



To Protect and Serve? – Militarization of the Police

By: Gardis Watts



Tyre Nichols of Memphis has become the latest of a long line of black victims of police terrorism. It is like watching several remakes of the same horror movie performed by different actors. The consistent theme is the victim in this movie is black, and in most cases, the victim is male. However, the perpetrators of this crime were different from the norm. Typically, the criminals in these cases are white cops. In this instance, it was four black Memphis police officers responsible for the crime. Many would argue that this would not be an act of racism/white supremacy because the perpetrators were black. Unfortunately, those who would believe that have a short-sighted view of this incident. If you look at it from an analysis of a system, you would understand that historically victims of police violence are disproportionately black no matter the race or ethnicity of the officer.

The point of this article is not to prove its motive of racism but to analyze another dangerous factor about local law enforcement agencies that help to lethally suppress the lives of black people, and that is the militarization of the police. What we have been witnessing for a while is the transformation of local police into military units. Police have gone from being local officers protecting their community to police being occupied military forces in enemy territory, being a law within themselves. No longer are there law enforcement police who bond with the people of the area. Law enforcement now has become soldiers in a war where the people they are supposed to be protecting are considered enemy combatants.

Much of what initiates this military mindset of local law enforcement starts with federal money. Every year billions of dollars from the federal government are distributed to many local law enforcement agencies for the purpose of giving them access to military resources. The cause of this funding started with the creation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a federal agency in the Justice Department that cooperates with local law enforcement to access military resources. Created out of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by then-President Lyndon Johnson, it was a response to Johnson's "War on Crime." In reality, it was really meant to quell the rebellions and uprisings of the 1960s, which typically involved mostly black people who fought against racial oppression.

Cooperation with local law enforcement and federal agencies was happening before the Omnibus Crime Bill of 1968. They were not necessarily made for brute military force but for intelligence gathering, operating countermeasures, and assassinations. One of the earliest of these joint task forces was the Red Squad. Born out of the FBI's COINTELPRO program, it initially was created to fight off communism, however, later shifted to black resistance movements of the 1960s. Many in-depth investigations into high-level political assassinations led to the involvement of the Red Squad, including that of Malcolm X and Fred Hampton Sr. And then you have the 1999 civil case of "the King family vs. Loyd Jowers and other unknown co-conspirators", a case where a federal court ruled on behalf of the King family that the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a planned operation by several entities. While it did not mention explicitly the Red Squad nor any government agency, it did find that one of the co-conspirators was the Memphis police. William Pepper, the attorney for the King family in this case, found that the Memphis police worked with the FBI, CIA, and the U.S. Army Intelligence division.

The extra funding from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration gave local police the resources to develop specialized units like Special Weapons and Tactics, or S.W.A.T. These paramilitary groups within the police department are equipped with weapons like automatic machine guns, grenades, and tank-like vehicles, just to name a few.

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The “War on Drugs”, started by President Richard Nixon and escalated by President Ronald Reagan, expanded the flow of military training and equipment to local police. More task forces within local law enforcement were created to deal with crimes that involved drugs and gangs. And while statistics showed that drug use is prevalent among all Americans regardless of race, it was black people who were arrested and killed at alarming rates.

Many of these special units worked with a certain amount of immunity. Elected officials would turn a blind eye to the acts of these special units because they were considered human rights violations. One of the most famous cases is the case of Jon Burge, a Chicago Police Commander who was part of a group of cops called the “Midnight Crew” who illegally tortured black suspects into forced confessions in the 1970s and 1980s. Burge picked up these interrogation tactics while serving in the Vietnam War. During the height of Burge’s reign of terror, a certain State’s Attorney, son of a past mayor and future mayor of Chicago Richard M. Daley, turned a blind eye to Burge’s atrocities when evidence was presented to him in 1982. Eventually, the Illinois Supreme Court overturned many of Burge’s arrests and Burge himself was made to somewhat pay for his actions by serving time in jail.

As more special task forces started to appear in different cities, the level of police corruption also started to increase. Famous special units like the **CRASH** unit in Los Angeles and the Red Dog unit in Atlanta are just a few examples of many military-style police units. Most of these units were investigated by the feds and these units were disbanded and most of their officers were convicted and sentenced to prison.

Another part of the problem is when American police go to Israel to train with the Israeli Defense Force. The Israelis train these American cops in all the repressive and deadly tactics they use on the Palestinians. These programs have been opposed by groups like Jewish Voice for Peace. The group has created an initiative called “Deadly Exchange”, a program that exposes the military training of U.S. law enforcement.

In light of 2020 and the George Floyd protest calling for defunding the police, current times have reversed the trend, and



Detroit police enforce a curfew following a rally against the death of George Floyd, June 2020. Source: <https://www.reuters.com>

funding the police has become popular again. And this trend is getting so much traction that cities like Atlanta are doubling down on their funding of police militarization. Last year, the City of Atlanta approved the building of a \$90 million, 83-acre military-style police training facility with plans to include: a mock city to train for urban warfare, multiple shooting ranges, and a Black Hawk helicopter landing pad. Many protests have centered around the building of what people labeled “Cop City”.

Watching the torture and murder of Tire Nichols would remind some of how prisoners in Guantanamo Bay were being treated. One could also equate this to the treatment of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib. Nevertheless, the military connections are evident in this case. The people who murdered Nichols were Memphis police, the same police department implicated in the assassination of Dr. King. They also belonged to a special unit called the Scorpion Unit, which has now disbanded. It was Memphis police chief Cerelyn Davis who created this unit, a unit she modeled after she oversaw the now defunct Red Dog unit when she was deputy chief in Atlanta. And while deputy chief in Atlanta, Davis also attended training in Israel.

There needs to be a persistent organized movement against police terrorism and not just a trend when the next unarmed black person gets murdered by cops. Congress in 2021 attempted to put on the table a police reform bill called, “The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.” This was in response to the global protest of 2020 against police violence. As usual, white conservative elements blocked this bill and it eventually died. Now that the trend is public safety, the sentiments have been reversed and calls for more militarization of local police are popular. Pressure needs to be placed on our legislators to put this bill back on the table. Congress also needs to stop federal resources from going to local police for the purpose of giving them military equipment. There are some movements out there already working against demilitarizing local police. The Deadly Exchange campaign by the Jewish Voice for Peace has gained traction. Last March, a 2020 internal memo from the Anti-Defamation League was leaked to the press and suggested eliminating the program of training American police in Israel. The program for now has been paused. There is also a protest movement in Atlanta called, “Stop Cop City” that is organizing against the building of the militarized police training facility. It has gotten so much attention that one of the protesters, Manuel “Tortuguita” Teran, was murdered by the Georgia State troopers in January. This is unacceptable and we need to continue to support this movement and all other movements aligned with demilitarizing the police.

In Reflection: Black Catholic Women

By: Stephanie Garrison

As we celebrate Women's History month, it is important for us to remember the sisterhood of Black Catholic women—the religious and the lay—and the many hardships they had to overcome in the Catholic church. Although rarely acknowledged, Black Catholic women have played an important role in the church. They helped spread the tenets of Catholicism—faith, education, and charity. Notably, in the 18th century, free Black women living in New Orleans served as godparents to more than 80 percent of the city's enslaved population.



Oblate Sisters of Providence

1995).

Unlike the majority, some Black women who were able to join white orders, did so quietly by “passing.” In many cases, when the superiors knew the truth, records baring the actual identity of these women were sealed and they had to make the decision to give up all ties to their family in order to keep their race hidden. The first known Black woman to enter religious life, who passed for white was Nellie Morgan. She joined the Sisters of Loretto. In the 1880's, when white orders started officially accepting African American women (one of the first being Mathilde Beasley or “Mother Mathilda”), they were placed in subservient positions. For example, in some orders the Black sisters were not allowed to eat in the same room as their white counterparts and vow ceremonies were segregated as well. Moreover, Black sisters were not allowed in the Mother House. This treatment would become the norm. Even in the 1950's, when Sr. Thea Bowman was accepted into community in Wisconsin, she had to endure the same pattern of racism the Black women of faith that preceded her experienced. At the age of sixteen, Sr. Thea was told by the older sisters in her community that “Black people go to nigger heaven together with the dogs and other animals.” Despite the many years of ill treatment, the sisters persevered and made a difference in the lives of people in the African American community. In addition to educating 10 of the nation's first 23 Black priests, Black sisters worked to desegregate several Catholic colleges and universities, including the Catholic University of America, where in 1934, women from the Oblate Sisters of Providence Mary of Good Counsel Baptiste and Mary Consolata Gibson became the institution's first Black women graduates.



Mother Mathilde Beasley



Anna Madre Bates

Like their religious counterparts, Black laywomen have always been the leading advocates of their Catholic faith and the backbone of their parishes and communities. For example, Anna (Madre) Bates of Detroit, who petitioned the Archdiocese for ten years to build a church for her Black community because the white churches in the area would not allow African Americans to worship with them, eventually founded Our Lady of Victory which became a thriving parish and school. Her story is just one of many of Black laywomen who founded Catholic missions in their neighborhoods when white ecclesiastical authorities refused to do so.

Black Catholic women's triumphs through hardships stand as a testament to their enduring faith. In an excerpt from Sr. Thea Bowman's address to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in June of 1989, the belief of Black Catholic women about their identities is truly expressed: *“What does it mean to be Black and Catholic? It means that I come to my Church fully functioning. That doesn't frighten you, does it? I come to my Church fully functioning. I bring myself, my Black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become, I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility as a gift to the Church.”*



Sankofa Spotlight



Recently retired State Senator Jacqueline Y. Collins has had a stellar career in journalism, as a videotape news editor for CBS-TV and as a legislator. Jacqui credits her success on the education she received at St. Carthage School, 7320 S. Yale, in Englewood. It was there she encountered the Adrian Dominican nuns and her first Black nun, Sr. Martin Thomas (now known as Sister Jamie T. Phelps). The nuns poured into the young minds of their Black students instilling a spirit of excellence, achievement and self-esteem. After high school, she attended Northwestern University where she majored in journalism and is a graduate of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Divinity School. She also holds a Juris Doctor degree from Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

While at St. Carthage, Jacqui converted to Catholicism. However, on April 4, 1968, her faith was shaken with the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She questioned God about how such a man of peace could be struck down by violence. As she processed her grief, Dr. King and his ministry became her inspiration and motivating force to pursue justice. She thought she needed to embrace his Baptist faith to achieve that goal. However, it was a Baptist minister who told her about Catholic Social Teaching (CST), the Catholic Churches "best kept secret."

Jacqui was very active in the Black Political Movement working with Operation PUSH and Congressman Gus Savage, but still searching for a church home that embodied CST and Dr. King's ministry. It was not until 1986 when she heard the church bells of St. Sabina that she would find such a place. On the first Sunday she attended St. Sabina, she sat in the back of church, observing. She noticed that the church had an altar dedicated to Dr. King, a strong youth outreach, a great respect for seniors and a Pastor who clearly walked under the mantle of Dr. King.

Once she joined St. Sabina, she was appointed St. Sabina's Minister of Communication where she worked to build St. Sabina's media presence. She trained the staff on how to write press releases, conduct press conferences and organized the archives of St. Sabina for the purpose of legacy. In 2002, she was asked by Pastor Pflieger to run for a new senate seat in the 16th legislative district. Her initial response was to say "no," out of fear. After prayer, however, she took a leap of faith and successfully ran for office. During Jacqui's 20-year tenure as a state senator, her faith informed her public policy and reflected Dr. King's crusade for social justice.

As a senator, Jacqui successfully fought to protect women and children, stop predatory lending, housing discrimination and disinvestment, end food deserts, expand voting rights, promote public safety, and elevate education. In 2012 she sponsored a resolution designating April 24, 2012 as Father Augustus Tolton Day commemorating the 126th Anniversary of his ordination. On that day all Illinoisans were urged to remember his unyielding commitment and ministry to African-American Catholics in Quincy, Chicago, and across the nation.

Senator Collins' spiritual grounding in scripture, specifically, Luke 4:18 continues to define her life's ministry. As for what's ahead in her life, she is discerning the next assignment that God has for her.

- Dr. Kimberly Lymore

Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.



Christine Riley, MDiv has used the example of service to others, first modeled by her beloved grandmother to serve those in need as the City of Chicago's director of Homeless Prevention, Policy, and Planning in the Department of Family and Support Services.

As a child, Christine, her brothers, and her grandmother would make sandwiches and take them to skid row in Chicago to feed the homeless every Sunday. This act of kindness was a reminder for Christine that blessings are shared.

Her family was originally Baptist attending Hope Baptist Church but Christine and her brothers' experience at St. Mel's Holy Ghost School and Church convinced the entire family to convert to Catholicism when she was in 4th grade. When St. Mel merged with St. Thomas Aquinas and Resurrection the newly formed St. Martin de Porres parish became the family's church home. Thanks to Ms. Austin, Christine's 7th-grade teacher, she learned about St. Ignatius College Prep. As a student at St. Ignatius, Christine was introduced to the school's motto, *Men, and Women for others*. After high school, Christine attended Northern Illinois University receiving a BA in Organizational Corporate Communications. This Tolton alum insists that the Master of Divinity that she received from the Catholic Theological Union in 2008 was God's degree for her.

Christine's career with the city of Chicago began as a student intern during high school. After college, Christine took a job with the department of cultural affairs Gallery 37 program. She then became the executive secretary of former first lady Maggie Daley. By May 2011, Christine moved into the Homeless and Human Services division of the Department of Family and Support Services. Her work with the homeless in Chicago is a full circle moment from the ministry that her grandmother introduced her to years ago. Christine states that it is important to show compassion and have patience because it can take up to 8 engagements before someone is willing to talk to you. Because of their experiences in shelters, it is safer for some to be outside in the elements. Homelessness is not illegal. It is an unfortunate circumstance that some individuals find themselves in and as a result, they are not ready to go back inside. They have a choice. Through her department, they are investing in better shelters, and through a multimillion-dollar budget, creating better housing opportunities for those who need it. The answer to homelessness is better, affordable housing. Christine finds her work with the homeless rewarding and necessary work.

In addition to her work with the homeless, she was the longtime Director of Religious Education at St. Martin de Porres until 2021 and currently serves as Chair of the Tolton Society at St. Ignatius High School, her alma mater. As chair, she is working to secure scholarships for African American students to attend one of the top Catholic high schools in the city.

Yet, with all her work for the city and her alma mater, she has not forgotten the importance of serving those in need in her neighborhood. With her cousin, Christine still does giveaways on the corner for the community. Using a rented storefront, hats, gloves, and groceries are still available for those in need. For this woman of faith, Christine is living out the values her grandmother instilled in her, the motto her high school taught her by being the hands and feet of Christ.

-Tina L Carter

Habari gani

What's the News?



The contributors of *The Pulse* would like to extend our thoughts and prayers to the family of Chicago Police Officer Andrés Vásquez Lasso who was killed in the line of duty on Wednesday, March 1st, and to all of those who lost their lives to senseless violence in our communities in our city during the first two months of this year. It is only through the combined efforts, compassion, and support of citizens, police, and local, federal, and state governments that we can create a society that respects all people no matter their age, race, creed, ethnicity, religion, work, or identification. Until we realize that we are all children under the Almighty God and that we all have basic human rights, we will all continue to be vulnerable.

-Tina L Carter.

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. In Antebellum America, a hush harbor was a place where the enslaved Africans would gather in secret to

practice religious traditions.

MEETING ID: 89415895742

PASSCODE: 636489

St. Katharine Drexel Virtual Stations of the Cross



All are invited to join St. Katharine Drexel Parish for
STATIONS OF THE CROSS: *Overcoming Racism*

Friday, February 24, 2023
Friday, March 03, 2023
Friday, March 10, 2023
Friday, March 17, 2023
Friday, March 24, 2023

Time
7:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81683474385?pwd=cjAAT28zS2h1NHQ5WnBiQy9LT0JpZz09>

Meeting ID: 816 8347 4385
Passcode: 067662

Dial by your location
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 816 8347 4385
Passcode: 067662

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdnMc2gEVm>



Our Lady of Africa
WE ARE ONE
Holy, Catholic & Apostolic



coalition for spiritual
& public leadership

PRESENTS A

PUBLIC MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 21ST, 2023

6:30 PM

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 6:00 PM

OUR LADY OF AFRICA | 607 E OAKWOOD BLVD

CSPL and Our Lady of Africa invites members of the community to a public meeting with the two remaining mayoral candidates to share our vision for the City of Chicago

REGISTER HERE:

bit.ly/csplolapublic



www.csplaction.org

Habari gani
What's the News?

The Tolton Spirituality Center

2023 Online Spring Course Schedule

Theme: A Year of Healing

**UPCOMING EVENTS
REGISTRATION OPEN**

FEBRUARY 28

MARCH

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

7

Self-Care for Lay Ministers

A two-part webinar that explores the importance of self-care as stewardship of the call in the Christian community. It examines the impact of neglecting the ultra-reliable volunteers.

MARCH

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

21

28

Generational Trauma in African-Americans

Violence in all its forms has become commonplace in our nation. This two-part course explores the church's role in healing and being a place of refuge.

APRIL

12 PM - 1:30 PM

5

Protecting Your Peace: Standing Up to Workplace Trauma

A toxic work environment affects your mental and physical health. Gain practical tips to reclaim your peace and start a healing journey in this workshop.

MORE INFO./REGISTER:

WWW.TOLTONSPIRITUALITY.ORG

GO TO PROGRAMS > COURSES & WEBINARS

QUESTIONS:

tolton.spirituality.center@gmail.com

REGISTER BY QR CODE

2023 Online Courses: A Year of Healing



Habari gani

What's the News?

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Evenings with Venerable Augustus Tolton



A five-part series featuring Bishop Perry

Join Bishop Joseph Perry at the Tolton Heritage Center in Chicago to learn about Venerable Augustus Tolton, the first recognized African American Roman Catholic priest. He is on the road to canonization. These events will include a short video, a presentation by Bishop Perry and plenty of time for conversation.

All events are free

Starting on March 8 | 4 – 6 p.m.

Tolton Heritage Center

44 East 41st Street, Chicago, IL 60653



March 8 The Man, Not Myth

Fr. Augustus Tolton's story begins more than a century ago, yet it remains relevant today. Who was Augustus Tolton? What does his life story teach us?

March 29 Tolton Spirituality

Fr. Augustus Tolton led an extraordinary and exemplary life. What tenets guided this former slave turned engaging Catholic priest? Is it possible to lead a holy life as Tolton did?

April 12 Spreading the Word

Venerable Augustus Tolton: The pioneer, spiritual leader, and social justice advocate. Discover how Tolton's legacy extends beyond Catholics, and why everyone should know about his impact.

May 3 Embodying Forgiveness

Today, there are deep divisions in this country. What does Fr. Tolton's life teach us about forgiveness and understanding that would move us toward healing?

May 10 All Things Tolton

You've probably heard a lot about Tolton or perhaps nuggets about several organizations bearing his name. Learn about the various groups and how they work together to advance Tolton's legacy.

Sponsored by the **Tolton Spirituality Center**. Register at www.toltonspirituality.org under Events.

Habari gani What's the News?



ST. MARY EVANSTON BLACK CATHOLICS

JOIN US, AS WE GATHER FOR A PEACEFUL
AFTERNOON DISCUSSION, EXPLORING A
VARIETY OF ARTICLES AND TOPICS
RELATED TO BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY,
SOCIAL JUSTICE, MINISTRY, & MORE.

WEDNESDAY'S VIA ZOOM @ 2:00 PM!
PLEASE CONTACT SHANNON AT
STMARYEVANSTONBC@GMAIL.COM
FOR THE ZOOM LINK AND ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION



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.

For More information or to apply visit us online at ctu.edu/Toltonprogram



Artist Credit: Edward L. Hayes, "Passing of Wisdom"

"HERE I AM, SEND ME"
Isaiah 6:8

save the date
JUNE 25 - JULY 14, 2023



Institute for Black Catholic Studies
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA



Write the Vision
A PROPHETIC CALL TO THRIVE

CONGRESS XIII

July 20 - 23, 2023 | Gaylord National Harbor, MD

Lenten Prayer

Father God,

As one, we come to you this lenten season with open arms, open minds, and open hearts; to humbly ask for your guidance as we partake on a spiritual voyage towards clarity, peace and rejuvenation.

Father, let our senses be in tune with you.

Let us hear you,

Let us see you,

Let us feel you,

and be comforted by your faithful promises that proclaim you'll never abandon us, and will forever remain by our side.

Father, let us find strength in every sacrifice and be reminded that each new day will lead us closer to you.

Let us abandon our fears, and rejoice because our lenten season is here.

Father, Let us have faith, find peace, find comfort, and find our way back home.

In Jesus names we pray,

Amen.



-Shannon Ambroise

Who are we?

Created by current and former Tolton scholars, **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

This month's contributors are:

- **Dr. Kimberly Lymore** DMin, is the director of the Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program at Catholic Theological Union and Associate Minister of the Faith Community of Saint Sabina.
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This is a publication of the Chicago Black Catholic Alliance!

