

# 2017 AD

## Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Parish

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Reverend Monsignor Charles Pope, Pastor

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Parish's African-American History Commemoration

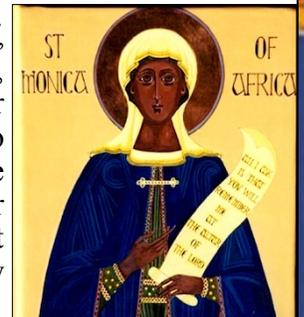
## BLACKS MOMENTS in CATHOLIC HISTORY

*(A Four-Week Historical Perspective)*

**Introduction for this series:** Some people have criticized Christianity as a “white man’s religion and referred to the Roman Catholic Church as a “white” church. These myths and misconceptions are not accurate. In fact, Blacks in Catholic Christianity have a long and vibrant history and we will list some of those facts here weekly during the month of February. *(All information was compiled from websites of the Archdioceses of Washington, Baltimore, Chicago & Newark, the Diocese of Raleigh, the NBCC Newsletter and the books: African Saints by Frederick Quinn, The Saints Go Marching In by Robert Fulton Holtzclaw, Blacks Who Died for Jesus by Mark Hyman and The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930 by Louise Daniel Hutchinson).*

**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that among the 265 popes of the Catholic Church, between St. Peter and the current pope Francis, are three popes known to be of African descent? St. Victor the First was a deacon when he became the first black and the 14<sup>th</sup> pope in 189 A.D. He established a set date for the yearly celebration of Easter. St. Victor died a martyr for the faith in 199. St. Melchiades (mel-KY-uh-des) reigned as the Church’s second black and 32<sup>nd</sup> pope, from 311 to 314. He signed the Emperor Constantine’s laws that ended persecutions and made Christianity the established religion of the Roman Empire. St. Gelasius the First, was the Church’s third black and 49<sup>th</sup> pope from 492 to 496. He was known then for saving Rome from famine, composing a book of hymns, and clarifying Church teaching on the Eucharist.

**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that perhaps no mother, other than the Virgin Mary herself, is considered to have had as much influence on the early Catholic Christian Church, as St. Monica of Tagaste, Africa? Why so? Because St. Monica spent most of her lifetime praying for the Christian conversion of a wayward and worldly son, who eventually became one of the Church’s greatest theologians, St. Augustine. Some observers considered her an interfering, in-your-face kind of mom. Others saw her as a shrewd woman of faith and spiritual anchor for a son whose talents she felt belonged to the Church. A crowning moment for St. Monica was when she saw Augustine finally baptized in the Church. She died in the year 387.



**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that the only saint, of African origin, in the Western Hemisphere to date, is St. Martin de Porres of Lima, Peru? Born in 1579, as the unwanted son of a Spanish knight and a freed African slave woman. St. Martin showed signs of the virtues of modesty, humility and charity for the poor, early in his life. As a Dominican Brother, St. Martin founded an orphanage and a hospital. He also ministered to hundreds of unhappy people from Africa, who were forced into slavery in the new western world. St. Martin is recognized in the Church as both the Patron saint of Peru and of the poor. His feast day is celebrated November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that the founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family, based in New Orleans, Louisiana, is among three African American candidates for sainthood in the Catholic Church? Mother Henriette Delille (duh-LEEL) was born in 1812 as a “free person of color”. At the tender age of 17, she and two companions began to evangelize the large slave and free-people of-color populations in New Orleans. Their efforts led to the formation of the nation’s second religious order for women of color in 1842. Its mission: to care for the aged; to instruct the unlearned; and to care for the poor.

