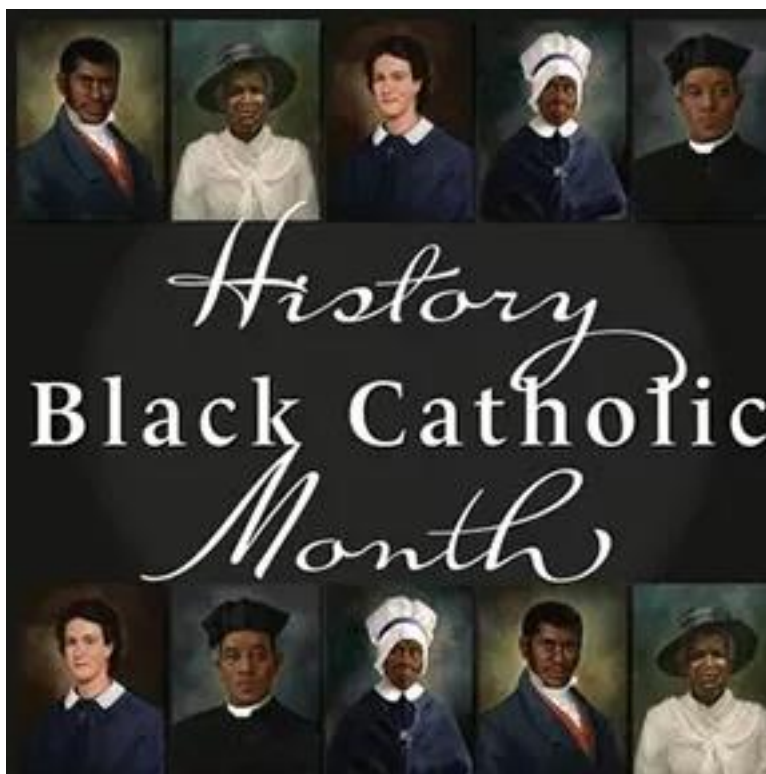




Black Catholic History Month Toolkit for Parishes 2025

Prepared by the Racial Solidarity Network

Stephanie Read, Assumption Parish; Daniel Lefebvre, Immaculate Conception Parish; Judy Byron, OP, Will Rutt, Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center; Fr. Bill Heric, Northeast Seattle Catholic Parishes; Deacon Denny Duffell, Lorraine Hartmann, Barb McGrath, Diane Moseley, Laura Okai, Linda Riggers, SNJM, Our Lady of the Lake Parish; Mary Kay Beeby, Lynn Stapp, St. Bridget Parish; Susan Simpson, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish; Joyce Farrell, St. John Parish; Maureen Augusciak, St. Luke Parish

This toolkit includes materials and suggestions for you to use to celebrate Black Catholic History Month, to educate our parish communities about our collective history and to pray for racial justice. Thank you for supporting this endeavor.

Toolkit available online at www.ipjc.org

Image: AI-generated image, available on Freepik. Copyright: walidberchid23

Introduction

Black Catholic History Month is an annual November observance celebrating the history, contributions, and heritage of Black Catholics in the United States and beyond. Established by the [National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus](#) in 1990, it provides a time to reflect, learn, and foster appreciation for the faith, resilience, and cultural gifts Black Catholics bring to the Church. The month is significant for the feasts of All Saints and All Souls, and the celebration of Black saints, including St. Martin de Porres (the first Black saint of the Americas), St. Augustine (an early Church Doctor from North Africa), and St. Monica (Augustine's mother). It also recognizes Servants of God and Venerables who are candidates for sainthood.

—AI generated

In 1989 Sister Thea Bowman addressed the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, becoming the first Black American woman to do so. In her historic address before the bishops, she spoke of the riches of art, science and culture in the “memory” of the Black enslaved men and women who were brought to this country and how they enriched every aspect of life and culture of this nation, despite the oppression they endured and survived over the centuries. She called on the bishops to recognize Black Catholics for who they are and to include them fully in the life of the Church. In her address she repeatedly asked the question

What does it mean to be Black and Catholic? It means that I come to my Church fully functioning. ... I bring myself; my black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become. I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility – as gifts to the Church. I bring a spirituality that...is contemplative and biblical and holistic. A faith that is embodied incarnate praise – a spirituality that knows how to find joy even in the time of sorrow – that steps out on faith that leans on the Lord.”

At the conclusion of her speech, she invited the bishops to join hands and sing the civil rights anthem, “We Shall Overcome.”

—cathstan.org/voices/preparing-for-black-catholic-history-month-a-personal-perspective

Black Catholic History Month Facts: usccb.org/committees/african-american-affairs/black-catholic-history-month

Black Catholic History Timeline: nbccongress.org/black-catholic-history-timeline/

Dear Black Catholics, Ministry Leaders and People of Good Will,

We offer these resources to further ministry with and for Catholics of African descent across the country. Black Catholics find ourselves in many different situations from vibrant parishes and well supported diocesan offices to dioceses with no representation or parishioners struggling to be recognized. Regardless of the situation in which we find ourselves, THE MINISTRY MUST CONTINUE!

usccb.org/committees/african-american-affairs/timely-resources-ministry-catholics-african-descent

Sunday Readings & Prayers for the Bulletin

November 2 – Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day).

- Wisdom 3:1-9 The souls of the just are in the hands of God, abiding with God in love.
- Romans 8:14-23 You are God's children, not having received a spirit of slavery, but of adoption.
- Luke 7:11-17 Raising the widow of Nain's son from the dead.

In African-American spirituality, belief in a future heavenly home was strong and motivating; ancestors were remembered with gratitude and with the hope of being reunited with them. With All Souls Day falling at the beginning of Black Catholic History month, we can pray to follow in the footsteps of those who sought racial justice.

Prayer to Follow in the Path of Our Fore Parents as We Seek Racial Justice

O God, we thank you for the lives of great saints and prophets in the past, who have revealed to us that we can stand up amid the problems and difficulties and trials of life and not give in. We thank you for our fore parents, who've given us something in the midst of the darkness of exploitation and oppression to keep going. Grant that we will go on with the proper faith and the proper determination of will, so that we will be able to make a creative contribution to this world. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

November 9 - Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

- Ezekiel 47: 1-2, 8-9, 12 The angel brought me to the entrances of the temple; water flowed out and, wherever the water was, life abounded.
- II Corinthians 3: 9c-11, 16-17 You are God's building; the foundation is Jesus Christ.
- John 2:13-22 Driving the money changers out of the temple; prophecy that when the temple is destroyed, in three days, Jesus will raise it up.

A cathedral or temple is as strong as its foundation. Systems are also built to last. When a system (like the system of slavery) is built on false premises, dismantling it and creating a foundation of love, equity and inclusion requires a lifelong commitment. During Black Catholic History month, as we reflect on the basis of our faith and practice today, we can pray that this foundation will include our commitment to building a society that truly has liberty and justice for all.

Let us pray

Dear God,

In our efforts to dismantle racism, we understand that we struggle not merely against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities – those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of the family are inferior and others superior.

Create in us a new mind and heart that will enable us to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories.

Give us the grace and strength to rid ourselves of racial stereotypes that oppress some of us while providing entitlements to others.

Help us to create a church and a nation that embraces the hopes and fears of oppressed people of color where we live, as well as those around the world.

Heal your family God, and make us one with you, in union with our brother Jesus, and empowered by your Holy Spirit.

—Pax Christi

November 16 – Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Malachi 3:19-20a The day is coming when evildoers will be put down, the sun of justice will arise.
- 2 Thessalonians 3: 7-12 Paul addresses community discord, people unwilling to work, taking advantage of others.
- Luke 21-5-19 Jesus prophesies: the temple will be destroyed; wars and natural disasters will occur; you will be persecuted. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.

In this Sunday's readings, Jesus, Malachi and St. Paul all address the social issues of their day that needed to change. Suffering is a part of bringing about the transformation needed. During this Black Catholic History Month, we pray that the system of racism will be put down and that the sun of justice will arise. It will not come without conflict; it will come through perseverance.

Prayer to Overcome Racism

God of Heaven and Earth,
 you created the one human family
 and endowed each person with great dignity.
 Aid us, we pray, in overcoming the sin of racism.
 Grant us your grace in eliminating this blight
 from our hearts, our communities,
 our social and civil institutions.
 Fill our hearts with love for you and our neighbor
 so that we may work with you
 in healing our land from racial injustice.
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever.

We have prayed and now, with changed hearts, let us move our feet to action.

—[A Prayer Service for Racial Healing in Our Land | USCCB](#)

November 23 – Feast of Christ the King

- 2 Samuel 5:1-3 David is anointed king of Israel; all gather to pledge allegiance.
- Colossians 1: 12-20 In praise of Jesus who delivered us from the power of darkness, in the image of God and through him all things are held together.
- Luke 23: 35-43 Scene at the crucifixion: If you are the Son of God, prove it; story of Dismas.

David was anointed King only after Samuel rejected the “likely candidates” and insisted that the people look beyond the usual ways of finding leaders. Jesus was also not recognized as king. During Black Catholic History Month, we pray that we can recognize the causes of racism, that we can more clearly see the worth and dignity of people who are different from ourselves.

Prayer to End Racism by Reaching Across Divides, Offering New Ways to See & Act

Lord, Jesus Christ

who reached across the ethnic boundaries

between Samaritan, Roman and Jew

who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives,

help us to break down the barriers in our community,

enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,

and free us to challenge and uproot it

from ourselves, our society and our world.

—John Buck, SJ, [Social Justice Resource Center Racism Prayers](#)

November 30 First Sunday of Advent

- Isaiah 2: 1-5 Prophecy: Many will come to the mountain of the Lord and worship at his temple.
- Romans 13: 11-14 Night is almost over; be ready.
- Matthew 24: 37-44 Be ready always; no one knows the day or time.

The Advent call is to stay awake, to be ready, to pay attention. At the Black Catholic Advisory Council Conference last year, Josephite Father Anthony Bozeman, SSJ, said, “What does ‘woke’ mean? It simply means that someone has become aware of something significant.” What do we need to be “woken up” to regarding racism?

Wake Me Up Lord, a Prayer to Recognize Racism

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism

finds no home within me.

Keep watch over my heart Lord,

and remove from me any barriers to your grace,

that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.

Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give

services of justice and peace.

Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory.

And finally, remind us Lord that you said,

"Blessed are the Peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God."
Amen.

—This prayer is from *For The Love of One Another* (1989), a special message from the Bishops' Committee on Black Catholics of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Pastoral Letter, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, the U.S. Catholic bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism (1979).

Quotes for the Bulletin

Include a quote in the bulletin each week.

We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.

—Pope Francis, June 3, 2020

Hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated.

—Coretta Scott King

The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be antiracist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism whenever you find it, including yourself. And it's the only way forward.

—Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race*

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

—Nelson Mandela

Truth is powerful and it prevails.

— Sojourner Truth

Liturgical Art

Black Madonna, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Gdańsk, Poland.

Wikimedia Commons (and others): uscatholic.org/articles/202204/learn-to-take-your-troubles-to-the-black-madonna/

Moeder Gods van Afrika: liesbethsiconen.nl/icoon/moeder-gods-van-afrika/

“Mama” icon by [Kelly Latimore Icons](#)



St. John the Evangelist Church, Seattle: The “Mama” icon, dedicated on December 11, 2022, is placed in a recessed area that used to house a confessional.

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, Seattle: The “Mama” icon is displayed in the Reconciliation Chapel.

Songs for Mass during Black Catholic History Month

1. Lift Every Voice and Sing (The Black National Anthem)
2. Soon and Very Soon, (in OCP Choral Praise)
3. Deep River
4. Down to the River to Pray
5. Hush, Somebody’s Callin’ My Name.
6. There is a Balm in Gilead (in OCP Choral Praise)
7. Precious Lord, Take My Hand (in OCP Choral Praise)
8. Standin' in the Need of Prayer
9. Swing Low Sweet Chariot
10. Wade in the Water
11. Every Time I Feel the Sprit
12. Steal Away
13. Go Down Moses
14. Nobody Knows, the Trouble I’ve Seen.
15. Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child
16. He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.
17. Give Me that Old Time Religion
18. Let us Break Bread Together, on Our Knees.
19. My Lord, What a Morning
20. This Little Light of Mine
21. Freedom
22. We are Marching in the Light of God (Siyahamba)
23. In Christ There Is No East or West (in OCP Choral Praise)

Prayer of the Faithful

For our faith community, that we may celebrate and welcome the diverse faces of Christ in our worship, our ministries, and our leaders, God in your mercy, hear our prayer

For our faith community, that we may respond boldly to the Holy Spirit's call to act together to end violence and racism, God in your mercy, hear our prayer

For healing and justice for all those who have experienced violence and racism, God in your mercy, hear our prayer

For our parish, that we may cultivate welcome, extend hospitality, and encourage the participation of people of all cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds, God in your mercy, hear our prayer

For the courage to have difficult conversations about racism, and for a better appreciation of how our words and actions – or even our silence – can impact our communities, God in your mercy, hear our prayer

Let us pray: O God, you call us into a deeper relationship to be your church for the sake of the world. Help us to see with new eyes the injustices within church and society. Call us to have a loving heart that respects and uplifts the humanity and dignity of every person; open our ears to listen to and learn from the experiences of people of color. Open our mouths to speak up and about injustices. Join us with others to work for racial equity and inclusion for all people. This we ask through Jesus Christ your son, who came to set us free.

Adapted from Prayer of the Faithful for the Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities
usccb.org/prayers/prayer-faithful-day-prayer-peace-our-communities

Resources for Action

Include a resource for action in the bulletin each week.

Black Catholic Advisory Circle Annual Conference

“The Eucharist for Inclusion and Healing”

November 15, 8 am – 3:30 pm, Mass 4 pm

St. Paul Catholic church

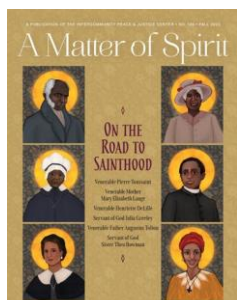
Details & Registration

[Black Catholic Advisory Circle Conference 2025 - The Eucharist for Inclusion and Healing - Archdiocese of Seattle](#)

Resources on Six Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood

Meet 6 Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood

catholicworldreport.com/2024/11/28/meet-6-black-catholics-on-the-road-to-sainthood/



On the Road to Sainthood

The Fall 2023 issue of *A Matter of Spirit*, published by the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, features reflections on the lives and legacies of each of the six Black Catholic Americans currently on the road to sainthood: Pierre Toussaint, Mother Mary Lange, Mother Henriette DeLille, Julia Greeley, Father Augustus Tolton, and Sister Thea Bowman.

issuu.com/ipjc/docs/amosfall2023web?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ

Subscribe to the Black Catholic Messenger online (paid or complimentary)

blackcatholicmessenger.org/about/

Join the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM)

naamnw.org/

The website has extensive resources, including a list of recommended books for adults and children and a Black Business Directory.

Read the 2018 USCCB pastoral letter against racism: “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism”

usccb.org/resources/open-wide-our-hearts-enduring-call-love-pastoral-letter-against-racism

Form a parish small group in person or by Zoom to discuss it using the guide prepared by the

Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (\$5/copy)

ipjc.org/open-wide-our-hearts-booklet-online-order/

USCCB guide: usccb.org/resources/open-wide-our-hearts-study-guide

Organize one of three JustFaith Ministries programs on Antiracism in your parish:

justfaith.org/programs/series/antiracism/

- 1) Faith and Racial Equity: Exploring Power and Privilege
- 2) Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice, and Restoration
- 3) Faith and Racial Justice: Changing Systems and Structures

Contact: Chris Koehler, Director of Missions and Immigrant Affairs

chris.koehler@seattlearch.org

Resources on Catholic Social Teaching

- **CST 101 Themes from Catholic Social Teaching from USCCB**
seattlearchmedia.weebly.com/uploads/4/8/5/3/48531691/17us495_cst_handout-adult_en-digital.pdf
- **YouTubes on CST from CRS**
CST 101| Catholic Social Teaching (English & Spanish)
youtube.com/watch?v=ABRI2ZSs58E&list=PLt5PsPjAk-0b9BYRHUAxnlKMlv7qyZca
- **OLL Project on Catholic Social Teaching – a real treasure!**
ollparishseattle.org/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teachings

Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teachings

Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teachings

In 2020-2021, the Justice and Peace Committee sent OLL parishioners and school families extensive educational emails about each of the seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Click on each button to view the corresponding email's content:

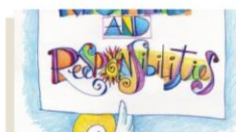
Artwork by Bro. Mickey McGrath



Life and Dignity of the Human Person



Solidarity



Rights and Responsibilities



Preferential Option for the Poor



The Dignity of Work and the Right of Workers



Call to Family, Communities, & Participation



Care for God's Creation

The IF Project: Real Stories. Real Change.

January 22, 7:00 – 9:30 pm

St. Bridget Parish

Featuring the founder of the IF Project, Retired Seattle Police Detective Kim Bogucki and the Executive Director, Dr. Felisa Bryant.

The IF Project is a movement rooted in the power of lived experience—where currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, community partners, and law enforcement come together to change lives and dismantle the cycles of incarceration and recidivism. At the heart of it all is one simple, profound question:

"If there was something someone could have said or done to change the path that led you here, what would it have been?"

- The IF Project trailer [The IF Project Documentary Trailer on Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/162596857)
vimeo.com/162596857

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness...A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.

— Wangari Maathai