

Celebrating Black History Month - February 2024

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. Participants 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.

Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration which commemorates Black 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 *A Place at the Table: "African-Americans on the Path to Sainthood"*
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 our church's first six Black Americans to be considered for sainthood and the efforts to canonize them. 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 the lives of so many. The Archdiocese of Washington has obtained permission to show the film; thus, we encourage you to host a screening event and engage your parish, school, and communities. Click [here](#) for more information and to schedule a presentation.

Celebrate Mark your calendar and plan to attend The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington commemorative [Black History Month Liturgy](#) that will be held at St. Camillus Parish, 1600 St. Camillus Dr., in Silver Spring, Maryland, on Saturday, February 3, 2024, 4 p.m. Praise & Worship, 4:30 p.m. Mass. Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr., Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, will be our celebrant. Click [here](#) to download the flyer.

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. Venerable Father Augustus Tolton (April 1, 1854 – July 9, 1897)**
Venerable 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. 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 Home website.](#)
- 3. Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA (Dec. 29, 1937 – March 30, 1990)**
Servant Sister Thea Bowman 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. Venerable Pierre Toussaint (June 27, 1766 – June 20, 1853)**
Venerable Pierre 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. Venerable Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (1784 – Feb. 3, 1882)**
Venerable 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 Henriette 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, [HOME \(henriette-delille.com\)](#)

Share

Please email culturaldiversity@adw.org to request copies of the Holy Six – Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood prayer cards.

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 Historical facts about Black history 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, a Black American or Black American Catholic to tell their story.

Learn Black Catholics have a rich history and dedication to social action. Learn this history by hosting a parish book discussion during the month of February. 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 Black 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 Black Catholics have a rich music 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 Black Religious or orders that serve Black 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 The [National Day of Prayer for the African American Family](#) and African Family was founded by Father James Good in 1989. Resources to support parish-level celebrations are provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop and can be found at uscgb.org. You can download a copy of the resource aid by clicking [here](#).

Share Invite parishioners to tell their story of being a Black Catholic through their family history or personal journey. This is an opportunity to learn about one another and how Catholicism has shaped their lives. These open dialogues can build community in the parish.

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.
2. Mary McLeod 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, [Search • MNCPPC, MD • Civic Engage](#)
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>.
11. Josiah Henson Museum & Park <https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/josiah-henson-museum-and-park/>
12. The Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery <https://www.sandyspringslavemuseum.org/>

Catholic Schools and Religious Education

- Share** **Smithsonian Institution 2024 Theme for Black History Month - “African Americans and the Arts”**
Utilize the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture’s resources for inspirational lesson plans in history, art, music, and language arts.
Visit website: [Black History Month | Smithsonian Institution \(si.edu\)](https://www.si.edu/black-history-month)
Smithsonian Collection Spotlight:
-*African American Artists and Selected Works* that illustrates the critical role American artists of African descent have played in shaping the history of American art.
-*Musical Crossroads* tells the stories of African American music from the arrival of the first African to present day.
- Learn** Visit Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) and explore. SAAM is home to one of the most significant collections of works by African American Artists in the world.

Plan a school field trip for the experience of touring the exhibits and wonderful portraits and galleries on display that illustrate the critical role American artists of African descent have played in shaping the history of American art.
- Celebrate** Plan a school art festival gathering to showcase students’ works in visual and musical arts. Invite families to share their heritage of traditional cuisines and music.
- Share** Include Black American historical facts in school newsletters, announcements, and social media.
- Learn** Help students learn more about Black saints with a fun and affordable art project by having them create “miraculous medals” with the images of Black 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 Black 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 request The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington commemorative 2024 Black History Month prayer card to be shared at a liturgy held for this purpose.