



Celebrating Black History Month - February 2023

Share, Learn, and Celebrate

The *Share, Learn, and Celebrate* initiative is designed to acknowledge, educate, and embed multicultural awareness in our diverse communities. Through *Share, Learn, and Celebrate* we hope to heighten awareness, knowledge and understanding through the engagement of Archdiocesan parishes, ministries, and the faithful in relevant activities. Stakeholders will be encouraged to share the achievements, identity, beauty, richness, and importance of each of our cultural communities as part of particular celebratory and historically significant occasions. Please see the following recommendations for consideration to *Share, Learn, and Celebrate* Black History Month.

History of Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration which commemorates African Americans' achievements, honors their contributions to the United States and the world, and recognizes their crucial role in U.S. history. In 1926, this celebration was created by Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and was initially called Negro History Week. During the nation's bicentennial in 1976 President Gerald R. Ford extended the celebration to a month.

Archdiocesan Level Activities and Resources

Share A variety of resources have been curated to support parishes and schools in the celebration of Black History Month. The Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach is at your service to assist with the resources described in this document. Please contact culturaldiversity@adw.org for more information.

Learn Participate in the upcoming Archdiocesan Information Session in preparation for the National Black Catholic Congress XIII in the summer of 2023 at National Harbor, Maryland. The [Information Session](#) will be held virtually on Thursday, February 16, 2023, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. All are welcome. Please share information found in adw.org to help spread the word and encourage attendance. (Click [here](#) to download the flier and [here](#) to register)

Celebrate Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Black History Month Mass at Holy Comforter and St. Cyprian on Sunday, February 5, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. (ET). Cardinal Wilton Gregory will be the celebrant. (Click [here](#) to download the flier)

Parish Level Recommendations

Share

Share the stories of six African Americans who are currently on the road to sainthood. Share information about these historically significant African Americans and encourage members of your parish community to support their cause for canonization.

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

Father Tolton was the first Roman Catholic priest in the United States publicly known to be Black when he was ordained in 1886. See, [Tolton Ambassador - Augustus Tolton \(archchicago.org\)](#)

2. Julia Greeley (1833-1848 – June 7, 1918)

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 Home website.](#)

3. 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 | Cause for Canonization](#)

4. Pierre Toussaint (June 27, 1766 – June 20, 1853)

Toussaint was born into slavery in Haiti. He became a freeman, successful businessman and philanthropist in New York City. See, [Pierre Toussaint Cause & Guild | Archdiocese of New York \(archny.org\)](#)

5. Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (1784 – Feb. 3, 1882)

Mother Lange was the foundress and first Superior General of the Oblate Sisters of Providence See, [HOME \(motherlange.org\).](#)

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

Venerable Delille was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she lived all of her life. In 1842, she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. See, [HOME \(henriette-delille.com\)](#)

Learn

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, Instagram: [@ToltonAmbsDC](#) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/toltonambassadorsdc>.

Celebrate

African American historical facts are available to be shared in school newsletters, daily announcements, and social media. Please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at culturaldiversity@adw.org for a listing of historical facts.

Share 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 particular expertise and experience about, or as, an African American or African American Catholic to tell their story.

Learn African American 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 for book and dialogue recommendations.

Celebrate Plan a special liturgy at your parish to celebrate the rich cultural expression of African Americans 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 for assistance with liturgical resources such as prayer cards and Prayers for the Faithful.

Share African American 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."

Learn 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 for more information.

Celebrate On February 5, 2023, celebrate the National Day of Prayer for the African American and African Family, founded by Father James Goode in 1989. Resources to support parish-level celebrations are provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and can be found at usccb.com. The Prayer for the African American and African Family can be found [here](#). Please consider reciting this prayer, which was composed by Father Goode, at the conclusion of Mass on February 5, 2023.

Share Share The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington commemorative 2023 Black History Month prayer card at a Liturgy held for this purpose. Please email culturaldiversity@adw.org to order prayer cards.

Learn Consider sponsoring a parish field trip or encourage families in the parish to visit the following historical sites within the Archdiocese of Washington:

1. Frederick Douglass National Historical Site, Washington D.C, <https://www.nps.gov/frdo/index.htm>.
2. Mary McCleod Bethune Council House, <https://www.nps.gov/mamc/index.htm>.
3. Anacostia Community Museum, <https://anacostia.si.edu/>.

4. African American Civil War Memorial, <https://www.afroamcivilwar.org/>.
5. Underground Railroad Experience Trail, <https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/woodlawn-manor-cultural-park/underground-railroad-experience-trail/>.
6. Holy Family Catholic Church was established as a Jesuit mission for black tenant farmers in 1890 and designated as a historic landmark in 1984.
<https://holyfamilywoodmore.org/>
7. Riversdale Mansion, <https://www.riversdale.org/the-plummer-family>.
8. Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center,
<https://pgaamcc.org/>.
9. Northampton Slave Quarters and Archaeological Park,
<https://www.mncppc.org/3009/Northampton-Slave-Quarters-and-Archaeolo>
10. Commemorative to Enslaved People of Southern Maryland,
<https://www.smcm.edu/commemorative/>. For more sites in Southern Maryland please go to: <https://books.alchemidesign.com/books/nqcd/#p=1>.

Share Include African American historical facts in school newsletters, announcements, and social media.

Learn Help students learn more about African American saints with a fun and affordable art project by having them create miraculous medals with the images of African saints. All you will need is construction paper, yarn, and the saints' images. Email culturaldiversity@adw.org for details and instructions.

Celebrate Engage students in art projects celebrating African Americans to be displayed throughout the school building.

Share Have a special school Mass celebrating Black History Month. Engage the parish, faculty, staff, students, and parents to plan and participate in the liturgy. Please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach for assistance with liturgical resources. Please email culturaldiversity@adw.org to order The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington commemorative 2023 Black History Month prayer card to be shared at a Liturgy held for this purpose.

African American Catholics have contributed significantly to the Church's history, growth, and liturgies. Celebrate their stories by incorporating books by and about African Catholics into your school's or religious education's curriculums. For a list of recommended books please contact culturaldiversity@adw.org.