

2017 AD

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Parish

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

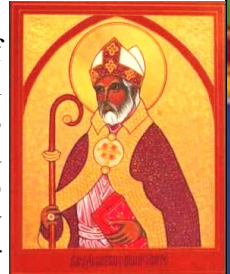
MOMENTS in BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY

(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 the New Testament of the Bible speaks of “Simon from Cyrene”, which is located in Africa, carrying the cross of Jesus, in the Gospel according to Luke? And did you know that in the Book of Acts, Apostle and Deacon, Phillip, helped convert an official from the African kingdom of Ethiopia to follow Jesus, even before the conversion of St. Paul? Some scholars say this event marked the very moment when the Church changed from a primarily Hebrew and Greek community to the truly universal and catholic Church.

DID YOU KNOW...? ...that the patron saint of southern Germany and parts of France, Spain, Italy and Switzerland, is a man of African origin? He is Saint Maurice of Aganaum, born less than 250 years after Jesus Christ. He became a general in the Roman army, stationed in what is now France. St. Maurice and his six thousand African soldiers were ordered to put down a rebellion against the empire. When St. Maurice discovered they all were Christians, he and his men refused to fight their fellow Christians. They also refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. For this, the emperor had St. Maurice and nearly all of his Theban Legion executed. A basilica in Aganaum, Switzerland enshrines their relic remains today.



DID YOU KNOW...? ...that two young African Christian women and three companions were thrown to wild animals and killed for their faith, at Carthage in the year 203? St. Perpetua, a new mother, and her pregnant maid-servant, St. Felicity, were first arrested during the Roman persecution of Christians. Both women had to leave their families because they refused to worship Roman gods. St. Perpetua’s account of their harsh treatment in prison is considered one of the earliest and most dramatic documents of Christian martyrdom. St. Felicity gave birth to a daughter just three days before she and St. Perpetua were ultimately beheaded for their faith.



DID YOU KNOW...? ...that the first African woman to be canonized as a saint by the Church in this 21st century, lived her entire childhood as a slave? When just a little girl, St. Josephine Bakhita (Bah-KEE-tah), was kidnapped from her loving family in the Sudan, and sold into brutal slavery. Her different “owners” frequently beat and tortured her. Finally, when she was sold to an Italian diplomat, at age 14, St. Josephine Bakhita received Christian instruction for the first time from the Sisters of Charity in Venice, Italy. Later, when the diplomat’s family returned to Africa, St. Josephine Bakhita refused to go with them. She remained within the protection of the Sisters’ convent in Italy, where slavery was illegal. St. Josephine Bakhita eventually joined this religious order. For the next 50 years, she joyfully and faithfully served as the convent’s cook, seamstress, sacristan, and doorkeeper until her death in 1947.

