



## ***Celebrating Black Catholic History Month – November 2023***

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On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate the long history and proud heritage of Black Catholics. During the month of November, which marks a time when we pray for all saints and souls in loving remembrance, we take time to recall in a special way the saints and souls of Africa and the African Diaspora.

### **2023 Commemoration of National Black Catholic History Month**

Join us for the annual Mass commemorating National Black Catholic History Month on Saturday, November 4, 2023, 5:00 p.m., at *Our Lady Queen of Peace* Catholic Church (3800 Ely Pl SE, Washington, DC). Cardinal Wilton Gregory will be the principal celebrant.

All parishes are invited to plan a special liturgy to celebrate the rich cultural expression of Black Catholics in the Church and our country. Engage your parish's intercultural committee or others to plan and participate. Please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at [culturaldiversity@adw.org](mailto:culturaldiversity@adw.org) for assistance with liturgical resources.

### **A Place at the Table – Documentary Film Screening**

As a part of celebrating this Black Catholic History Month, parishes and ministries are invited to host a screening of the documentary film, *A Place at the Table*, which tells the story of the lives of the first six African Americans on the path to Catholic sainthood. Learn more about these outstanding men and women and hear of their lives of faith. We can make a difference by sharing their stories, contributions, and impact on so many people's lives. Please click [here](#) for additional information and to reserve a date for a screening.

Share the stories of these Black Catholics who ministered in the U.S. and support their canonization causes. For additional information on the lives of these remarkable individuals visit their websites. Click on the links provided below:

**1. Venerable Father Augustus Tolton (April 1, 1854 – July 9, 1897)**

The venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton was the first Roman Catholic priest in the United States officially known to be Black when he was ordained in 1886. See, [Augustus Tolton website](#)

**2. Venerable Pierre Toussaint (June 27, 1766 – June 20, 1853)**

The venerable Toussaint was born into slavery in Haiti. He became a freeman, successful businessman and philanthropist in New York City. See, [Pierre Toussaint website](#)

**3. Venerable Henriette Delille (March 11, 1813 – Nov. 17, 1862)**

The venerable Delille was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she lived all her life. In 1842, she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. See, [Henriette Delille website](#).

**4. Venerable Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (1784 – Feb. 3, 1882)**

The venerable Mother Lange was the foundress and first Superior General of the Oblate Sisters of Providence See, [Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange website](#).

**5. Servant of God Julia Greeley (1833-1848 – June 7, 1918)**

Servant of God Julia Greeley was born into slavery, at Hannibal, Missouri, sometime between 1833 and 1848. Freed by Missouri's Emancipation Act in 1865, she joined the Secular Franciscan Order in 1901 and was active in it until her death in 1918. See, [Julia Greeley website](#).

**6. Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA (Dec. 29, 1937 – March 30, 1990)**

Sister Thea was born in 1937 and reared in Canton, Mississippi. As a child, she converted to Catholicism. She joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. See, [Sister Thea Bowman website](#)

### [Additional Celebration Ideas](#)

- The story of Father Augustus Tolton can be shared by inviting a Tolton Ambassador to your parish to give a talk about his life. Contact: Tolton Ambassadors DC, Co-Convenors Cheryl Holley and Anita Coleman at (202) 491-5779, [toltonambassadors.dc@gmail.com](mailto:toltonambassadors.dc@gmail.com), Instagram: [@ToltonAmbsDC](#) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/toltonambassadorsdc>.
- Storytelling is a great way to share history and build relationships in parish communities. Identify and invite member(s) of your parish community who have expertise and experience about, or as, a Black Catholic to tell their story.
- Black Catholics have a rich history and dedication to social action. Learn this history by hosting a parish book discussion during the month of November. Please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at [culturaldiversity@adw.org](mailto:culturaldiversity@adw.org) for book and dialogue recommendations.
- Black Catholics have a rich tradition. Share the gift of music by inviting musicians from the diaspora to perform music from their cultural traditions during the Mass or consider having your own parishes music ministries perform representative selections from the diaspora. See, “Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal.”
- Acknowledge the service of African American Religious orders that serve African Catholics by hosting a virtual panel discussion or meeting with members of the Josephites, Oblate Sisters of Providence, and/or Sisters of the Holy Family. Please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at [culturaldiversity@adw.org](mailto:culturaldiversity@adw.org) for more information.