

Bishop Ricard helps Oblate Sisters commemorate Mother Lange

By Catholic Review Staff

The Oblate Sisters of Providence and members of the Mother Mary Lange Guild were among 400 worshipers at the former's chapel in Arbutus Feb. 2, when Bishop John E. Ricard presided at an annual Mass that honors and advances the canonization cause of Mother Lange.

"Mother Lange planted deep roots of faith in Baltimore," said Bishop John E. Ricard, rector of the Josephite seminary in Washington, D.C., bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., and a former Baltimore auxiliary.

Mother Lange co-founded the Oblate Sisters in Baltimore in 1829 and died Feb. 3, 1882. It was the first religious community for African American women in the U.S. Cardinal William H. Keeler, then-Archbishop of Baltimore, opened her cause for sainthood in 1991.

Concelebrants included Fathers Raymond L. Harris, who serves St. Agnes, Catonsville, and St. William of York, Ten Hills, and Father Donald A. Sterling, pastor of New All Saints in Liberty Heights.

The celebration included Deacons Curtis Turner and Seigfried Presberry; the choir and dance ministry of New All Saints; Sister Stella Kanu, a new Oblate postulant; Oblate lay associates; Oblate chapter members and members of the St. Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary.

"Mother Lange remained obedient to God and practiced these virtues (obedience, patience and perseverance in faith), despite the pain of prejudice and persecution that she and others experienced as people of color," said Dr. Marie Boursiquot, president of the Mother Mary Lange Guild, which promotes her canonization.

As the Catholic Review previously reported, Mother Lange's remains were transferred from Baltimore to the Oblate chapel in June 2013.

Her accomplishments included helping start St. Frances Academy in 1828, a Baltimore school for black children that still operates today.

See also:

Mother Lange's relics moved to motherhouse as sainthood cause advances