southern Province of the Society of the Divine Word and was vice-president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men from 1979-1983.
- Was ordained Bishop in 1984 and installed as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, Missouri.
- Was installed as the fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee in 1993 and served there until his retirement in 2016, making him the longest-serving bishop in that diocese to date.
- Stated, in reflecting on his experiences as an African-American bishop, “An important challenge is to get our people in the Church to see the universality of church in all its cultural diversity, to look at and bless these differences and to see the beauty of one church and one family.”
- Has as his episcopal motto: ***“The Lord is my Light.”***



Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Deceased

There are 24 deceased Black Catholic Bishops as listed by the National Black Catholic Congress.
They are (in order of death)

Year of death	Name	Year of Birth	Birthplace	Diocese(s) Served
1991	Bishop Harold Perry, S.V.D.	1916	Lake Charles, LA	Auxiliary Bishop, New Orleans, LA
1992	Bishop James P. Lyke, O.F.M.	1939	Chicago, IL	Auxiliary Bishop, Cleveland, OH Archbishop, Atlanta, GA
1993	Bishop Carl Fisher, S.S.J.	1945	Pascagoula, MS	Auxiliary Bishop, Los Angeles, CA
1995	Bishop Emerson Moore	1938	New York, NY	Auxiliary Bishop, New York, NY
1997	Bishop Joseph Francis, S.V.D.	1923	Lafayette, LA	Auxiliary Bishop, Newark, NJ
2000	Bishop Eugene Marino, S.S.J.	1934	Biloxi, MS	Auxiliary Bishop, Washington, D.C. Archbishop, Atlanta, GA
2013	Bishop Moses B. Anderson, S.S.E.	1928	Selma, AL	Auxiliary Bishop, Detroit, MI
2014	Bishop Leonard Olivier, S.V.D.	1923	Lake Charles, LA	Auxiliary Bishop, Washington, D.C.
2018	Bishop Dominic Carmon, S.V.D.	1930	Opelousas, LA	Auxiliary Bishop, New Orleans, LA
2019	Bishop Joseph Howze	1923	Daphne, AL	Auxiliary Bishop, Natchez-Jackson, MS Bishop, Biloxi, MS
2019	Bishop Elliot G. Thomas	1926	Pittsburgh, PA	Bishop, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands,
2020	Bishop George V. Murry, S.J.	1948	Camden, NJ	Auxiliary Bishop, Chicago, IL Coadjutor Bishop & Bishop, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Bishop, Youngstown, OH



Black Catholic Bishops of the United States: Deceased

The Question of Bishop James Healey

(1830-1900)



Although the National Black Catholic Congress website lists 12 deceased Black bishops, it also contains a reference to Bishop James Augustine Healey. In the section of the website entitled “History of Black Catholics,” there is a timeline detailing “U.S. Black Catholic History” which was compiled by Father Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. (See page 13 of this resource). Click below to access this timeline.
<https://www.nbccongress.org/history-of-black-catholics.html>

The entry, entitled **1875: James Augustine Healey, First Black Bishop**, reads:
Although James Healey and his nine siblings-all fathered by a Georgia plantation owner-are officially slaves, their father brings them north for education and freedom. Three of the Healey brothers-James, Patrick, and Alexander-become the first African-American priests in the U.S., although they do not identify with being black and never speak on behalf of blacks.

There are many aspects of this story to consider. The father, Michael Morris Healey, was an Irish immigrant to Georgia who owned a large plantation. Their mother was a mulatto slave named Mary Eliza Clark. The laws at that time did not allow inter-racial marriages. One source maintains that the couple was married in Santo Domingo before Michael Healey moved to Georgia, where interracial marriages were banned. Likewise, there were no seminaries in the United States at that time which accepted black men, nor were any colleges integrated. The three boys, along with their brother, Michael, attended Holy Cross College in Massachusetts without anyone being aware of their racial heritage beyond the obvious Irish. The three Healeys who were ordained attended seminaries in Europe and were ordained there. James and Alexander were diocesan priests for the Diocese of Boston and Patrick entered the Society of Jesus. Father Patrick Healey became president of Georgetown University at a time when black students were not accepted to that institution, but he is now known as its “second founder.” Father James Healey became Bishop of the Diocese of Portland, Maine in 1875 and held that post till his death in 1900. It is worthy of note that 8 of the 10 Healey children survived until adulthood. Three of the boys became priests and two of the girls became religious sisters. If they had acknowledged their race, how many doors would have been remained open to them at that time?

So, to answer the general questions in the **Challenge** before this section: There are currently 12 black bishops in the United States: 5 active, 7 retired; There are 12 deceased (13 if you count Bishop Healey) and 24 total (25, including Healey). Cardinal Gregory is the first to be named Cardinal.





Places of Faith

With Significance to Black Catholics

Pilgrimage has long been a tradition in the Catholic faith. Pilgrimages were made for the purposes of sacrifice, for intercessory prayer, in thanksgiving, to express sorrow, for many reasons.

The sites to which people journey hold significance for some reason. Perhaps, it was a site where a holy person lived or died, like sites in the Holy Land. Maybe something important happened there, an important battle in a war, or a person lost his/her life there, like the 911 Memorial.

The three places features in this section all have to do with Black American Catholics and figure uniquely in their experience in faith.



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Our Mother of Africa Chapel
The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
Washington, D. C.



Photo: © "Our Mother of Africa," (Ed Dwight, 1997), Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Photograph used with permission of the National Shrine. All rights reserved.

The Chapel of Our Mother of Africa is on the Crypt level of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Chapel encompasses elements of faith and cultural heritage in a compelling way. The bronze statue of Our Lady with the Infant Jesus dominates the chapel and seems to welcome the person who enters before her. The painful legacy of slavery is faced when one must, literally cross over the inlaid outline of a slave ship to enter the chapel, which evokes a powerful response. The African-American journey from slavery to freedom is portrayed in a 6-foot long bronze relief directly opposite the state of Our Lady as if she is watching over the journey from beginning to end.

The pillars represent the values of the African-American Family: Unity, Self Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Familyhood and Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith.

For a Virtual Tour of the National Shrine click this link: <https://www.nationalshrine.org/virtual-tour/>
Details about the Chapel are also presented here: <https://www.nbccongress.org/our-mother-of-africa-chapel.html>
The slave ship image and the bronze relief are described here <https://afro.com/national-shrine-jewel-depicts-powerful-history/>



Saint Martin de Porres National Shrine and Institute Memphis, Tennessee



**Photos: Courtesy of the Saint
Martin de Porres National
Shrine and Institute
Used with permission**

The National Shrine of Saint Martin de Porres is housed at Saint Peter Church in Memphis, Tennessee. It originated in Columbia, South Carolina, was moved to New Orleans when the Southern Province of the Dominica Order was established and head-quartered in the city; and finally was permanently set in Memphis, Tennessee, at the Dominican parish there. It has as its mission to

Saint Martin himself was a Dominican Brother and was known for compassion, humility, kindness, especially for the poor; and healing. His mother was a freed slave of African descent born in Panama. His father was Spanish and saw to it that his son was trained as a barber-surgeon. Martin was a gifted healer.

These qualities were not wasted by Martin. The poor of his hometown of Lima, Peru knew his kindness and charity. The friars at his convent, especially those in the infirmary, knew his holiness and his care. It is reported that Martine even fed the mice so that they, in turn, would quit eating the brothers' habit material! If you look closely at the foot of Saint Martin in the photo to the let, you will see a pair of mice!

The mission of the Shrine is to foster devotion to Saint Martin and to provide educational events about Martin's life and the Catholic faith. Martin died on November 3, 1639 and on the third of each month, the Martin's Bread Ministry of the Shrine distributes freshly-baked bread in to any guest in the area after the noon Mass in Martin's honor.

Visit the website for a virtual tour and to see about pilgrimages there. The Shrine is also just 1.1 miles from the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis.

<https://stmartinshrine.org/>



Xavier University of Louisiana New Orleans, Louisiana



*Photo: Courtesy of Xavier University of Louisiana
Used with permission*

Xavier University of Louisiana (Refer to <https://www.xula.edu/>) is the country's only Historically Black University which is also Catholic. It is also the only university to be founded by a canonized Saint of the Catholic Church, Saint Katharine Drexel and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

Two phrases of Mother Katharine Drexel still animate the Xavier Community. The first is "God's greatest work on earth is man; man's master art is leading men to God." The Xavier University Mission Statement also incorporates her values: "The ultimate purpose of the University is to contribute to the promotion of a more just and humane society by preparing its students to assume roles of leadership and service."

One student comments, "We're a family here. We are a community. You find your closest friends. More importantly, Xavier helps you find yourself."





Prayer to end Racism

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Also:

Links to Resources combatting Racism



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Prayer to End Racism

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Mary, friend and mother to all,
through your Son,
God has found a way to unite himself to every human being,
called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other.

We ask for your help in calling on your Son,
seeking forgiveness for the times when
we have failed to love and respect one another.

We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son
the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism
and to build a just society.

We ask for your help in following your Son,
so that prejudice and animosity
will no longer infect our minds or hearts
but will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person.

Mother of the Church,
the Spirit of your Son Jesus warms our hearts:
Pray for us. Amen.

Link to Everyone Belongs Program information

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/everyone-belongs-0>

Link to Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love Pastoral Letter Against Racism

<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>

Link to Study Guide for Open Wide Our Hearts: (English)

https://www.usccb.org/resources/study-guide-open-hearts-2019-09_0.pdf

Link to Study Guide for Open Wide Our Hearts: (Spanish)

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/study-guide-open-wide-hearts-spa.pdf>





Using this Resource:

Ideas and Suggestions

The following suggestions are general in nature and can be adapted for varying grade levels.

If you have further suggestions, please, send them to Sister Elizabeth Anne,
O.P. : sreanne@aquinascollege.edu



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Suggested Activities, Projects and Assignments. Just some ideas!

- ✓ Have the students choose one of the 6 persons who are in the canonization process (Part 1: *On the road to sainthood!*) If you could ask that person **3 questions**, what would they be? Why would you choose those questions? Then:
- ✓ After you decide what questions you want to ask, see who else in your class chose that same person. Form a group and list your questions. From that list decide on 3 questions. Then talk about how you think that person would answer them. As a panel, present your questions, answers and rationale to the class. You may use **PowerPoint or Google Slide to help present your answers. OR** a student “**becomes**” that person and someone interviews him/her giving those answers that the students have determined. Have students record the interviews and show them to the class.
- ✓ Print the pages in Part I: People of Faith: *On the Road to Sainthood* and post them on a wall or bulletin board. Discuss them and challenge the class to “**add a fact**” or give more information about any of those 6 people. Provide index cards and have them post the extra facts around the posters. [The same type of thing could be done with the other people included in the People of Faith section.]
- ✓ Have the students identify the **virtue** do they think each of the people *On the Road to Sainthood* practiced. Maybe brainstorm a list of virtues that could stimulate responses and then have them reflect and write. Certainly, include the principal virtues, but also things like friendship, mercy, kindness, sharing, patience, generosity, courage, perseverance, cheerfulness, etc. to encourage them to think about those qualities in the lives of the people they studied.
- ✓ Choose a **quotation** by or about one of those *On the Road to Sainthood*- one that you like. Explain what it means and why you chose it.
- ✓ Use the following **sentence stems** for mini-reflections or paragraph response:
 - The life of _____ taught me that _____..
 - I admire _____ because _____..
 - What impressed me most about _____ was _____.Have the students share their responses or post them.
- ✓ Discuss or reflect on how **faith impacted** the life choices of the people in the first two sections.
- ✓ Many of the saints have coats of arms with symbols associated with them (Saint Joseph and carpenter’s tools or the lily; St. Peter with the keys or the upside down cross; St. Cecilia with a harp, Saint Andrew with the X-shaped cross, etc.) Have the students design (individually or in groups) **coats of arms** for the People *On the Road to Sainthood* and explain them to the class.



- ✓ Post a **map** of the United States on a wall or bulletin board and mark the dioceses where the Black Bishops in the United States have served. Be careful, because some bishops have been in multiple dioceses and that should be reflected. You can write the Bishops name on a small card, post it outside the map on the wall or bulletin board and connect it to the name of the Diocese. Some dioceses will have been served by more than one bishop.
- ✓ Have the older children make an **Movie or storybook** for the younger children about one of the Black Catholics in the resource.
- ✓ Design a **scavenger hunt!** Divide the class into teams. Give each team information about the people and places in the Resource. Make a list of 15-20 questions that take them through the resources about the people. For example, Which bishop was the oldest of 17 children? Who founded the longest, continuously active school for Black children in the United States? Can you name the school? Who was the longest serving college president in the United States? What was the name of the first Black-owned newspaper in the United States? Questions like this help the people become real to the students.
- ✓ With older students, and if the environment and maturity level of the class is sufficient, you might discuss **the dilemma of Bishop Healey**. Should he be included on the list of Black Bishops? Why would he not reveal his racial heritage? This can be very delicate, but it can also help students see the various perspectives that could be taken into consideration with this issue.
- ✓ Make a **virtual pilgrimage** to one of the 3 places in the book, either as a class or on their own. How were both the **faith and the African-American culture** present in those places? Discuss, etc. (Or if you are close enough to one, go!)
- ✓ Read through the episcopal **motto** for each of the Bishops. Choose one that you find most meaningful. Explain your choice and the meaning of the motto as you understand it.
- ✓ Have the students design their own **motto**, a statement that represents their mission or what is important to them. Suggest using a scripture verse or an appropriate line from a hymn or song. Make compute posters or banners with their mottos and post them.
- ✓ Have the students make up a **Quiz Game** using facts from the Resource. Or the teacher can make up the questions and determine the rules.
- ✓ Write a **prayer** based on the virtues these people have modeled. Pray it as a class. Like, Lord give us the patience of Father Tolton, the forgiving heart of Julia Greeley, etc. If you keep it to those 6 and maybe a couple of general qualities the others model, it could be used as a class prayer.
- ✓ In religion class, do a **virtue survey**. After study of the biography sections, students receive a blank index card and fill in the following sentences: _____ (name of person) is an example of the virtue of _____ because _____. Discuss and post the responses.





Relevant Websites and Other Resources

Useful in the preparation of this Resource



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Relevant Websites and Selected References

National Black Catholic Conference

[Black Catholic - The National Black Catholic Congress \(nbccongress.org\)](http://nbccongress.org)

This website has a wealth of different resources. The most pertinent resources for K-12 purposes are accessed through the tab entitled “About Us” which has information for the following topics: African Popes, Black Catholic Sainthood (biographies and portraits of 6 people of the United States who are currently in some stage of the canonization process), Black Saints and Martyrs, History of Black Catholics (in the US), and Black Bishops of the United States.

Also has a wonderful set of posters which download to Dropbox!:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p37h0uytr8sptu/AAAd7CdUmOJb6Ud0ecg5Pxala?dl=0>

Additional Links to information about the 6 Black Catholics of the United States

<https://www.simplycatholic.com/black-catholics-have-a-legacy-of-holiness/>

(OMITS Tolton and Greeley)

<https://uscatholic.org/articles/201202/built-of-living-stones-5-black-catholics-to-remember/>

<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/upload/Selected-Chronology-AAA.pdf>

Venerable Pierre Toussaint:

[Venerable Pierre Toussaint | Archdiocese of New York \(archny.org\)](http://archny.org) Documentary/legacy video

<https://archny.org/ministries-and-offices/cultural-diversity-apostolate/black-ministry/venerable-pierre-toussaint/>

Video and print.

Servant of God Thea Bowman

Brief biography

[Microsoft Word - Sister Thea Bowman Spiritual Biography.doc \(wsimg.com\)](#)

Video

[Sister Thea Bowman | Cause for Canonization](#)

<https://simplycatholic.com/servant-of-god-sister-thea-bowman/>

Venerable Father Augustus Tolton

[Father Augustus Tolton, First Black Priest in the U.S. - Catholicism.org](#)

<https://tolton.archchicago.org/about/life-and-times>

Servant of God Julia Greeley

[Julia Greeley Guild – Welcome to the official website of the Julia Greeley Guild](#)

Includes video biography

<https://denvercatholic.org/simple-humble-julia-greeley-placed-path-sainthood/>

<https://diocesan.com/slave-saint-life-julia-greeley/>

Burkey, B. ,ed. (2012).*In the secret service of the Sacred Heart: The life and virtues of Julia Greeley*. Denver:

Julia Greeley Guild.



Venerable Henriette Delille

[HOME \(henriettedelille.com\)](http://henriettedelille.com)

<https://simplycatholic.com/venerable-mother-henriette-delille-a-patron-for-perseverance/>

<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/upload/Henriette-Delille-Fortnight-2016.pdf>

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/simply-spirit/venerable-servant-slaves-bears-witness-how-spirit-blesses-faith>

Hidden Figures: Venerable Mother Henriette DeLille #BlackHERstoryMonth 20/29 - Bing video

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/meet-the-creole-nun-who-risked-her-life-to-teach-slaves-93326>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Henriette+Delille+New+Orleans&ru=%2fvideos%2fsearch%3fq%3dHenriette%2bDelille%2bNew%2bOrleans%26FORM%3dVDMHRS&view=detail&mid=D22A3C12EFC6D15D58B4D22A3C12EFC6D15D58B4&rvsmid=5ADE03B993247A4889BC5ADE03B993247A4889BC&FORM=VDQVAP>

Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange

[Founders \(oblatesisters.com\)](http://founders.oblatesisters.com)

Video: [VIDEOS AND PUBLICATIONS \(motherlange.org\)](http://VIDEOS AND PUBLICATIONS (motherlange.org))

Other Biographies

Mother Mathilda Beasley

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/beasley-mother-mathilda-1832-1903/>

<https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/online-exhibits/featured-historical-figures/mother-mathilda-beasley/mathilda-beasley-and-the-catholic-church/>

Dr. Norman Francis

New Orleans Historical, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/1450>.

Daniel Rudd

<https://aleteia.org/2016/11/28/daniel-rudd-born-into-slavery-his-catholic-faith-was-his-fortress/>

Llewellyn Scott

<https://georgiabulletin.org/news/2006/03/renowned-scholar-shares-black-catholic-history/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1995/12/19/when-llewellyn-scott-fed-the-poor/8d7aa572-70dc-47da-bb31-47650a9ce938/>

Healey Family

<https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/james-healy-portlands-african-american-bishop-passed-white/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/healy-bishop-james-augustine-1830-1900/>

<https://maineencyclopedia.com/healy-james-augustine/>

<https://www.catholicerald.com/news/james-healy-america-s-first-black-bishop/>

<https://www.holycross.edu/bishop-healy-committee/overview-healy-brothers>



Additional Resources

Catholic Extension

[Celebrating Black Catholics During Black History Month - Catholic Extension](#)

Our Mother of Africa Chapel, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.

[3 Marian Prayers: Our Lady of China, Our Mother of Africa, Our Lady of Vailankanni - National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception](#)

Note: This site includes a 360-degree tour of the chapel of Our Mother of Africa.

The works of Father Cyprian Davis, O.S.B. were invaluable:

These include:

The History of Black Catholics in the United States. (1990). New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.

Brothers and Sisters to Us: The Never-ending Story. (March 31, 1990). America, pp. 319-21, 324.

Black Catholics in America: A Historical Note. (May 3, 1980). America, pp. 376-378.

The Holy See and American Black Catholics. A Forgotten Chapter in the History of the American Church. U.S. Catholic Historian, Spring-Summer, 1988. Vol. 7, no 2/3. The Black Catholic Community. 1880-1987. (Spring/ Summer, 1988), pp.157-181.

Black Catholics in Nineteenth Century America. U.S. Catholic Historian. 1986, Vol. 5. no. 1. The Black Catholic Experience (196), pp. 1-17.

Black Catholics in the Civil Rights Movement in the Southern United States: Ap.P. Tureaud, Thomas Wyatt Turner, and Earl Johnson. U.S. Catholic Historian. Fall, 2006. Vol. 24. No. 4. Catholics in the South. (Fall, 2006), pp. 69-81.

