

November Celebrates Black Catholic History

In the world today, there are more than 200 million people of African descent in the Roman Catholic Church. The fastest growing population comes out of the continent of Africa. The second-largest population of Roman Catholic African descendants are in Brazil. In the United States as we enter into this present holy time, we are 3 million strong, with 250 African-American priests, 75 men of African ancestry in the seminary, 450 Deacons, 400 African-American religious women, 50 religious brothers and 798 predominantly African-American parishes. This gives reason for celebration, rejoicing and increased efforts of evangelization.

The first celebration of Black Catholic History Month began in November of 1990 in various cities in the United States with the celebration of St. Martin de Porres' feast day. On Nov. 3 of that year, a liturgy celebrated the 350th anniversary of St. Martin's transition into eternal life. For this reason - along with the number of important dates within the month - November was selected. Nov. 1 was seen as an opportunity to review the lives of the saints of African descent living in the first 300 years of church history. Nov. 2 is All Souls Day, a time to remember the Africans lost to cruel treatment in the Middle Passage crossing. Additionally it is a remembrance of stories of the many souls who have brought the faith to people of this present time within the African American Catholic Community. Nov. 13 is the birth of St. Augustine in 354, A.D., the first doctor of the church from North Africa. Nov. 20 is the death of Zumbi of Palmares of Brazil, the South American founder of a free state for blacks.

While we celebrate Black Catholic History in November, the celebration is not just for some of us, but for the entire people of God in this archdiocese. The stories told and the invitations extended are integral to the history of all in this our beloved Archdiocese. Activities include:

? Archdiocesan Mass to Celebrate Black Catholic History Month

Come and join Bishop Denis J. Madden and faithful people of God on the eve of the

birthday of the very first black Catholic priest ordained in the United States, Josephite Father Charles Randolph Uncles. This will take place Nov. 5 at 4 p.m. at New All Saints Church(Liberty Heights and Eldorado Avenues).

? Festival of Sacred Songs: Promoting the Cause of Mother Mary Lange

The Oblate Sisters of Providence along with the Mother Lange Guild board of directors will celebrate Black Catholic History Month through a Festival of Sacred Song. Come lift your spirit and celebrate the story of black Catholics through song on Nov. 12 at 6 pm at Our Lady of Mount Providence Convent located at 701 Gun Road in Halethorpe. Children, youth and adults from Cardinal Shehan Catholic School, St. Ambrose Gospel Choir, the Jubilation Trio from St. Gregory the Great and St. Cecilia Catholic Churches “will give God the glory” by providing soul-stirring and faith-filled renditions of praise. Stories of Mother Mary Lange and the history of the Oblate Sisters will punctuate the festival through a dance and drama performances by Traci Jiggetts. Erich March will serve as master of ceremonies. Come celebrate with the Oblate Sisters and the guild and leave revived, renewed and surprised again of the many marvelous things God has done and is doing. Ticket cost are as follows: \$25 per person, \$20for senior citizens and \$10for youths and children under 18 years of age. Proceeds will go to the Oblate Sisters of Providence and will provide funds to support the canonization of Mother Mary Lange.

? Black Catholic History Pilgrimage and Tour To St. Mary’s County

Come and see, come and know more about the origins of Catholicism in the black Catholic community on Nov. 19. Reserve your seat soon - the motor coach will fill up fast. We will end our day at St. Peter Claver Church in Ridge (St. Mary’s County). A “down-home country-style” meal is included in the \$40 cost. For more information contact us at 410-625-8472 or by e-mail at AACM@archbalt.org

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