



BCAC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Black Catholic
Advisory Circle of the Archdiocese of Seattle

In this newsletter:

Page 01

Welcome from the Chair

Page 02

History & Mission

Page 03

*Collaborative Efforts
Road to Sainthood*

Page 04

*Black History Month - A
Reflection*

Page 05

*Feeding your mind
Book Sponsorship Project*

Page 06

*Affiliates
Interesting Facts*

Page 07

Events of Interest

Page 08

BCAC Leadership

WELCOME FROM CHAIR by SeVera Dowe

The Black Catholic Advisory Circle is pleased to launch its first newsletter. The past few years have been challenging for the Circle, yet our group remained diligent in our service to the Black Catholics in the Archdiocese of Seattle. From its humble beginnings, we met, collaborated, networked, and developed programs and events to advocate the rich tapestry of the Catholic faith for those in the Pacific Northwest of African descent. Our strategy for the next few years will intensify our focus across the Archdiocese and offer ways to deliver advocacy and close our faith community's divide. Our use of technology will create the best practices to share information, and our organization is fully engaged and supportive in developing strategies.

I want to thank BCAC members for their support over the years and the confidence you have placed in our team of laity and religious to build upon the success of the Circle. We have worked hard with the Archdiocese to articulate the mission, clarify the vision, develop, and execute plans to address the needs of Black Catholics.

We look forward to a future of providing resources to support faith-building and cross-culture awareness.

BLACK CATHOLIC ADVISORY CIRCLE: Who Are We?

We are commissioned to bring the richness of Catholicism to the people of African descent and the richness of Black heritage to the Catholic Church.

The gift of the Catholic faith is among our superior treasures.

Our focus is to share our gifts.

We are Catholic Christians, so we can do this.

We are pilgrim Christians moving toward the kingdom so we can do this.

We respect one another, so we can do this.

We love our Catholic faith, so we can do this.

"...we recognize that our faith is not separate from our black heritage, not extraneous to our history but coterminous with that history."

THEN AND NOW...Walter Hubbard, a member of St. Therese Catholic Church, Seattle, became President and Co-Founder of the Catholic Interracial Council (CIC). Their goals were to eradicate racial discourse within the church and community. He became President of the National Catholic Congress for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ) in 1961 and established the Black Catholic Lay Caucus. This was the feeder organization that led to the founding of the African American Black Catholic Advisory group (AAABCA), founded in 1987. Thus began their participation in the 6th historic National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC). The advisory group was established to advocate the needs and concerns of the Black Catholic local parishes, encourage leadership among our communities, and nourish our African Catholic Gospel roots in ways most appropriate to the cultures and traditions of our Black communities.

In 2008, a brief hiatus in leadership occurred in the Archdiocese of Seattle Multicultural Communities office, which allowed the new Director to re-think the direction and activities of the group. From this hiatus came the re-birth under the name of the Black Catholic Advisory Circle (BCAC). The consensus of BCAC members is to be more inclusive of the many constituents and people that make up the Archdiocese of Seattle. As we grew and garnered more representation throughout the Archdiocese, we have evolved from our earliest goals while keeping the commission of the origins rooted in our mission to educate, empower and evangelize.





#BlackVocations

Collaborative Efforts

BCAC is partnering with the August Tolton Vocation Action Circle to encourage our African-American Catholic Community and others to pray for vocations.

As a mission Ambassador, you believe in the overall mission of praying for Black Priests in the United States. You are expected to help raise awareness of the need for more vocations to the priesthood in the Black Catholic community and promote the cause. Each Ambassador is expected to help raise awareness by purchasing our prayer package, raising funds to support seminarians, and advocating in the local church, Deanery, Region, and Diocese. Join the cause at www.blackvocations.org.

On the Road to Sainthood

In this column, we will introduce the six Black American Holy Men and Women of African descent who are on the road to Sainthood. They are from top left to right in the photo: Venerable Henriette Delille (1813-1862); Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton (1854-1897); Servant of God Julia Greeley (1833-1848 – 1918); Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1776-1853); Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (1784-1882); and Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA (1937-1990). We begin with Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first publicly known Black Catholic priest in the United States.

Born the son of slaves in Missouri, Fr. Tolton studied for the priesthood in Rome, having nowhere to study as a seminarian in America. He was ordained in Rome in 1886 in the Basilica of St. John Lateran and celebrated his first Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on Easter Sunday that same year. He was assigned to the Diocese of Alton, Illinois (which is now Springfield), and spent his first three years as a priest at St. Joseph, a church serving the



Black Catholics in Quincy. White Catholics also attended his services, which brought the wrath of a racially bigoted priest whose parish was located a block away. He made life exceedingly difficult for Fr. Tolton, to the point where the young Black cleric sought permission to relocate.

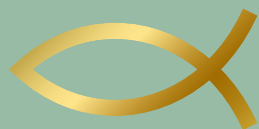
At Archbishop Patrick Feehan's invitation, Fr. Tolton went to the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1889. The very first Black Catholic Congress convened in Washington, DC in January of that year. The two hundred delegates met with President Grover Cleveland and Fr. Tolton celebrated High Mass. During his tenure in the Archdiocese of Chicago, he served as pastor of St. Augustine's Church, a small community of Black Catholics congregating in the basement at Old St. Mary's. He later led the development and construction of a new church, St. Monica, at 36th and Dearborn Streets on the South Side. St. Monica grew from what had been a storefront church of about 127 people, to a parish where Fr. Tolton ministered to some 600 Black parishioners, even though construction of the church was never fully completed. Fr. Tolton led St. Monica Parish until his passing in 1897.

Bishop Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, presents the case for Fr. Tolton's sainthood to the Vatican

Continued on Page 6

BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY MONTH-A REFLECTION

by Deacon Joseph Connor



Some people forget that Christianity did not originate in Europe and even express surprise when they learn that Black Catholic History began in the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40) with the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Philip the Deacon.

Dcn. Al Douglas Turner

What is Black Catholic History Month, and why is it celebrated? In the month of November, when Black Catholic History is celebrated, these two questions are asked almost every time.

In 1990 the National Black Clergy Caucus of the United States presented the idea to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and it was accepted and started. Black Catholic History Month is a time to reflect on the fact that Black Catholics are part of the foundation of Catholicism and the building of Catholicism long before the Europeans. But, unfortunately, Black Catholic contributors to Catholicism were forgotten and very often not mentioned in the history of Catholicism.

We celebrate BCHM to remind ourselves and others that we are a part of Catholicism, not an add-on. We belong to and have a God-given right to participate in the Church as Black and Catholic fully.

Black Catholics have had a significant impact on the history and traditions of Christianity, as stated in "The History of Black Catholics in the United States" by Father Cyprian Davis, O.S.P., an African American Catholic priest. And as a cradle Catholic, I celebrate the rich heritage of Blacks who have contributed to Catholicism and the building of God's kingdom on earth, both past, and present. Also, I celebrate to honor the men and women from Africa who have pioneered the Catholic faith.

By studying and celebrating during this month we learn about the history of Black contributions to Catholicism, past, and present. Sources tell us that some people forget that Christianity did not originate in Europe and even express surprise when they learn that Black Catholic history began in the Acts of the Apostles (8: 26-40) with the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Philip the Deacon.

Some questions for all of us to ponder are: As Catholics, what is our supportive role in the history of Black Catholics? Do we continue to become knowledgeable of this history to understand the rejection Black Catholics have experienced in the Catholic Church? As a Christian, is it helpful to know that Blacks are a part of the history of Catholicism and to accept Black people as fully a part of the Catholic Church and into their Catholic Church?

Let Us Pray, Most Loving and Merciful God,

In whose law we find our guidance, in whose love we find our healing and joy, and in whose will we find our peace, rule over our spirits in this month that we will go from our worship with the freedom of those who trust you and have no anxiety for themselves. Empower us, O God, to be open to the seasons of life and give of our hearts love generously to all in need. Grant us the silence of heart so that we can grow in your word.

As we go through our hours of worship during what we call "Black Catholic History Month," help us never to forget our Catholic history and instill in us the willingness to share our Catholic history with our youth and others throughout the year.

Now Lord God, fill us with the seriousness of the faith of the great commission to love one another and provide us with the means and the will to stay in loving and joyous relationships with one another and the world. We ask for a special blessing for Pope Francis, all bishops, priests, deacons, brothers, and religious who will bring the message by sharing all Catholic historical reflections.

Lord, we praise and adore you, and we thank you for the joy we have in worshiping you in spirit and truth. In your name, we pray, Amen.

Feeding Your Mind

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS AND CHANGE THE WORLD

Daniel, K. S.; **The Ultimate Juneteenth Activity Book for Kids & Young Scholars** – ELA, U.S. History, and Freedom Day Activities for Kids Grades 2 – 6 Black History, K1 and K2 Productions (May 20, 2021).

This activity book is packed with fascinating facts about the history of Juneteenth and the Black American experience in the USA and shows why they should be preserved for future generations to explore in more depth.

Green Owl; Juneteenth Book for Kids - Liberty & Justice for All!: On Juneteenth History and Activities Book for Children from 7 Years Old, Social Justice Books for Kids Paperback, Published Independently (May 23, 2021). This book contains a short history of Juneteenth (understandable for kids), activities such as my reflection question about Juneteenth, text to be completed, word search, and crossword. Children will easily remember this important holiday and the history associated with it.

Rinaldi, Ann; **Come Juneteenth** (Great Episodes), HMH Books for Young Readers (May 4, 2009). This book is fictional but very true to life experiences. Sis Goose is a beloved member of Luli's, family despite the fact that she was born a slave. But the family is harboring a terrible secret. And when Union soldiers arrive on their Texas plantation to announce that slaves have been declared free for nearly two years, Sis Goose is horrified to learn that the people she called family have lied to her for so long. Her freedom has tragic consequences. (Recommended for ages 12+)

Our Lady of Kibeho: Mary Speaks to the World from the Heart of Africa and The Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ appeared to eight young people in the remote village of Kibeho.

The Boy Who Met Jesus by Immaculee Ilibagiza

Martin de Porres: A Beggar for Justice. Elizabeth DeDomenico and Barbara Yoffie

African Saints, African Stories: 40 Holy Men and Women by Camille Lewis Brown

Thea Bowman: Faithful and Free (People of God) by Maurice J Nutt CSsR



When God Made You by Matthew Paul Turner and David Catrow (Illustrator)

Great Black Catholics: Saints Like Me Board Book by Lisa Hendey

Picture Book of Saints by Lawrence G. Lovasik.

Saint Martin de Porres: Humble Healer and **Martin de Porres: A Beggar for Justice** by Elizabeth DeDomenico and Barbara Yoffie.

Contributor: Gaynell Walker

Book Sponsorship

BCAC was delighted to have Alana Bell, Program Director of Becraft Scholars Program, address our leadership with news regarding a partnership between the Richard and Maude Ferry Foundation, Fulcrum Foundation, and the Becraft Scholars Program. Members learned the schools that will benefit from the equity program for Black and African-American students and families will be in the Archdiocese of Seattle. They are Holy Family Bilingual School, St. George School, St. Therese Catholic Academy, and Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. After hearing the wonderful attributes of the program, the Book Sponsorship Project is underway. Led by Barbara Connor, BCAC has already received a commitment of \$2,100 to purchase books, themed in Black Catholic history, for students between the ages of 8-12. You can help as well. Contact Barbara Connor at (206) 322-5970 Ext. 607 or at bconnor@icseattle.org for more information.

AFFILIATES

STRONGER TOGETHER - 1 COR 12:12

Archdiocese of Seattle - We serve and work under the direction of the Office of Multicultural Ministries. Deacon Carl Chilo serves as the advisor. Each parish is invited to participate in events and workshops regardless of color or traditions.

Knights of Peter Claver Inc. - Founded in 1909 in the South, it is the largest African American Catholic lay organization in the US whose mission is to serve Catholics of African descent. They carry out their mission through divisions of men, women, boys, and girls. KPC/KPCLA has been the place for Black Catholics in the Seattle area since 1980.

Seattle University Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture - This group invites the community to renew the Catholic intellectual tradition of engagement at the crossroads where faith and reason, religion and culture, church and world meet - through academic research, reflection and dialogue. They strive to be a place of multifaith, diverse conversations where people come together to engage, if necessary, about the meaning of the Gospel in our time.

National Black Catholic Congress

National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life

National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus

Black Catholic Deacons

Institute for Black Catholic Studies

National Black Sisters Conference

US Conference of Catholic Bishops

Interesting Facts:

According to the Pew Research Center, of the 200 million people of African descent in the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world, over 173 million of them live in the African continent. The largest percentage of growth in the Catholic population over the last 100 years, occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, there are over 3 million African-American Catholics in the U.S. Today, there are 250 African American priests, 437 deacons, and 75 men of African descent in seminary formation for the priesthood in the United States. There are 5 living African American bishops, of whom two head U.S. dioceses. The Archbishop of Washington, D.C. was elevated to the College of Cardinals on November 28, 2020. There are also 400 African American religious sisters and 50 religious brothers in the United States.

SAINTHOOD: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and recounts the history of discrimination, hardships, and resilience of Fr. Tolton's life. "He lived the Gospel within adversity and he did so faithfully for his entire life in a simple and loving way. He maintained above all fortitude of spirit harboring no resentment for any of the insults and offenses received from others. Fr. Tolton's sanctity emerges from an experience of the cross. His goodness easily elicits our affection and our empathy, goodness that attracted people of whatever background to his sermons and ministrations and counsel. He was a bright light in a dark time." Historical sources report that "Good Father Gus," as he was fondly nicknamed, was popular for his musical talents, including playing the accordion. He also had a magnificent singing voice and was famous for the eloquence of his sermons. He was referred to as being "a fluent and graceful talker."

Fr. Augustus Tolton is among the eight individuals whose heroic virtues were confirmed by Pope Francis in a series of decrees promulgated by the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The name of Fr. Tolton stands out among the list of eight decrees of heroic virtue, partly because he is the only American, but mostly because, when he was ordained in 1886, he was the first Catholic priest in the United States publicly known to be Black.

"Saints arise from the exigencies of the eras within which they live," writes Bishop Perry. "Saints are of human stock but have the genius to step forward and bring the gospel message to the contradictions of their time. In the case of Augustus Tolton, it is the long period of Black slavery in this country and the nation's Civil War foisting a resolution to uncompensated Black servitude and the tumultuous period of Reconstruction of a nation torn to shreds over this issue. Augustus witnessed mistreatment of his people and became a victim himself of such mistreatment." Despite his tribulations, Fr. Tolton never lost his love for the Church or his vocation. For the Black community in the United States, remaining strong is a coping mechanism for enduring injustices. Unfortunately, that is also killing the Black community because of the toll it takes on our health and lifespan.

Fr. Tolton succumbed to heatstroke in the city of Chicago on July 8, 1897, collapsed, and died at 43 years of age. His cause for canonization was opened by the Archdiocese of Chicago in 2010 and on June 12, 2019, Pope Francis officially confirmed his "heroic virtue," putting him "On The Road to Sainthood."

Did you know you can participate in his cause for canonization? Pray! Invite others to pray! Present to God petitions, especially for healing. A special prayer for Fr. Augustus Tolton can be found by visiting <https://tolton.archchicago.org/prayer>

- Contributor: Caroline Okello

WASHINGTON STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Gloria Purvis, an African-American, known as the most important and incisive Catholic voice in the United States today, as stated in the Northwest Catholic, October/November 2021 Issue, was one of the keynote speakers at the 2021 Cornerstone Catholic Conference. Gloria hosted the well-known EWTN radio show Morning Glory and spoke about Catholic Social Teaching which teaches that human dignity and human rights must be protected. After speaking out in support of anti-racist measures in the wake of the murder of George Floyd the show was canceled.

Subsequently, Gloria has launched the Gloria Purvis Podcast with America Media where she hosts conversations on issues such as racism, religious liberty, abortion, and vaccine mandates.

Gloria's presentation at the Cornerstone Conference: "What Do the Racial Justice and Pro-life-Life Movement Have in common?" helped to enlighten and educate on what binds the two together.

The Washington State Catholic Conference formalized in 1976 has been the cornerstone to foster a unified Catholic voice on public policy issues. It continues to work for the common good and to create a society that recognizes the dignity of every human person by advocating for human life, education, social justice, and religious freedom in accord with the Gospel mandates and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

This year the annual conference was held on Saturday, October 30, 2021, as a virtual event. Recordings are available to the public 60 days after the date of the event on the WA Catholics YouTube channel.

Contributors: Gaynell Walker and Barbara Connor

ONGOING EVENTS

October 2021-October 2023 – Pope Francis calls us as a Church to encounter, listen, and discern as participants in the synodal process or "journey" leading up to the October 2023 assembly of Bishops in Rome. Pope: Celebrating Synod means walking together on the same road - Vatican News. Preparation for the Synod starts with listening and conversation at the parish level. There will be opportunities to share your reflections in the weeks and months to come. Let your voice be heard!

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1-30, 2021 – National Black Catholic History Month

November 1, 2021 - ALL SAINTS DAY

November 2, 2021 – Undoing Racism Rosary Prayer; Recite the Rosary to end racism every Tuesday, 12pm CT, 1:00pm ET, 10:00am PT. Each decade is recited with an intention toward racial justice. Use this Zoom link to access the prayer room: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83577921613>
Meeting ID: 835 7792 1613

Password: 405387

November 3, 2021 – St. Martin de Porres Feast Day

November 5, 2021 – Good News Conference - "Living in the Hope and Joy of Christ." Sr. Josephine Garrett, Bishop Robert Barron, Fr. Mike Schmitz, and more in Orlando, FL. Registration at rezmagic.com

November 8, 2021 – Requiem Mass for loved ones lost in the pandemic. St. James Cathedral, 7-8 pm. Visit Archdiocese of Seattle (archseattle.org)

November 14, 2021 – Black Catholic History Month Event: Seattle University partnering with BCAC and Immaculate Conception Church. Zoom event followed by In-Person Mass in Chapel of St. Ignatius at 8 pm. Visit Seattle University link to attend.

December 26, 2021-January 1, 2022 – Kwanzaa

January 17, 2022 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January 18, 2022 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Event. BCAC in partnership with Seattle University. Mass and guest speaker at St. Ignatius Chapel, 901 12th Ave., Seattle, WA; Visit Seattle University

<https://www.seattleu.edu/oma/oma-programs/mlk-celebration/> to attend.

June 14-18, 2022 – Lyke Conference, "Listen to the Lambs: Black Confirmation - Rejoicing in the Gifts of the Young." Hilton Embassy Suites in Grapevine, Texas. Conference registration not yet open; [Follow this Link for hotel reservations](#): Hotel – Archbishop Lyke Conference

Various dates – "Tolton" – A multi-media live production based on the life of Venerable Father Augustus Tolton, featuring music, dance, and drama. To book a showing, contact St. Luke Productions, Battle Ground, WA. 360-687-8029. For more info at visit Tolton: From Slave to Priest at stlukeproductions.com.

- Contributor: Lisa Matchette

How You Can Help



When we reflect on what is taught about African American History, we find an extensive amount of information is deleted, misdirected, or found “not applicable” by the powers that write the history. During November, National Black Catholic History Month, spend some time getting to know the Black Catholic’s unique and essential account of the Catholic Church experience.

- Spend time rediscovering your family’s Catholic history.
- Read about the first African mentioned in the Gospels (Matthew 27:32).
- Check out how many Popes were African and who was the first black bishop in the U.S.
- Do you know the name of the first known black priest?
- Name the first black president of Georgetown University.
- What is the name of the African American Catholic Hymnal?
- How many Black Catholic Bishops are there?
- Familiarize yourself with www.nbccongress.com National Black Catholic Congress, a great resource.

To learn more detailed information, read “The History of Black Catholics in the United States” by Cyprian Davis.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the 11:00 am hour on Sunday morning “the most segregated hour in America.” Sadly, this is very much the same today as it was then. You can become an instrument of change.

BLACK CATHOLIC ADVISORY CIRCLE LEADERSHIP

Deacon Carl Chilo, Advisor

- St. Stephen the Martyr Parish, Renton
- Archdiocese of Seattle, Office of Multi-Cultural Ministries

Deacon Joseph Connor

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Deacon LaMar Reed

- St. Anthony Parish, Renton

SeVera Dowe, Chair

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Valerie Anderson

- St. Paul Parish, Seattle

Jeffrey Battleus

- St. Madeline Sophie Parish, Bellevue

Barbara Connor

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Bessie Douglas

- St. Louise Parish, Bellevue

Brenda Fincher

- Holy Spirit Parish, Kent

Olivia Gallegos

- Holy Spirit Parish, Kent

R. Michael Hale

- St. Leo Parish, Tacoma

Barbara Henderson

- St. Leo Parish, Tacoma

Loretta McIver

- St. Therese Parish, Seattle

Lisa Matchette

- St. James Cathedral, Seattle

Caroline Okello

- St. James Cathedral, Seattle

Ngozi Oleru

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Ukwenga Oleru

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Corliss Nesbit Reed

- St. Anthony Parish, Renton

Ceaser Patterson

- Immaculate Conception Parish, Seattle

Nicholas Schoen

- St. Philomena Parish, Des Moines

Deborah Tinsley

- St. Therese Parish, Seattle

Gaynell Walker

- St. Paul Parish, Seattle

Eric Wilcox

- St. Therese Parish, Seattle

Artee Young

- St. Leo Parish, Tacoma

Renita Lloyd-Smith

- Technology and Graphics

The information contained in this newsletter is provided by BCAC as a service to its supporters, users, subscribers, and affiliates. Although we try to provide quality information, we do not guarantee results obtained from the use of this information. In no way BCAC is liable to any party for damages, costs of any character including but not limited to direct or indirect, consequential, incidental, or other costs or damages, via the use of the information contained in the newsletters.

Editorial team: Deborah Tinsley, Chair; Lisa Matchette, Caroline Okello, Gaynell Walker and Renita Lloyd-Smith.