

2019 AD

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Parish

1357 East Capitol Street, Southeast  
Washington, District of Columbia 20003  
202.546.1885— www.hcscchurch.org  
Reverend Monsignor Charles Pope, Pastor

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Parish's African-American History Commemoration  
**BLACKS MOMENTS in CATHOLIC HISTORY**

**Introduction:** 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. On our bulletin cover this week is a very small list of some of these facts. *(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 first African-American priest ever ordained in the United States, was born and raised in nearby Baltimore, MD, 150 years ago? **Charles Randolph Uncles** was the son of a B&O Railroad worker and a dressmaker mother. Father Uncles was an extremely bright student in high school and college. He broke the color barrier in Baltimore’s St. Mary’s Seminary, at a time when segregation within and outside the Catholic Church was the norm. Father Uncles’ ultimate achievement in 1891 made headlines around the country, including those of the New York Times newspaper. Two years after his famous ordination, Father Uncles became one of the founders of the St. Joseph Society of the Sacred Heart. More commonly known as the **Josephites**, this order’s mission is to evangelize African Americans, mostly in the United States.

**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that the **Oblate Sisters of Providence** in Baltimore, is the first and oldest religious congregation for women of color in the United States? Haitian immigrant and educator, **Mother Mary Lange**, and three companions founded this order in 1829, when Maryland was still a slave state. Under great risk, these religious women dedicated themselves to serving orphans and educating black children. Also around that time, Mother Lange founded Baltimore’s historic St. Francis Academy. It continues to thrive today as a co-ed high school that educates mainly inner city African American and Hispanic youth. The Oblate Sisters also served at Saint Cyprian School here in DC. Mother Lange’s candidacy for sainthood began in 1990.



**DID YOU KNOW...?** ...that a canonized saint who described herself as “the mother and servant of the Indian and Negro races” helped found Holy Redeemer Parish and School in DC? In 1858, **Saint Katherine Drexel** was born into great wealth in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As she grew up, Saint Katherine’s parents taught her that their money was meant to be shared with others. Saint Katherine took this to heart throughout her long life, especially in service to suffering Native and African Americans. She gave more than 21 million dollars of her own money to help found dozens of churches, schools and hospitals across the United States. Besides founding her own religious congregation of the **Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament**, Saint Katherine also established Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana. It’s the only Catholic African American College in the country. Saint Katherine Drexel died in 1955 and was canonized a saint in the year 2000.

