



Black Catholics: Who Are We?

By: Connie Reden



Holy Name of Mary Parish in Morgan Park.

We are the 272 people enslaved and sold by the Jesuit priests in Maryland for \$115,000, equivalent to \$2.79 million in 2020. The Maryland Catechism of Christian Doctrine stated masters must be kind to their slaves. This was a document written and distributed by the Catholic Church. The church long believed slavery was a secular issue. This meant slaves could be treated anyway the slave owner desired and most of the time disobedience to them meant harsh punishment. The church did not really concern itself with slavery from its beginning and remained complicit with white supremacy for centuries. Many people say this complicity is present today. Many white Catholics still believe our color defines us as inferior. Despite all our challenges during the time of slavery, we survived and launched a movement forcing the Church to accept who we were. We are the unrelenting voices as the unyielding voice of a black priest. Father Her-

man Porter, from Rockford, Illinois in 1968 convened the first Black Clergy Caucus in Detroit Michigan. One nun and one Brother with 58 priests led by Father Porter accused the church of suppressing the equal rights of Blacks that benefited whites. The caucus demanded racism be excluded from church practices. If this did not change, the church was not welcome into the Black community. Other organizations such as the National Black Sisters' Conference, the National Convention of Black Lay Catholics, and various Catholic Black Catholics lay organizations pressured the church until it established the Office for Black Catholics in Washington, D.C. was founded in 1970. (Note the time frame of Black Catholics becoming relevant to the Church.) It was dissolved in 1987 to become the National Black Catholic Congress. Under its new name it established the month of November as the History of Black Catholics Month. When have you heard that?

We are the people who came to church doors and were turned away. We are the ones who wanted to share our culture, music and worship style with the church. Black presence in white churches caused whites to hasten to suburbia to avoid welcoming the Black Catholics. One Black community, Morgan Park, in Chicago, Illinois said, "No more" and battled to have their own Catholic Church in their own isolated Black community. Eleven Black women in 1938 fought to have a church built, Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church. The only Black Catholic Church founded and built by Blacks in the Midwest. The name was selected because the women were mothers and wanted to honor the mother of Jesus. Not only did they establish a church, but they also built a school to accommodate the educational needs of their children with the help of Black Protestants in the community. This community was a religious flower garden of faith in God.

These women invited the Oblate Sisters of Providence to come to their newly built school to educate their children. This was an order of Black nuns founded in 1829 by Mother Mary Lang, a Black woman, who gave her life for her people. They came with a mission to teach and inspire religious faith for Morgan Park children to become survivors. The nuns came from the Mother House in Baltimore, Maryland to become an integral part of the Morgan Park Community. We are the heirs of these nuns who came to educate us.

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From Left-Right Sr. Henriette DeLille, SSF; Fr. Augustus Tolton, Julia Greeley, Pierre Toussaint, Mother Mary Lange, OSP; Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA.

We are the Catholics demanding the canonization of Black servants of God, such as, Mother Mary Lang, Pierre Toussaint, Henriette DeLille, Sister Thea Bowman, Julia Greeley and Augustus Tolton. They have shown love for mankind, humility and their strong spiritual relationship with God. We are the heirs continuing to battle for relevance in the church. How many years will it take for Black Catholics to be honored as saints? Presently, there is not one American Black saint. We have always known St. Martin De Porres, but others were hidden from common knowledge. We now know that the “Father of the Church” was St. Augustine, a Black scholar, and St. Benedict the Moor, but “Moor” was dropped from his name. There were also three Black popes: Pope Victor I who reigned from 189 A.D. to 199 A.D, Pope Miltiades reigned from 311 A.D. to 314

A.D. and Pope Gelasius reigned from 492 A.D. to 496 A.D. Even Mark, the writer of the Bible, was Black. Contributions of Africans and African Americans have been ignored by the church hierarchy.



Holy Name of Mary Parish Choir
important as a glass of cool water when thirsty.

The question the Church fails to answer is why many African Americans are leaving the Church. Our music, our worship style, and our spirituality are interwoven into our culture. White tradition and cultures have been woven into the practices of the church. When is it our turn to share the uniqueness of our people? An article by the Pew Research Center (June 1, 2021) found we are more authentically involved in our belief in God. We are more likely to read the Bible. We fortify our understanding of God’s spiritual goals for us while relating the Bible to our circumstances. We are more prayerful. We pray individually or with others. Prayer to us is as im-

There were 2 holocausts in the United States. We were enslaved for 400 years while the church was slow to act against it. The Native American for 500 years encountered diseases whites brought to this continent and then massacred them for their land. In both situations, the Church was docile. It is time for the church to accept African Americans' physical and spiritual culture as part of the Mass. The church is not a church if it does not reflect the church Jesus foresaw. The writings of the Bible show his kindness, justice, and acceptance. Church, open your arms, to the energy and encompassing strength of a culture that enriches. We are survivors with a determination to be Black Catholics. THIS IS WHO WE ARE!!!



Connie Reden attended Holy Name of Mary School and Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church for 75 years. She has been an active civil rights advocate for many years. As a retired educator from the Chicago Public Schools, Connie continued to use her educational experiences to teach graduate students at Concordia College. She also trained principals and teachers to improve their administrative and teaching skills through DePaul University and Illinois-Chicago University and has been an entrepreneur of two successful businesses. Connie completed her post-graduate education at the University of Chicago.

SHUT UP IN MY BONES

By Stephanie Garrison



My name is Stephanie Garrison, and I am an Augustus Tolton Scholar at Catholic Theological Union (CTU). I will be graduating this month with a Masters in Pastoral Studies. When I reflect on the time I have spent at CTU as a Tolton Scholar, I can truly say that I have been blessed. Before CTU, my journey started with scripture school. Studying the Word in the way I did, lit a fire in me that ignited my desire to seek a master's degree because I wanted to learn more about ministry. I felt just like Jeremiah in chapter 20:9, "Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am tired of holding it in, And I cannot endure it." When I began seminary, I only ever thought about the "doing" or serving of ministry, being a lector, eucharistic minister, a catechist. However, as my courses took me deeper into the study of ministry, I learned about its purpose and that authentically, ministry is first from God. As it states in Ephesians 4:11-12, "And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Learning to view ministry in this way gave me the understanding that I am God's vessel, and it is not about what I alone can do for others in need but what God does through me for those in need. He calls me, equips me, and places me in a unique role to bring about His mission on earth.

The Tolton Scholarship Program which made it possible for me to study at CTU, nurtured my spiritual and cultural identity. I was introduced to a host of faithful, Black scholars of the past (Howard Thurman, Jarena Lee, James H. Cone, and Sr. Thea Bowman) and the present (Dr. Diana L. Hayes, Fr. Maurice Nutt, M. Shawn Copeland and Fr. Bryan Massingale), whose concepts and ideas enlightened and challenged my established ways of thinking. The program broadened my perspective on the authentic and historical gifts of the Black Catholic tradition. I have acquired a confidence and a voice that I feel poised to use as I return to ministry work in the Black Community.

Additionally, over the time I spent in the program, I studied about the life of its namesake, Fr. Augustus Tolton. For the cause of sainthood, he is presently at the stage of Venerable (step 2). Fr. Tolton played a significant role in ministering to the emerging Black Catholic community in Chicago in the 1890's and built and established St. Monica's Parish (the first Black Catholic church that later merged with St. Elizabeth in 1924). When I learned about the obstacles he faced in "answering the call" as a Black Catholic priest in the United States, it made me reflect on the complex nature of African American participation and acceptance in the U.S. Catholic Church. His life of perseverance in the midst of overwhelming odds has helped me to understand my own struggles to become a lay minister in the Catholic Church. As a Catholic woman who is also African American, at times I have found my vocational choices questioned, and access to full participation in the church challenging. Since learning about Tolton, I now look to his story for inspiration. His dedication to daily prayer and the Eucharist during his formative years gives me guidance with my own spiritual practices. In addition, his life experience also helped me to see that a minister does not shy away from asking for help in times of struggle. So, another valuable lesson I am taking away from my total experience at CTU as a Tolton Scholar, is the importance of being fully invested in the community in which I minister. As I felt on "fire" at the beginning of my journey into CTU, I am on "fire" now as I move on to my next Great Adventure!!!

The Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program through Catholic Theological Union in partnership with the Archdiocese of Chicago, 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, whether in predominantly Black Catholic or other spaces. For more information about this and other programs please visit www.ctu.edu. (accessed: 5/2/2022)



Beverly Ann Stewart is the matriarch of her family. Married at the age of 18, she became the mother of 4 sons, now adults, ranging in age from 37-48. She has 12 grandchildren and 1 great grandson. Beverly Ann is a cradle Catholic, and she raised her sons in the Catholic faith. After her divorce, it was important to her that her sons have positive role models growing up. They were involved in the Jr. Knights of Peter Claver, as well as other organizations that offered mentorship to young men.

The African proverb of “it takes a village to raise a child” was true in Beverly Ann’s life. Her grandparents, parents, and siblings had a role in helping Beverly Ann with raising 4 boys. Family is important to her, and her sons had a great relationship with their grandparents and uncles and to this day recall the lessons learned from them. “...as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) Beverly Ann was a member of St. Thaddeus Catholic Church located on the South Side of Chicago for 55 years, until its closing in October 2016. Her sons attended CCD at St. Thaddeus and had many mentors at the church. Some of the grandchildren also attended St. Thaddeus. After the closing Beverly Ann joined St. Margaret of Scotland where she is the Director of Evangelization and involved with the liturgy committee. She loves and is very gifted in creating liturgical environments.

Of course, there have been ups and downs of raising her children, however, her greatest joy today is knowing that the sacrifices she had to make have paid off. Beverly Ann has been blessed in that none of her boys became victims of the street, members of a gang, nor been in jail. She credits the grace and mercy of God and the support she received from her family, teachers, neighbors and extended family members. When she looks her sons’ lives and see that they have a strong sense of family connectedness and see how they are raising their children, it makes her smile. She has two granddaughters that attend HBCU colleges. Education is important to Beverly Ann. At the age of 40, she received her bachelor’s degree in nursing. She worked for 25 years as a registered nurse. She continued her education by attending Catholic Theological Union as a Tolton Scholar and graduated with a Masters of Pastoral Studies in 2009. After graduation she stayed involved in the life of the Tolton Program by being the formation facilitator from 2015-2020 and on the Tolton Advisory Board.

In July of 2021, her 15-year-old grandson died of heat exhaustion while at football practice. This was time when Beverly Ann had to dip into her well of faith to help comfort her children and grandchildren during this difficult time. They depended on her strength and deep spirituality to bring them through this great loss. Beverly Ann has a saying, “younger in your lap; older in your heart.” No matter how old her children are they are forever in her heart. She is always there to offer support and a word of encouragement as they maneuver through life. She has learned though that she must let go and allow them to develop their own spirituality. She has planted the seeds of faith in them, now it is up to God to give the increase. “Her children arise and call her blessed.” (Proverbs 31:28) Beverly Ann continually works on her own spiritual development by seeking out spiritual advisors, mentors, going on retreats and taking Sabbath time for herself. Beverly Ann Stewart is mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, matriarch, and a woman of faith who brings glory to God.

-Dr. Kimberly Lymore



Shannon Ambrose is a dedicated person of faith and an advocate for social justice. She is currently a parishioner at St. Mary’s Parish in Evanston, IL where she has been a parishioner since childhood. At the age of 22, Shannon completed the R.C.I.A. program and was officially baptized. Shannon is dedicated to her faith and ministry and loves bringing people together.

Shannon’s educational journey started with attending public schools in Evanston, IL and then receiving a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from National - Louis University. Shannon then completed a Masters of Arts in Pastoral Studies at Catholic Theological Union where she was also a Tolton Scholar. Shannon would later use her education and ministerial skills to serve many roles within her parish. For many years she worked as an office assistant at St. Mary’s parish, where she currently facilitates the St. Mary of Evanston Black Catholics group. What Shannon most enjoys about facilitating the St. Mary Evanston Black Catholics group, is that people gather from the community and parish to discuss issues related to social justice, catholicism, and black spirituality. It helps keep everyone up to date on current events as they discuss how to be better citizens within the parish and community.

Shannon’s wants according to her have been fairly simple, she worked hard to complete her M.A in pastoral studies degree in 2019 from Catholic Theological Union where she was also a Augustus Tolton Scholar, and she is now currently a mother to her two year old son Z, who is currently in daycare, thriving tremendously and working on the alphabet and singing several songs. When Shannon spoke of Z, you could hear her smile and know without saying that he is a huge blessing to her. Z is very smart and the pair make it a priority to read 2 books per day. Z has also learned that reading allows him to stay up a little later. They both sing, color, participate in art activities and watch Disney movies. Z’s favorite character is Spider Man.

Shannon once faced the challenge of Cancer, after being diagnosed with lymphoma years ago. It was then Shannon stated, the parishioners of St. Mary’s wrapped their arms around her and provided her with prayers and courage. She is currently 7 years in remission and that was when she committed herself to ministry. Shannon is grateful to God and her bout with cancer has strengthened her relationship with God. What cancer taught her was that things are trivial when your back is against the wall. What Shannon loves about the Catholic faith are the homilies, the Mass and being in the moment and praying the rosary. She believes that praying the rosary helped to heal her from cancer and strengthened her faith in God. Surviving cancer continues to give her the greatest blessing of being a Mom. She feels that all children are blessings from God and she is rearing Z in the Catholic faith and teaching him about the goodness of God.

-Tanya Bolen

George, Breonna & Policing:

A Mother's Lament

My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out on the ground because of the destruction of my people...Lamentations 2:11



Under the Wilson L stop in my Uptown neighborhood are the murals of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor with the names of men and women who have been killed by the police.

For the mothers of those men and women, the pain of losing a child to someone who is called

to serve and protect is not only a bitter pill to swallow, but feelings of guilt creep into to their very souls and a renewed sense of outrage and helplessness occurs.

On May 31st 2020, with the pandemic raging, citizens across the world bore witness to a police officer kneeling on the neck of George Floyd for almost 9 minutes. In some ways George's death was the straw that broke the camel's back. A few months before we heard of the botched raid that killed Breonna Taylor and of the murder of Ahmad Aubrey who was jogging in the wrong neighborhood. During George's fateful encounter, video showed George crying out "Momma! Momma! I'm through". In an article for National Geographic, Lonnae O'Neal, called George's cries for his mother who died two years before a "sacred invocation; a prayer to his mother." For mothers, aunts, grandmothers and sisters the cries and prayers of a dying George were heard deep within their own hearts. It was a feeling of helplessness when the very strength of a mother's love was not enough to save this child of God from the injustices of the world.



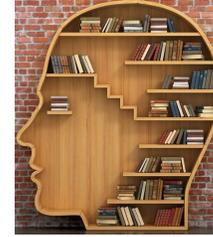
Mothers have given their sons and daughters "The Talk" when being confronted with police. "Don't wear your hood. Don't put your hands in your pocket. If you get stopped, don't run. Put your hands up. Don't make a lot of moves. Speak calmly and respectfully." The point of

course is to make sure that they make it home safe and unharmed. A mother knows that their beautiful Black child may be seen as a menace to society, a threat to law and order, or a violent criminal in this society, without uttering a single word. It has become a sad rite of passage for mothers to prepare their children for a world that sees their very color as a threat and a constant prayer that they come back alive and unharmed.

For those children who are who are traumatized by the experience with the police or are unlucky enough to make it back in the warmth of their mother's arms, mothers are called from deep within their very being to make sense out of what has happened to the flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone. They are then embolden to speak out and protect their children or ensure it doesn't happen to another child. We must also be willing to speak out against the injustices that we see within our laws and work together to make sure that those who are called to serve and protect, protect us all equally and without prejudice, so mothers can stop burying their children at the hands of the police. As the title of a book by Dr. King asks *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, only we can answer that question for ourselves and our children.

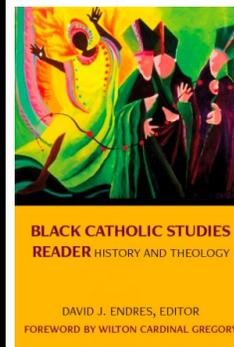
-Tina L Carter

Literary Corner



Black Catholic Studies Reader: History and Theology

Edited by: David J Endries

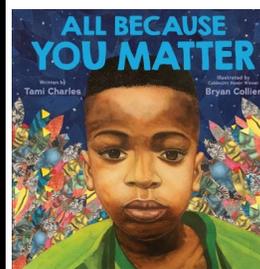


This first ever Black Catholic Studies Reader is a collection of essays that highlight the history and theology of the Black Catholic experience. Featured in the reader are Black Catholic scholars displaying the progression of Black Catholic thought. The essays featured brings together selections from theologians and activists of the past including Thea Bowman, Cyprian Davis and Clarence Davis as well as current scholars such as M. Shawn Copeland, Diana Hayes, Bryan Massingale and C. Vanessa White. These essays contribute to the ongoing conversation on culture, race and racial justice in the United States.

This book is a must read for anyone with little personal knowledge or experience with the African American religious heritage. It is a valuable tool and tremendous resource for Black Catholics and it illuminates what it means to be Black and Catholic in the United States.

-Tanya Bolen

All Because You Matter by Tami Charles



Written in 2020, this wonderful love letter to children of color by author Tami Charles relates the joys, pride and fears she had when her son came into the world. The quiet lyrical prose reminds children that they mattered long they were born: "Long before you took your place in this world, you were dreamed of, like a knapsack full of wishes, carried on the backs of your ancestors as they created empires, pyramids, legacies." Tami addresses snickers her child may receive about his name to having "The Talk" with her ever growing son. The rich illustrations by award winning artist Bryan Collier are a feast for the eyes of both young and old. This is a must share for families struggling for the right words to have with their children about being a child of promise, a child of color in America.

-Tina L Carter

Habari gani

What's the News?

St. Benedict the African Church

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLEWOOD

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hush harbor was a place where the enslaved Africans would gather in secret to practice religious traditions.

MEETING ID: 89415895742

PASSCODE: 636489



St. Moses the Black Parish

331 E. 71st Street

Chicago, IL 60619

773.224.1022

stmosesparish.org



Men's Bible Study

Every Saturday beginning

February 5, 2022

7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Join our men's bible study every Saturday at 7:30am. This is a place where anyone can come and

find friends, conversation and God. Bible study meets in the church.



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STMARYEVANSTONBC@GMAIL.COM
FOR THE ZOOM LINK AND ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION



ST. MOSES THE BLACK PARISH

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

The first Friday of every month at 6:30pm

"O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker!" Psalm 95:6

331 E 71st Street
Chicago, IL 60619
(773) 224-1022
www.stmosesparish.org

It's
time to
press
play.

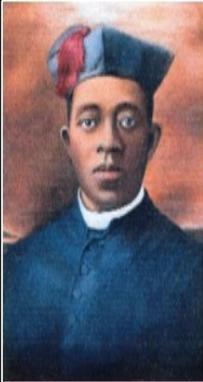


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Troop meets every 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month in Wilson Hall at Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy beginning at 10:00AM to 12PM

Habari gani

What's the News?



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



Our Lady Of Africa/Tolton Site
4058 S Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL 60653
(773) 268-1518

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Fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and non-perishable groceries.

Info for Thursday food pantry...
Every Thursday
@10:00AM-12:00PM

Meats and non-perishable food

*You can only receive once a month, identification is required and no boundaries

4058 S Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL 60653

Info for Saturday food pantry...
Every fourth Saturday
@10:00AM-12:00PM

Fresh fruits, vegetables, and non-perishable groceries.

44 E 41st
Chicago, IL 60653

The Faith Community of Saint Sabina

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY

SUNDAY
JUNE 19
@10AM

GUEST SPEAKER
**MARC
LAMONT
HILL**



Rev. Michael Pflieger, Senior Pastor
Rev. Thulani Magwaza, Pastor
1210 West 78th Place, Chicago, IL 60620
773-483-4300

**Teach us to comprehend how few our days
are so that our hearts may be filled with
wisdom.**

**Return, O Lord. How long must we wait?
Show compassion to your servants.**

**Fill us with your kindness in the morning
so that we may exult and be glad all our days.**

**Grant us joy for as many days as you have
afflicted us and for as many years as we have
known misfortune.**

**Manifest your works to your servants
and your glory to their children.**

**May the favor of the Lord, our God, rest upon us.
And may the work of our hands prosper—
indeed, may the work of our hands prosper.**

Psalm 90:12-17 (NCB)

Prayer for Mother's Day

Father God,

On this glorious Mother's day, we call upon your blessed name to bless the crown of every Mother, Grandmother, Sister, Aunt, Cousin, and friend; who with strong arms and welcoming hearts, all devoted their lives to protecting, nurturing, loving, caring and effortlessly raising their children.

We thank you Father, and are forever grateful for the support of our mothers, and their ability to always keep us encouraged,
for our Mothers unwavering support, and strength to guide us through any obstacle,
for our Mothers strong prayers, and unshakeable Faith that protects us and keeps us close to the bosom of the Lord,
and for our Mothers unconditional love, a love that's strong enough to endure for a lifetime.

Father we pray that you bless our mothers,
protect our mothers, comfort our mothers, dry the tears of our mothers,
and heal our mothers.

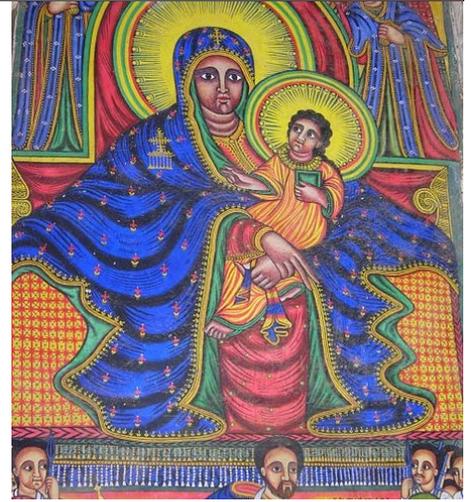
Lord we love our mothers,

For a mothers job is often overlooked, yet never done.

In Jesus's heavenly name we pray,

Amen.

-Shannon Ambroise



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

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.
- **Shannon Ambroise** MAPS, is a Tolton Alum, facilitator of St. Mary Evanston Black Catholics and member of St. Mary Parish, Evanston, IL.
- **Tanya Bolen** is a Tolton Scholar and part-time student at Catholic Theological Union pursuing a Masters of Arts in Pastoral Studies. She serves and worships at St. Moses the Black Parish as a Eucharistic Minister, Hospitality, and the Women's Guild.
- **Tina L Carter**, M.Div.; MLIS, is a public librarian, graduate of Catholic Theological Union and Tolton Alum. She is a parishioner, catechist and serves on the technology ministry at Our Lady of Africa Parish in Bronzeville.
- **Stephanie Garrison** is a retired teacher, Tolton Scholar currently seeking a Masters in Pastoral Studies at CTU Seminary, attends St. Moses the Black Parish, serve in the ministries of Lector, Catechism and RCIA.
- **Gardis Watts** is a Tolton Scholar and part time seminary student at Catholic Theological Union pursuing a Master in Divinity. Current member of Holy Name of Mary Parish.
- **Latrece Winfield** is a part-time student (Augustus Tolton Scholar, M.A P.S. program) and a part-time library assistant at Catholic Theological Union; church affiliation- St. Benedict the African Church, ministers as a commentator and proclaimer.

This is a publication of the Chicago Black Catholic Alliance!

