



RACE RELATIONS AND THE CALL TO SYNODALITY

Part 2

By Sister Anita Baird, DHM



Why is it important for us to know our history?

“The heart of the race question is moral and religious. It concerns the rights of man and our attitude toward our fellow man. If our attitude is governed by the great Christian law of love of neighbor and respect for his rights, then we can work out harmoniously the techniques for making legal, educational, economic, and social changes. But if our hearts are poisoned by hatred, or even by indifference toward the welfare and rights of our fellow men, then our nation faces a grave internal crisis”. (Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter, Open Wide Our Hearts).

While the bishops have made strong statements on the national level, little is done to implement their public position at the local level. Tangible and sustainable progress comes painfully slow. Here we are 57 years later still needing to address America’s original sin, which is just as lethal to the survival of white America as it is to black America.

We have come a long way; yet we have a lifetime to go. President Biden just recently signed into law the “Emmett Till Anti-lynching Law” making lynching a federal crime. It only took 124 years after the end of slavery for this nation to acknowledge that lynching is a hate crime and must be punishable by law.

The church has the vocation amid the world to be the people redeemed and reconciled with God and one another forming “one body, one spirit in Christ”. If the church is to be truly catholic and universal, no inequality arising from race, or nationality, or sex can exist. God will not be mocked, and the church of Christ will be held accountable.

Racial supremacy, which denies the equality of every member of the human family and sins against the creator, can only be eradicated at the root of its existence...the human heart. God continually calls us to conversion. God is calling for social and ecclesial transformation born of theological, religious, and moral conversion.

Today, many church leaders are simply inattentive and insensitive to the moral issues involved and to the brutality and death-yielding consequences of institutional racism. They fail to acknowledge that racism is a sin and a heresy that not only divides the human community but also sustains a pattern of systemic genocide.

Some have even gone as far as to attack the “Black Lives Matter” movement as being Marxist and a pseudo religion. As a result, people of color continue to experience economic, political, and professional alienation within societal and ecclesial institutions. The realization of racial justice in the United States and in the catholic church rests upon those catholic bishops, priests, religious and the lay faithful, who have come to know and believe that racism dehumanizes not only people of color but whites as well.

Continued on page 2



Racism kills people of color physically and mentally and it kills white people morally.

In calling us to dismantle institutional racism, God places before us a choice of life and death. We must choose the life of moral fortitude and truth as a church in speaking and acting against the social injustices of systemic racism.

Those who benefit from the privileges that come with being white in America must desire and seek a conversion of heart. They must undergo a spiritual transformation according to the word of God.

The church must diligently insist that church leaders; pastors, preachers, teachers and catechists, study the word of God in spirit and in truth and then teach the unadulterated truth according to sacred tradition.

The church must empower people of color—clergy, religious and lay—to use their competencies and to develop their gifts. Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that the major hindrance to the full development of such leadership within the church is still the face of racism.

The question then becomes, “how do we promote unity, anti-racist diversity and inculturation in a church that is still confronting the sin of racism? Are we willing to share power equally with the powerless as well as the powerful? Can we, as church, commit to dismantling racism to make room at the eucharistic table for all of God’s children?”

Can we dwell together in God’s trinitarian love?

In his pastoral letter, “*Dwell In My Love*”, Cardinal Francis George wrote: “our gathering for Mass is always a gathering in the name of the father of our lord, Jesus Christ. In the eucharistic assembly we share all the cultural, racial, economic, and spiritual gifts given us by the holy spirit To enrich and transform both church and society.” “If she is faithful to her lord, the church will not only proclaim who he is but will herself act to become the womb in which a new world can gestate and be born.”

Are we ready to be reborn? Future generations will judge us based on the world and church that they will inherit from us. Until there is a reckoning around the sin of racism we cannot move forward. We cannot begin to create a truly inclusive society until America’s original sin is acknowledged and atoned for. Then and only then can we ensure equality for all people regardless of the color of their skin, or where they come from, or the language that they speak, or their sexual orientation, or the God whom they worship.

Jesus prayed to his Father, as he prepared to embrace the cross that “all may be one...as we are one.” John 17:21-22 To be one with the triune God is to be in perfect union with the divine and in truth and charity with all members of the one family of the creator.

This union with God in the holy Eucharist makes us interdependent on one another. Every Christian is responsible for the brother and sister and will indeed put their needs before their own. The eucharist compels us to live lives of truth, built on justice and animated by love...to build a new heaven and a new earth where all of god’s children can live with human dignity and respect.

What mighty social and political revolutions would come about if this message of love was seriously lived in our communities, our churches, our world? Our world, nation and church are in crisis, and we need God’s transformative grace if we are going to heal the land and set the captives free.

This is our appointed work as catholic Christians at this synodal moment in the life of our church...to preach not with words but with deeds that will transform our church, our communities, and our institutions; to prepare a table, where all are equally welcomed as members of the one family of God. Will we commit as a synodal church to the long-term work of redefining and restructuring our church and faith communities to address the legacy of racial superiority and systemic injustice? For now, is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation.

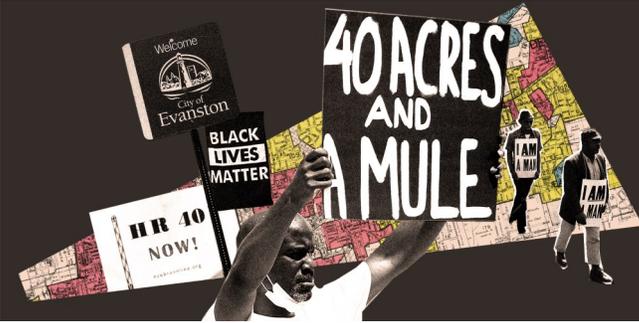


Sister Anita Baird is a member of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and founding director of the Archdiocese of Chicago’s Office for Racial Justice. She is a member and serves on the board of the National Black Sister’s Conference. Sister was awarded an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree from Catholic Theological Union and is a recipient of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious’ Outstanding Leadership Award.

A Look at Local Reparations in Evanston, IL

By: Shannon Ambrose

In 1783, Belinda Royall was believed to be the first black woman to receive a pension as a reparation payment for the treatment she endured while working as an enslaved person in the United States. Although Royall was able to receive a pension as a form of a reparation payment, reparations for blacks within the United States have not been easy to obtain (WP, 2022).



In 1865, the Special Field Order No. 15, which many refer to as "forty acres and a mule", was created during the Civil War, with the expectation to provide forty acres of land to formerly enslaved blacks to assist with the integration process. However, soon after the order was created, it was quickly reversed, and the reparations were never carried out (WP, 2022). Although the reparations never came into play, the claims for reparations have been in talks for decades and continue

today within several communities throughout the United States.

For some time, my hometown, Evanston, IL, has been in the news, and a great topic for discussion within several circles for its works regarding the reparations program for Blacks within the Evanston community. It began in 2019 when the Evanston city council voted for a reparations fund that would be funded by revenue received from legal Marijuana sales within the city of Evanston. Reports stated the fund would provide ten million dollars in reparations to black residents within 10 years, starting with the first phase issuing 25,000 to 16 black residents. To qualify for the program, Black residents of Evanston had to prove they resided in Evanston as adults before 1969, (or be a direct descendant of a resident who resided in Evanston during this time) (Adams, 2021). The funds are said to go towards costs associated with purchasing a home in the city of Evanston or costs associated with completing repairs within the Evanston homeowners' home (Seidenberg, 2022).

Many within the city of Evanston, and throughout the nation rejoiced and supported the idea of reparations in Evanston because it was the first time in history anyone had received or benefited from local reparations in this form. Many also disagreed with the reparations concept and considered it to be nothing more than "a housing plan dressed up as reparations (Adams, 2021)."

It was recently reported that out of the sixteen black residents who were "all" randomly selected, one resident is using their share towards a home purchase while others have either selected mortgage assistance, or home improvement grants. One of the residents was undecided, and one resident who chose to use their funds towards the improvement of their home has yet to receive their full payment (Seidenberg, 2022). Evanston committee chair Peter Braithwaite stated, "We recognize that this up to \$25,000 is not going to make anyone whole, but it is a first step that we recognize".

Ald. Devon Reid, a council member on the Reparations Committee stated the city was not on track to generate ten million dollars over the next 10 years. Ald. Reid went on to state "That's a great goal, but right now we're nowhere near on track to do that, ". "At the pace that we're gathering funds in the Reparations Fund now through the taxing sources, it would be another two years before we could do another 16...."It'd be years, decades before we even got through the ancestors. And so, the charge that this body has to take up now, I think, is finding additional sources of revenue to allocate toward reparations and looking to expand the program (Seidenberg, 2022)."

As a black woman from Evanston's 5th ward, I commend the city of Evanston for taking the initiative to give back to the black residents within the Evanston community. However, I believe this plan for reparations appears to be more of a plan for housing, as opposed to reparations. Nonetheless, it is a great start. I really want to see "more residents" within the Evanston community benefit from this program and go on to successfully purchase homes throughout the city of Evanston without facing any issues or forms of discrimination.

Sources: Adams, Char (2021, March 26). Evanston is the first U.S city to issue slavery reparations. Experts say it's a noble start. NBCNEWS.com. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/evanston-s-reparations-plan-noble-start-complicated-process-experts-say-n1262096>
 Seidenberg, Bob (2022, April 26). Evanston Honors First Reparations Recipients 'A long overdue redress' of past wrongs. Evanston Roundtable. <https://evanstonroundtable.com/2022/04/26/evanston-honors-first-recipients-reparations-housing/>
 Wikipedia 2022. "Reparations for slavery in the United States". Wikipedia Foundation. Last modified May 2022.
 Photo Source: Anjali Nair / NBC News; AP; Getty; Mapping Inequality https://media-cldnry.s-nbcnews.com/image/upload/t_fit-1240w,f_auto,q_auto:best/rockcms/2021-05/210503-reparations-main-2x1-an-d29139.jpg



Sankofa Spotlight: Looking Back



Pastor, preacher, teacher, parent, lecturer, activist, radical disciple, “Blue Eyes, Black Soul,” are just a few names that describe, Rev. Dr. Michael Louis Pfleger. Ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 14, 1975, he is still very active at the age of 73 as he was at 26, when first ordained.

Following the example of a mentor and friend, Rev. George Clements, he became a parent, when he adopted an 8-year-old son, Lamar. In 1992, a South Korean women saw a story about him and sent her son, Beronti, to the United States to be adopted by Fr. Mike, as he is affectionately called by everyone. In 1997, he became a foster father to Jarvis Franklin, who was tragically killed as a result of gang crossfire, around the corner from

the church, on May 30, 1998.

In 1966 when civil rights activist Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King marched through Marquette Park in Chicago, Rev. Pfleger witnessed his friends’ parents spewing hateful words, spitting, and throwing rocks at Dr. King. He wondered what inner strength Dr. King possessed that he responded, “we love you.” This placed Rev. Pfleger on a trajectory that would change his life.

While attending seminary at St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Rev. Pfleger would come Chicago to hear the well-known Black preachers like Rev. Clay Evans, Rev. T.L. Barrett and Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. He wanted his ministry to be in the black community. He also ministered on the West side of Chicago where he would help, Fred Hampton and the Black Panthers give out food to the residents. Once ordained, he was immediately assigned to St. Sabina Church. When he became pastor in 1981, he was told by the Archdiocese that St. Sabina would be closing in 3 years. Pastor Pfleger said, “not on his watch.”

In the 47 years of his pastorate, The Faith Community of St. Sabina has survived and thrived to become known around the world for its vibrant liturgies and its social justice activism. The campus of the Faith Community of St. Sabina consists of the Employment Resource Center (ERC), The ARK (Youth center), St. Sabina Social Services and the St. Sabina Elders Village in collaboration with Catholic Charities, St. Sabina Academy, MLK Center for Strong Futures (assist justice-challenged youth & young adults) and the Stein Learning Gardens and the Samaritan Building (low-income housing).

As a minister of the Gospel, Pastor Pfleger has sought to break down the walls of racism and denominationalism by building unity among all people founded on truth and based on Jesus’ command to love one another. He is known as the “radical disciple” because he follows Jesus, who was radical. He is a prophetic preacher and leader because he is not afraid to speak truth to power.

When asked what wisdom he would share with newly ordained priests, such as Rev. Carl Gales, SVD, he said: 1) Be well grounded in their own faith and relationship with God. Like any relationship it demands time, work, and consistency; 2) Remember that we are here first to represent God and His Kingdom, before religion or denomination, sometimes unfortunately, these things may conflict; 3) Always remember that most of Jesus’ ministry was outside the walls of the church building; 4) Regain the prophetic voice that the church is called to be. Be unafraid to challenge society and the church when they neglect their mission to care for the poor, abandoned, and neglected. Remember justice is the DNA of the Gospel and not an attachment; 5) See your congregation as the community in which you live and not just those who come to your church; 6) Embrace and seek out the youth. Listen to them and make sure the church remembers that they are the future; 7) Recognize, honor, and make sure your staff reflects women and diversity – no matter your community; 8) Seek to make your congregation see themselves as leaders. Provide the training and support needed for them to be builders of the Kingdom no matter where they go. We are called to be and make disciples; 9) Don’t be intimidated with others’ gifts. “Father knows best” mentality is over. Embrace the gifts in your staff and in the pews; 10) Don’t put yourself on a pedestal. Let the people see your faith and your struggles; 11) Christianity is not things we do, it is a lifestyle; 12) Love your people and always see yourself as a servant – willing to wash feet, bandage wounds and provide comfort.

Allison Payne, long-time WGN reporter won an Emmy for Outstanding Achievement within a Regularly Scheduled News Program – Specialty Report: — Religion: Blue Eyes, Black Soul: Allison Payne, Reporter; Pam Grimes, Michael D’Angelo, Producers. WGN story based on Pastor Michael Pfleger. “Radical Disciple: Father Pfleger, St. Sabina Church and the Fight for Social Justice” by Robert McClory.



On a sunny May, 28th day at 10 am the ordination of Fr. Carl Gales, SVD began at Our Lady of Africa parish. Phone cameras and wide smiles followed him as he and his fellow brother in the faith Fr Derek Nguyen, SVD processed to the front of the church to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Fr. Carl Gales was born on September 8th in Baltimore Maryland. He grew up in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) church. His mom and dad were Pentecostals, so it was natural for them to be in church all day on Sunday and attend Wednesday bible study and Friday choir rehearsal. He was memorizing bible scriptures, participating in plays, singing in the youth choir, and involved in activities geared toward the young. This fertile ground allowed him to be open to God. By the time Carl became an adult, he was preaching and active in the music ministry as a choir director and organist.

Fr. Carl attended Indiana University, obtained a BA in music performance/piano, and wanted to get a minor in biblical studies. He had a desire to know more about the scriptures. One of the courses at Indiana University helped him to explore different denominations. Those in the church of his youth believe that the bible was the literal word of God, a fundamentalist approach. See other vantage points through this course led him to explore other faith traditions. He learned about the history of sacred scripture and the church which led him to the Catholic Church. Learning about the development of the early church, church fathers, and traditions was a huge draw for Fr. Carl. As a classical musician who was thinking about the very history of music and musical styles that developed from Gregorian Chant, it was already embedded in his mind to explore and expound upon this legacy. For Fr. Carl the Catholic faith was intellectually stimulating and spiritually peaceful. He gravitated towards how orderly things were. The liturgy itself seemed to be unifying not only locally but globally. It is a treasure that we have as Catholics. As we continued our conversation, we talked about the beauty and structure of the Liturgy of the Word. We discussed how parts of the liturgy are like other denominations. For example, the penitential rite in Protestant traditions is said after the gospel but for Catholics, the penitential rite is used at the beginning which is telling because we are interested in a communal call to conversion because worship itself is communal, not private. We are all parts of one body. How the personal and communal within this liturgical expression is also rich with cultural diversity within the church. As Black Catholics, we have our way of expressing our love and devotion to God.

The question of “What is my purpose” led Fr. Carl to come back and work in the Catholic church. For several years, he was focused on “How do I want my life to be expressed”? Musical and Liturgical expression became important to him. Yet, there was a still small voice inside of him that was letting him know that this was not it. As much success and affirmation from others as he was getting about his work, he knew that it was not enough. The feeling of peace returned when Carl asked God if he wanted him to become to a priest.

Fr. Carl’s journey with the Divine Word Missionaries (SVDs) began with a job at an SVD parish in New Jersey. With his second job, he met and became friends with twins Frs. Chester and Charles Smith, SVD who were regular celebrants at a church he worked at. Carl knew of the Divine Word Missionaries’ commitment to Black Catholics. Soon, Fr. Adam McDonald the vocational director, had reached out to Fr. Carl. After a second call a year later, it led to dinner, a come-and-see visit in Chicago, and another one in Iowa. Fr. Carl was accepted as a seminarian by the Society of the Divine Word. It was God-ordered. That radical sense of peace gave him the strength, courage, and endurance to go through theological classes and formation. The Holy Spirit was guiding him, and God’s grace helped him accomplish becoming a priest.

His mother has always been a huge part of his life as a single parent raising two children and working three jobs. Her faith in God was transmitted to her children. While she was concerned about his soul and salvation as he was on his “walkabout” and while she did not understand all that it entailed, she knew that the Catholic church was Christian and supported his decision to become a priest. In addition, his father, stepfather, and sister have been incredibly supportive of his choice to serve God and God’s people as a Catholic priest. This journey has been a revelation for his entire family and yet Fr. Carl was able to show his family the new creation he had become without proselytizing them. They understood that this was the path that God was leading him towards.

On the day that Fr. Carl was ordained, what he felt and remember was a blur. Before the ordination, he was nervous. From welcoming people in town to the particulars of the thanksgiving mass everything about the weekend was a blur. Yet, two moments stood out for him. One was when Bishop Guillory anointed his hands. He poured so much oil into his hands that it was dripping. He felt this anointing of his spirit, soul, and life. He then rubbed the oil on the purificator and gave it to his mother. Fr. Carl wept with tears of joy of gratitude for all that she has done for him that has led him to this point. Praying the Eucharistic Prayer at his Thanksgiving mass was the second moment. It was so profoundly moving. “It wasn’t just about me but also the community.”

On July 2nd, 2022, Fr. Carl Gales, SVD will begin as the associate pastor of Our Lady of Africa. He has a profound respect for the parishioners and the lay ministers. His initial goal is to work towards dialogue to get everyone to come together and work towards one common goal. He will lead as director of Religious Education and work with the catechists to bring forth strong programming for the youth. May the ministries that he serves be blessed.

Tina L Carter

Good Fr. Gus:

The Legacy of Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton



On a hot summer day in 1897, a young priest collapses on his way to the rectory. A few hours later he dies from heat stroke. Fr. Augustus Tolton, the nation's first recognized African American priest was celebrated as one with a strong voice and a great preacher but at 43 years old he was left carrying the cause of Black Catholics virtually alone. July 9th, 2022, marks 125 years since Fr. Augustus Tolton's death.

On a warm day in the mid-1980s, a group of ordained and lay men and women crossed the Mississippi River from Missouri into Illinois. Arriving in Quincy, IL they made their way to the burial site of Fr. Augustus Tolton. These people of faith began to pray and as their prayers became stronger, they began to kneel and kiss the obelisk that Fr. Tolton is buried under. Tears were shed as they began to feel this profound sense of peace and purpose. They felt the very presence of this trailblazer who answered the call to serve God and God's people as a Catholic priest, as a Black man in America was with them. His sons and daughters in the faith came to thank him, be with him, remember him, and remind the world that they are Fr. Augustus Tolton's legacy.

These men and women of God see in Fr. Tolton endurance, tenacity and perseverance to continue to serve in a church that was not always welcoming to them or their people. Fr. Tolton has taught them to fight from within to be seen and heard, to remind the church that all are welcomed to the table of Christ.

For African American priests today, Fr. Tolton paved the way for them to answer the call serve despite the unique pressures and challenges that the color of their skin causes. As being a few in some seminary programs, Fr. Tolton's life serves as a source of renewed strength to preserve, to continue to listen to the call and to lean deep in relationship with Christ for these men of faith. Fr. Tolton's legacy is a reminder the purpose of their lives is to serve God and God's people as authentically Black and truly Catholic.

Fr. Tolton's example also taught them that self-care and rest are equally important when serving God and God's people.

For one newly ordained priest the lesson is this. "If you're called nothing will stop the move of God. God opened up paths that were seemingly closed to him. Fr. Tolton gave of himself totally to the people to be available so much so that he died from exhaustion. Fr. Tolton was a man extremely devoted to the people of God."

Fr. Tolton's cause for canonization was opened in 2010, and he was declared Venerable by Pope Francis in June 2019.

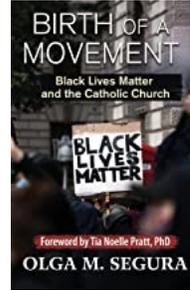
Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, Pray for us.

Tina L Carter

Literary Corner

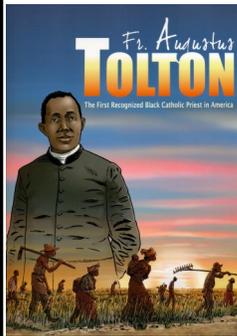


Olga Segura is a Black Catholic immigrant from the Dominican



Republic. Her book, *Birth of a Movement, Black Lives Matter, and the Catholic Church*, is part call to action and her spiritual memoir as she shares some of her own experiences. The book was initially intended to be an overview of the Black Lives Matter movement and the Catholic church to prompt the church to be more involved in the work of

racial justice. Instead, the book's emphasis became about helping Catholics understand how the church is suffering and how Catholics of color are struggling. Segura calls upon the bishops to emulate the example of leadership provided by the women of the Black Lives Matter movement and stand in solidarity with Black Americans fighting for dignity and human rights and get more involved in the work of racial justice. Also, for the bishops to take a more active stance against systemic racism. The question we should all ask ourselves is what does a church that is authentic and committed to helping marginalized voices truly look like? Tanya Bolen



Corinna Laughlin and Maria Laughlin authors of *Father Augustus Tolton: The First Recognized Black Catholic Priest in America* created a book that is both informative and accessible to children and teens by using the graphic novel format. The images depicted offer a rich tapestry of Fr. Tolton's life and legacy. He was born enslaved in 1854 and baptized Catholic. By age 6, his family escaped slavery, crossed the Mississippi and settled in Quincy IL. When he became an adult, he felt the call to become a priest but no American seminaries would take him. He had to study in Rome. When Fr. Tolton completed his studies, he returned to Quincy but racism and jealousies forced him to go to Chicago. While in Chicago Fr. Tolton was tasked to create a National Black Catholic Parish, yet with no funds and little support, he had to fundraise and travel. By the time he was 43 he was exhausted and died of heatstroke in 1897. The cause for his canonization was opened in 2011. For children and teens interested in learning about this man faith, this is a good introduction to his life and legacy. Tina L Carter

Habari gani

What's the News?

St. Benedict the African Church

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLEWOOD
340 W 66th St, Chicago, IL 60621
(773) 873-4464*<https://benedicttheafrican.org/>



HUSH HARBOR

Saturdays at 11 AM
Our Hush Harbor series features spirituals and speeches from the past that speak loudly today.

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St. Moses the Black Parish

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Pray the Rosary

August 7th 9:30 AM 10:15 AM
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AUGUST

28 10:00 AM 12:00 PM
29 7:00 PM 9:00 PM
30 7:00 PM 9:00 PM



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May 22

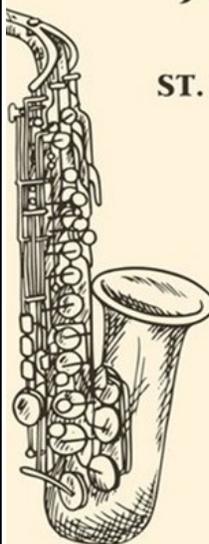
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St. Moses The Black Parish

Habari gani What's the News?

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Every Thursday
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@10:00AM-12:00PM

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The Faith Community of Saint Sabina Presents a...

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Friday, July 8

6-9pm

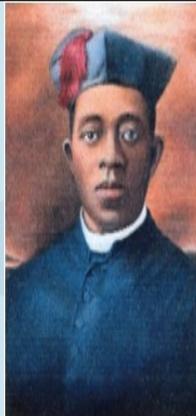
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The Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program at Catholic Theological Union

The Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program provides an opportunity for Black Catholics to receive academic, personal, spiritual and professional education and training in preparation for professional ministry for the specific needs of Black Catholics.

- Applicants from the Archdiocese of Chicago are eligible for a full-tuition scholarship.
- Applicants outside of the Chicago dioceses are encouraged to apply for the Tolton program and will be considered for other scholarship funds.

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**Services vary by cafe.

Prayer for July

¹⁴ if then my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and heal their land.

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Good and Gracious God,
You are in the highest place where we find grace and mercy.
As we worship You and Your power overflows, we ask You today to
HEAL OUR LAND:

From senseless killings, and shootings.

From war and destruction.

From divisiveness and racism.

From abuse of power.

From authoritative brutality.

From gender inequality.

From hatred and terrorism.

From economic disparities.

From hunger and homelessness.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, You know us all by name and through Your grace and mercy we are eternally blessed. As we seek Your face and gentle touch, we ask You today to
HEAL OUR LAND.

AMEN



Who are we?

The Pulse is a monthly newsletter to provide information about the concerns and happenings in Black Catholic Chicago. It will be made up of articles, profiles and information about events and programs happening throughout the archdiocese of Chicago. If you are interested in contributing or have any questions or concerns please email us at chicagoblackcatholics@gmail.com

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