

NOTRE DAME PARISH

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

"If one of my followers sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you."



Disputes are probably the most uncomfortable of social situations. Whether private or public, disputes can define a person's style: confrontation or avoidance, blunt honesty or face-saving lies, "fight for the right" or "peace at all cost." Grace under this kind of fire can be

impossible at times.

When others hurt you, do you confront them, reconcile with them, or just ignore them? How do we address disputes in a way that encourages both mutual respect and justice?

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 5 @ 8AM

Joan & Mike King

Saturday, September 5 @ 4PM

Alan Kalk

Thomas Doody

Sunday, September 6 @ 9:30AM

Kathryn Neary

Monday, September 7 @ 8AM

Eileen Zrenner

Tuesday, September 8 @ 8AM

Mary & Robert Carmody

Wednesday, September 9 @ 8:30AM

Nancy Henry

Thursday, September 10 @ 8:30AM

Hedwig Macudzinski

Friday, September 11 @ 8AM

Joe Meel

Saturday, September 13 @ 4PM

Tom, Florence, & young Tom Gately

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For victims of the massive unemployment created by COVID-19
- For those burdened by oppressive or meaningless work
- For recently deceased parishioner, Glen McGeady and his mourning family
- For the sick and their caregivers
- John & Mary Kay Swanson, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary
- For racial harmony and dialogue
- For the rebuilding of Lebanon and its democratic institutions
- For Caden Ernest Bar to be baptized this weekend

Nostra Culpa – Through *Our* Fault

In light of recent racial tensions, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Feast of Saint Peter Claver this week, I've devoted much of this newsletter to the history of the Church in relation to African Americans, and especially African-American Catholics. This history has been notably absent from the Catholic school curriculum. I was happy to read that the Archdioceses of Chicago and New Orleans are encouraging their schools to put new emphasis on racial justice and Black Catholic History, and that the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) is forming an advisory committee to study how this initiative could be launched in Catholic schools nationwide.

Whether it is American history or Church history, textbook writers tend to accent the positive and omit or downplay the negative. For example, Native Americans, their struggles, their treaties and government betrayals are dwarfed by the treatment of the Revolution, Manifest Destiny, and the triumph of democracy in the USA. Catholic schools have failed to include the history of Black Catholics, from the centuries-old Catholic faith of the Congo, to slavery in the British colonies and in Haiti, to plantations in Catholic Maryland, Kentucky, Louisiana, and elsewhere.

Who among us has heard of the Stono Rebellion in North Carolina (1739)? Promised freedom and land near Saint



Augustine, Florida by the Spanish, Congolese Catholic slaves rose up against their British slaveholders. Thirty-five to fifty African slaves were killed.

White Catholics need to be educated honestly about our ancestors' historical role, racial prejudices, and racial fears, as well

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September 9: Saint Peter Claver (1580 – 1654), Apostle to Slaves



"I wish to be a slave to slaves forever."

Saint Peter Claver was born in Spain. He entered the Jesuits in 1602, and was sent eight years later to Cartagena (present-day Colombia). Ordained in 1616, he witnessed the miserable condition of enslaved people aboard ships and in the pens of Cartagena, South America's chief slave market.

Accompanied by interpreters and carrying food and medicines, he boarded every incoming ship and visited the pens, where he nursed the sick, comforted the distraught and terrified captives, and taught the faith. He also visited slaves on the local plantations to encourage their faith and to exhort their masters to treat them humanely; during these visits he often refused the hospitality of the plantation owners and instead stayed in the slave quarters. He died September 4, 1654. He was canonized in 1896 by Pope Leo XIII. +



This article, by Katie Scott, is excerpted from *The Sentinel*, the Catholic paper of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, July 30, 2020

Untaught Black Catholic History

In the mid-1970s, Mary Elizabeth Harper was eager to join the cheerleading squad at her all-girls Catholic academy in an Illinois town. When the team captain excluded her from tryouts with no clear explanation, the young Mary Elizabeth went to the principal.

"Your being on the team won't look right," Harper recalled the nun telling her. "After I pushed her for what that meant, it became clear the issue was my race." The athletes and cheer teams were all white.

"It stabbed me in the heart," said Harper, now in her 60s and a member of Resurrection Parish in Tualatin.

Alaina Hardy, 20, grew up attending Immaculate Heart Parish in North Portland and Catholic schools in the Portland area. In 2016, when she was in high school, classmates compared her to a monkey.

"They thought it was OK because it was disguised as a joke," said Hardy.

Two years ago, Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers was a speaker at a Catholic youth conference in Chicago. The 54-year-old African American is co-host of a national EWTN radio program and a permanent

deacon at Immaculate Heart. Wearing a suit and tie, Deacon Burke-Sivers stepped onto the elevator at the conference site and smiled at a woman who was a fellow rider. She backed into the corner and clutched her purse.

"I turned around and got off," said the deacon.

Such painful experiences are echoed by generations of Black Catholics in Oregon and across the country. Some individuals have a handful of stories, others an extensive list. Each story is part of a long history of racism in the wider culture and the church.

As demonstrations and conversations remain impassioned in the wake of George Floyd's death in May, it's all the more urgent "to have an honest look at history and the Catholic Church's past," said Gloria Purvis, a Washington, D.C.-based pro-life advocate, vocal proponent of the Black Lives Matter movement and fellow radio show host with Deacon Burke-Sivers. "In many ways," Purvis said, it's a miracle that there are Black Catholics."

Black Catholics have been in the Americas for as long as Catholics have been in the Americas, said

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Matthew Cressler, professor of religious studies at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. Arriving in the 15th and 16th centuries, some were free but many were enslaved.

"There's a multicentury history of Catholics engaged in enslavement converting and baptizing Blacks," Cressler said.

Among the Black Catholics who practiced their faith prior to enslavement were those from present-day Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 1441, an African king was baptized Catholic and converted the inhabitants of his kingdom.

The largest slave uprising in the Colonies prior to the American Revolution was led by a group of Congolese Catholics, who in 1739 timed their attempt for freedom with the feast of the Nativity of Mary. Most were killed.

Not only Catholic families but also religious orders and priests owned slaves.

Shannen Dee Williams, a history professor at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, writes in a 2019 *America* magazine article that the Oblate Sisters of Providence – the United States' first successful order of Black nuns – was the only non-slaveholding U.S. order of sisters known to have educated enslaved people.

"If the U.S. church seeks to remedy the ills of its own participation in over 400 years of chattel slavery and segregation, it must start by always telling an honest history of American Catholicism – one that includes rampant racism and exclusion, but also the insurmountable faith, hope, love and charity of people who fought (and continue to fight) to make the church truly Catholic," Williams said in an essay published on the U.S. bishops' website.

Until the 20th century, the majority of African Americans were living in the South as slave laborers and then as indebted farmers. Between 1915 and 1970, however, came the Great Migration, a period when African Americans fled the South's Jim Crow laws and lynchings, and moved into cities in the North, Midwest and West. "They were refugees in a sense," said Cressler. Some were Catholic but most of the migrants were evangelicals.

Predominately white Catholic neighborhoods in large cities, including Chicago and Detroit, thus saw an influx of Black, mostly non-Catholic families. The relocated African Americans faced fierce resistance from Catholics who didn't want them as neighbors.

"But an exceptional few sisters and priests who served as missionaries to the Black migrants hoped to

repopulate churches and schools with African American converts," Cressler said. The result was a period of unparalleled growth, with a 200% increase in the number of Black Catholics between 1940 and 1975.

In the years after the Great Migration ended, the number of Black Catholics leveled off. According to statistics compiled by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, there currently are about 3 million African American Catholics, roughly 4% of the country's 72 million Catholics.

Cressler said that in the late 1950s and '60s, white Catholics across the country were on the frontlines of resistance to the civil rights movement and the desegregation of institutions.

"For obvious reasons those who write the history of the Catholic Church include exceptions to the rule, but Catholics engaged in civil rights activism were really the minority," he said.

When individual archbishops endorsed efforts by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., many white Catholics wrote angry letters saying how disgusted they were. There were Catholics who grabbed Confederate flags as they shouted down and at times assaulted civil rights marchers – some of them priests and nuns.

Other Catholics viewed such overt racism as uncouth, "but nevertheless invested in lily-white suburbs while divesting from black and brown communities," Cressler said.

When in 1963 King scribbled a letter on newspaper margins in a cell in Birmingham, Alabama, he was responding to a letter from eight white clergymen – a Catholic prelate, Bishop Joseph Aloisius Durick, among them – who wanted the civil rights movement to abandon demonstrations and urged caution and negotiations.

King wrote that he was disappointed with white moderates who "see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist."

Its contents, exhibiting King's righteous fury and brilliant intellect, in fact helped transform Bishop Durick's views. He became a civil rights crusader who gave a eulogy during a memorial service for King at Memphis City Hall.

In the aftermath of King's assassination were uprisings in more than 100 cities. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, a white Catholic, authorized the police to "shoot to kill" arsonists and "shoot to maim" looters.

The Black Power movement of the 1960s and '70s inspired Black Catholics to confront racism within the church, and the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) fueled

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unprecedented liturgical innovations that integrated African religious practices with Catholic worship. Gospel music began to flourish for the first time in some Catholic churches.

A generation of Black activist-scholars questioned assumptions that white ways of being Catholic were the proper ways.

In 1979 the U.S. Catholic bishops issued their first pastoral letter on racism, entitled *"Brothers and Sisters to Us."* They noted the progress made in the culture and the church, much of it due to Black activism, but said it was insufficient.

"We do not deny that the ugly external features of racism which marred our society have in part been eliminated. But neither can it be denied that too often what has happened has only been a covering over, not a fundamental change."

Ten years later, at the U.S. bishops' annual meeting, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Sister Thea Bowman, an African American, repeated some of the conclusions of the pastoral letter, offering a rousing, incisive address on the state of Blacks.

"Surviving our history physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, spiritually, faithfully and joyfully, our people developed a culture that was African and American, that was formed and enriched by all that we experienced," said Sister Thea, whose life is being examined for sainthood. "And despite all of this, despite the civil rights movement of the '60s and the socio-educational gains of the '70s, Blacks ... are still trying to find home in the homeland and home in the church." +



The Servant of God, Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA, (1937 – 1990), on the path to canonization as a saint.

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as our need to acknowledge the subtle, subconscious, indifferent, or deliberate behaviors that mark relationship to African-Americans.

The archivist at Saint Meinrad, where I attended seminary and lived as a Benedictine monk for thirty years, told me that during the Civil War, the monks (who had arrived in 1854) were sympathetic to the Confederacy. They had come from Switzerland and Germany where aristocracy was baked-in.

In 1946, a black Catholic boy from Louisville, Kentucky proclaimed a vocation to the priesthood, encouraged by his pastor and a teaching nun. Archbishop Floersh rejected his application; the Louisville seminary excluded Blacks in the priesthood. But word arrived that Saint Meinrad had begun to take Black students into their high school seminary program. During his time at St. Meinrad, Randy Hardin decided to become a monk and was given the name of Boniface.

He served as assistant treasurer and completed studies in Business at Notre Dame University. But sent out for weekend assistance at the Catholic churches of the region, particularly Jasper, Indiana, he was confronted with hatred, so that the abbot no longer sent him out. Later, he was sent to serve at Holy Angels, an African-American parish in Indianapolis. After riling Archbishop Schulte for his activism, he became the founder of Martin University in Indy, "a biracial and ecumenical effort to overcome injustice and hostility between black and whites in that city." He died a priest and monk in 2012, and is buried in the abbey cemetery at Saint Meinrad.

At another time I will write about another African-American monk of Saint Meinrad, Father Cyprian Davis, who also became a notable person in the American Church.

It still pains me, however, that so many Catholics are so skilled at separating their faith and the teachings of Jesus and the Church from their daily actions, opinions, and politics.

Father Keith & Rocco

P.S. This Wednesday, the feast of Saint Peter Claver, has been designated as a day of prayer to end racism by Bishop McClory and the USCCB.



Be kind to one another... FROM EPHESIANS 4:32