

# **Mother Mary Lange Awards Banquet to be Held Tonight**

The Archdiocese of Baltimore will honor over 50 African-American Catholic leaders for their service within the 16 predominantly African-American parishes in the archdiocese. The banquet will take place this evening, February 13, at Martin's West, Dogwood Road and Belmont Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. Bishop Gordon Bennett, S.J., Urban Vicar, will be among those offering remarks.

Proceeds from the banquet will be used for scholarships to assist African American Catholics in their training to minister in the African American apostolate. Of the 51 award recipients, Charles G. Tildon, Kirk and Kirby Gaddy, Lillian Humphries and Megan Barkley will be honored.

Mother Mary Lange was born around 1784 in the country known today as Haiti. She, along with hundreds of others, fled that country in the late 18th century when a revolution occurred. By 1818, Mother Lange was educating black children in her own home in Baltimore and at her own expense. In 1828, with the help of Sulpician Father James Jouberts, SS, Mother Lange and two others started the first black Catholic school in the Catholic Church in America—St. Frances Academy. A year later, three black women, and Mother Lange pronounced vows to become the first religious order of women of African descent. Today, the Oblate Sisters of Providence number 85 sisters, 20 associates and 16 guild members. This year marks their 175th anniversary.