



Wednesday, November 1, 2017

Dear Friend in Christ,

Throughout the month of November, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates Black Catholic History Month, a time when we reflect on the rich contributions of Black Catholics to our Church and to our community.

Here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, we need not look far to see the legacy of those Black Catholic pioneers whose works continue to bear fruit in our local Church and beyond.

For example, Mary Elizabeth Lange came to Baltimore from Haiti in 1817 and began a school to educate black children in her Fells Point home. In 1829 she and three other women of African descent became the first Oblate Sisters of Providence when they took their vows in the chapel of St. Mary's Seminary. Their work continues to bear fruit today, as St. Frances Academy, the Catholic high school they operate in East Baltimore, serves as a beacon of hope for many African-American children, including those from impoverished neighborhoods.



*Catholic Review Media (Kevin J. Parks/CR Staff)*

The Josephite Fathers is another Catholic religious community dedicated to serving black Catholics and the wider black community. The Josephites, who count our own Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, John Ricard, among their numbers, have lovingly ministered to God's people at St. Francis Xavier, St. Peter Claver/St. Pius V, and St. Veronica Parishes in Baltimore.

And countless lay men and women in our Archdiocese have served and volunteered in parishes, schools, and charitable programs throughout its long history. In doing so, they have advanced the Church's missionary identity, blessed the lives of those they have served, and glorified God and our Church.

At a time in our country when we see too many examples of the racism that continues to stain the fabric of our national being, let us be inspired by the works of those who came before us, as well as those in our midst today. May their efforts to bring peace, justice and dignity for all people be foremost in our minds and hearts as we pray and work for a world that is loving and kind. As disciples of Jesus, we are

called to be Christ for others. Let those seeking Christ see His face in ours and know his tender embrace through our acts of goodness and love.



Faithfully in Christ,

*+ William E. Lori*

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore

Archdiocese of Baltimore  
320 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

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