



Celebrating Black History Month - February 2025

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 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.

2025 Black History Month Theme-"African Americans and Labor"

Each year a theme is selected by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History to bring to the public's attention to important developments that merit emphasis. This year's theme, *African Americans and Labor*, focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds – free, paid or coerced; skilled and unskilled; vocational and volunteer – intersect with the collective experiences of Black people.

Archdiocesan Level Activities and Resources

Share

What We Have Seen and Heard – A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States (1984). The 40th Anniversary of this pastoral letter was commemorated on September 9th, 2024. This historical pastoral letter written by 10 Black Bishops, inspired by the Holy Spirit and felt compelled to address the unique needs and challenges faced by the Black community. Share the message and its ongoing relevance for evangelization within the Black community today. We are called to action in this pastoral letter to share our gifts and seize opportunities to spread the Gospel in meaningful ways today in our communities.

Explore the resource links below for more insights:

- [*A Video Reflection from Cardinal Gregory*](#)
- [*Pastoral Letter*](#)
- [*Study Guide*](#)
- [*WWHSH Prayer Card*](#)

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. We encourage you to host a screening event and engage your parish, school, and communities. Please click [here](#) for additional information and to schedule a date for a screening.

Celebrate

Mark your calendar and plan to attend The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington's commemorative [Black History Month Liturgy](#) that will be held at the Church of the Incarnation, 880 Eastern Avenue NE, Washington, D.C., on Saturday, February 22, 2025. Praise and Worship at 9:30 a.m. featuring the Archdiocese of Washington Gospel Mass Choir. The Mass will follow at 10 a.m. with Auxiliary Bishop of Washington Roy E. Campbell Jr. serving as Principal 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. 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 \(henriette-delille.com\)](http://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: Co-Convenors Cheryl Holley, and Anita Coleman at (202) 491-5779, toltonambassadors.dc@gmail.com
Instagram: [@ToltonAmbsDC](https://www.instagram.com/ToltonAmbsDC) 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

The theme, *African Americans and Labor*, intends to encourage broad reflections on intersections between Black people's work and their workplaces.
[2025 – African Americans and Labor Executive Summary](#)

Learn

2025 marks the 100-year anniversary of the creation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids by labor organizer and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph. It was the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor.

Celebrate

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.

Share

Black History Month is a great time to make an intentional effort to broaden our churches' reach and understanding. Celebrations can include singing, watching films, and having discussions. These events can help parishes learn more about Black history and culture and promote understanding and reconciliation.

Activities to consider:

- Invite a priest, deacon, or choir from a parish of different ethnicity than the prominent ethnicity in your parish. Share the diverse culture of liturgical expression.
- Sing hymns or songs by composers from the African diaspora.
- Include the history of the song in the church bulletin or website.
- Have a potluck with foods from members' ancestral homelands.
- Invite members to wear clothing from their ancestral country.
- Attend or co-host a Black history event in your community.

Learn 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.

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 vibrant cultural expression of Black Americans in the Church and our country. Celebrate the diversity of your congregation. 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. African American History in St. Mary's County MD begins in 1634. Explore African American Heritage sites: <https://www.visitstmarysmd.com/explore/museums-history/african-american/>
2. Southern Maryland African American history of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's County: [Southern Maryland African American Heritage Guide](#)

3. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, is located at 1411 W Street, SE Washington, D.C. The site preserves the home and estate of Frederick Douglass, one of the most prominent African Americans of the 19th century.
<https://www.nps.gov/frdo/index.htm>
4. Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, <https://www.nps.gov/mamc/index.htm>.
5. Anacostia Community Museum, <https://anacostia.si.edu/>.
6. African American Civil War Memorial, <https://www.afroamcivilwar.org/>.
7. Underground Railroad Experience Trail, <https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/woodlawn-manor-cultural-park/underground-railroad-experience-trail/>.
8. 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/>
9. Riversdale Mansion, <https://www.riversdale.org/the-plummer-family>.
10. Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center, <https://pgaamcc.org/>.
11. Commemorative to Enslaved People of Southern Maryland, St. Mary's College <https://www.smcm.edu/commemorative/>. For more sites in Southern Maryland please go to: <https://books.alchemidesign.com/books/nqcd/#p=1>.
12. Josiah Henson Museum & Park <https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/josiah-henson-museum-and-park/>
13. The Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery
<https://www.sandyspringslavemuseum.org/>

Catholic Schools and Religious Education

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.

Learn

Five Black Leaders who Shaped the Labor Movement:

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/5-black-leaders-shaped-labor-movement>

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

Smithsonian Institution 2025 Theme for Black History Month -

African Americans and Labor The focus on the various and profound ways that work of all kinds intersects with the collective experiences of Black people. 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: Celebrate Black History Month with Smithsonian events, resources, exhibitions, and podcasts.

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.

For Teachers: PBS is celebrating Black History Month 2025! This collection is curated to showcase Black excellence through contributions, achievements, and ideas across core subjects and eras. [Celebrating Black History & Culture](#)

These classroom resources aim to inspire educators to intentionally include Black history and culture stories in all curricula, using PBS Learning Media as a tool to celebrate Black history this month and all year long.

- [Literature & Media](#)
- [The Arts](#)
- [Civics & Society](#)
- [STEM](#)

Celebrate

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

All parishes and schools in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington are welcome to join in *An Invitation to Love: A Call to Prayer to End Racism*. Choose a date in the month of February to pray for an end to racism - perhaps at the end of mass, during a prayer service, a parish meeting, or at the beginning of a school day as the Spirit moves you. **Made in God’s Image Prayer Cards** can be downloaded [PRAY](#) | [LEARN](#) | [ACT](#)

Share

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.

GOD OF MERCY AND LOVE

we place our African American and African Families before You today. May we be proud of our history and never forget those who paid a great price for our liberation. Bless us one by one and keep our hearts and minds fixed on higher ground. Help us to live for you and not for ourselves, and may we cherish and proclaim the gift of life. Bless our parents, guardians and grandparents, relatives and friends. Give us the amazing grace to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Help us, as Your children, to live in such a way that the beauty and greatness of authentic love is reflected in all that we say and do. Give a healing anointing to those less fortunate, especially the motherless, the fatherless, the broken, the sick and the lonely. Bless our departed family members and friends. May they be led into the light of Your dwelling place where we will never grow old, where we will share the fullness of redemption and shout the victory for all eternity. This we ask in the Precious Name of Jesus, our Savior and Blessed Assurance. Amen. Holy Mary, Mother of Our Families, pray for us.

Prayer composed by FR. JIM GOODE, OFM, who in 1989 founded this National Day of Prayer for the African American and African Family



Produced by The National Black Catholic Congress, 2025

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN FAMILY

36th
Year



*Bless Our Families
Heal Our Land*

FEBRUARY 2, 2025
FIRST SUNDAY OF
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BLESS OUR FAMILIES. HEAL OUR LAND...THIS WE PRAY

By Therese Wilson Favors

Today we take pause to give God the glory for Family. We pause to take note of the divine beauty of God's creation called Family and we seek God's blessings on our Families. Some say that Family is God's way of giving us a love hug. Generation after generation we have seen God's hug of love manifest itself. It shows that God moves through and within our human affairs called Family.



Family is not only a collection of people... it is a continued journey of a people's connection with God and an expression of the values of that family. In this, we realize that our deepest hopes and dreams are never singular... not just for one person. Rather, they are always connected to others. It is a journey of Us! That is why we pause to pray for our Families and to seek God's blessing and governance over our Family. God is "Our Father".

Here's some spiritual wisdom as we pray for our Family. Always be on the ready to place God in the middle of the Family, especially when serious decisions need to be made. God is our shelter and our strength, always ready to help in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). Always step back and look at what Jesus would do when relationships among the Family are fragile and weary. Remember that Jesus instituted Christianity as a culture of reconciliation rather than a cancellation of a person or a people. Wounds can fester when disagreements, challenges and broken relationships show up. In these

situations ... go get some supernatural help from God. He moves through human affairs. We all know that invisible wounds are the hardest to heal. Their closure depends on God's grace and the love of others with patience, understanding and justice. Jesus says that the golden rule of life is Do to others whatever you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12).

This same strategy of healing is warranted in these times within our land. Wounds are festering and there is a lot of pain out there. Let's look to God's Word and God's Ways to find a healing ointment. In places that are in need of healing...Work towards reconciliation with love, patience and true justice. Do all your work in love (1 Corinthians 16:14) and remember that God never stops working (John 5:17). Let us therefore lean on the Lord, for great is God's faithfulness and His mercies endure forever.



FAMILY/RVCULABACSSR

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN FAMILY

On this National Day of Prayer, take a moment to initiate a family tradition that fosters deeper connections and strengthens your bonds.

- Gather your family around the dinner table and take turns sharing something positive about each person. This simple practice of giving affirmations can lift everyone's spirits and create a loving, appreciative atmosphere.
- Plan a family walk or outing to embrace the beauty of nature together. Use this time to reflect on the blessings in your lives and express gratitude for one another.
- Set up a family prayer or gratitude jar. Encourage every family member to write down their hopes, prayers, or things they are thankful for and place them in the jar. At Sunday dinner, open the jar and read the messages, and pray for the intentions.
- Arrange for a mass to be said for your family. This can typically be done through your parish and usually involves a small donation.
- Establish a "Family Prayer Call" for families that are spread out. Choose a specific day and time, whether weekly or monthly, and commit to it!



Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NABRE

Produced by The National Black Catholic Congress, 2025

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN FAMILY

Your family can engage in several meaningful activities to serve your neighbors and exemplify love and charity for your children. These actions not only provide tangible help but also instill valuable lessons of compassion and empathy in your children.

- As a family or within your neighborhood, hold a small gathering to come together to pray for those affected by recent natural disasters and discuss ways to offer support.
- Start a “Blanket Ministry” by accepting donations of blankets for the homeless. Contact your local Catholic Charities office for information about its Caring Connections Program.
- Prepare care packages with essential items such as non-perishable food, toiletries, and clean clothing in good condition, and distribute them to local shelters or directly to families in need. Catholic Charities accepts donations to assist the homeless and those impacted by natural disasters.
- Encourage your children to participate by making heartfelt cards or drawings to accompany the care packages, spreading messages of hope and solidarity.
- Clean out closets and drawers for donations. Kids can help go through their clothing, shoes, and toys, selecting things that are clean and gently-used to give away. Sort through kitchen utensil drawers and donate duplicate items.
- Make/send Valentine’s Cards and messages to those people you know who are facing challenges. Kids will especially love doing this! Walmart and Target Gift Cards are always welcomed.
- Donate children's and youth books to those in evacuation centers. The Red Cross lists shelters by impacted area, and you can find the addresses [here](#).
- Volunteer as a family at a local food bank or community center to provide hands-on assistance and foster a spirit of giving.



‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Matthew 25:40 NABRE