



Never Tire of Turning to God

EARN THE PROMISES OF CHRIST



If we are paying attention at Mass this weekend, it is going to be one of those Sundays when we sit in the pews and think, “Oh boy! It feels like the readings were really speaking specifically to me today!”

While your childhood (or RCIA) teacher would be saying, “Of course! The entire Bible is speaking to you.” That’s absolutely true, but let’s admit these readings pack a big punch!

We can own up to the fact we can be a lot like Job. We need to be reminded by the Psalmists of our awesome God. We definitely need to act on St. Paul’s word on us how to live, and we need to put ourselves in the scene St. Mark is describing in order to do more than listen to the words, but to see the miracles happening. Further, consider how we would feel witnessing these healings and then accepting Christ’s decision to move on to the next town.

The readings are real, relatable, and should leave you with the reassured feeling that “God knows! Bad things happen to good people. I need to trust in Christ, strengthen my faith, and not only want to be healed, but also take responsibility to heal the spirit of others - evangelize and share His mercy. Decide to be patient, reverent, and EARN the promises of Christ!”

Like Job (First Reading Job 7:1-4, 6-7) we can find ourselves miserable, overwhelmed, restless, and hopeless. Tossing and turning through the night, letting worry take over his thoughts.

The entire Book of Job is pretty dramatic, and theologians have different interpretations, but we can clearly see Job chooses to go right to God with his complaints, confusion,

and demands. By the end of the Book of Job, the Lord speaks to him, and Job is content and at peace. The Book of Job challenges us to come to our own understanding, take some accountability, don’t give up on God, and even though we may be burdened by hopeless days and troubled nights, God will gently guide us out of misery to peace.

The message of the Psalmists we hear in the responsorial Psalm (Psalm 147), “Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted,” emphasizes the mighty power of the Lord, who knows us, like the stars, by name.

Saint Paul speaks (1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23) of his duty and desire to preach the Word of God to all people with confidence, humility, and unfailing energy. We too need to go out of our comfort zone to evangelize, introduce Jesus to those who do not really know Him, and live the lessons of the gospel with them through word and deed. Then like St. Paul we too “may have a share” in the promises of Christ. Earned!

In the Gospel for today Mark describes the moments after Jesus cured Simon’s mother-in-law. When the word got out, Jesus healed many of diseases and demons from the people of the town that gathered outside the woman’s home. The next morning before others woke up, Christ went out to pray. When the apostles found him, they told him that many more were coming to be healed. Christ announced the decision to move on to the next town. Let’s stop and put ourselves in this scene and be compassionate. Christ dwelt among us! He was human flesh. We can only imagine His prayer, struggling to want to free all from their diseases and

continue...

torment for all to see, but He knew His ministry and through prayer concluded he must move on from the town to help elsewhere.

In the face of our great setbacks, ailments, and torment turn to Christ Jesus. Have faith in His love, mercy, and great healing. Pray that as the Church we proclaim the Word of God in what we say and do so we may drive out the demons of hatred, apathy, and cynicism.

Let us picture in our mind's eye Christ holding our hand

at our baptism and every time we reverently cry out to Him, so that we will be raised us up to new life - renewed to bring His healing touch to all suffering from harsh setbacks of body, mind, or spirit.

“Thanks be to God!”

Editor's note: The graphic along with this reflection includes a painting by Kolby Larsen of Kolby Kreations and is part of his original artworks available at WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/KOLBYKREATIONS

FOLLOW UP SYNOD SESSIONS PLANNED THROUGH LENT

Faithful throughout the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston will have the opportunity to continue on the path of synodality this Lent as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has requested all dioceses conduct follow-up listening sessions to address two specific questions as a local Church:

- Where have I seen or experienced successes—and distresses—within the Church's structure(s)/organization/leadership/life that encourage or hinder the mission?
- How can the structures and organization of the Church help all the baptized to respond to the call to proclaim the Gospel and to live as a community of love and mercy in Christ?



In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston there will be six sessions - one in each vicariate. The sessions will be held Feb. 21 at the Saint John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston, Feb. 22 at St. Leo Church in Inwood, Feb. 27 at St. Francis de Sales Church in Beckley, Feb. 28

at Immaculate Conception Church in Clarksburg, Feb. 29 at St. Francis Xavier Church in Parkersburg, and March 7 at St. Michael Church in Wheeling. All sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. and everyone is encouraged to attend.

More information on the second phase of the Synod on Synodality will soon be released on the diocesan website, the FaithInWV e-bulletin; The Catholic Spirit, diocesan social media; and your parish bulletins.

Pope Francis initiated the Synod in 2021. The initial Diocesan Phase was held in the local Church from October 2021 to June 2022, as an opportunity for the faithful in West Virginia to invite the Spirit of God to work in us, through us, and even despite us.

On June 29, 2022, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston submitted the Final Synthesis Report to the USCCB.

As a recap, the diocese's final report was reflective of the session summaries from 92 parishes. (You can read the

report at: DWC.ORG/SYNOD/)

Seven key themes emerged from the collective response of the faithful:

1. Prioritizing Catechesis, Catholic Education Opportunities and Faith-Based Bible Study
2. Continuing the Transparency, Listening, Dialogue and Synodality within the Church
3. Stimulate more Participation and Growth in the Parish, especially among Minorities, the Young, and Special Needs Persons
4. Divorce, Remarriage and Annulment Barriers to Participation
5. Inclusion of Traditional/Conservative Catholic Views
6. Better Inclusion of Women in the Church
7. Better Inclusion of LGBTQ Persons in the Church

During Lent 2024, we will unite with Pope Francis and pray for Holy Spirit to enlighten all, as we are called together again to discern, listen, and discuss how the Church can grow more fruitful in unity as the two new questions are addressed.

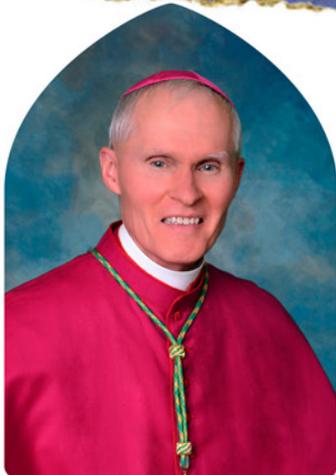
As the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops reminded the faithful at the conclusion of their October session: “Today, in a culture where people struggle against one another for dominance and become obsessed with what is visible, the Church is called to echo the words of Jesus, to bring them to life again in all their potency. ‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use it for?’ Our Lord’s question throws light on the work that now lies ahead of us. It isn’t a matter of dispersing ourselves over several fronts, reducing everything to logic of efficiency and proceduralism. Rather it is a matter of grasping, among the many words and proposals of this Report, what appears as a small seed, yet one that bears the future, and of imagining how to bring it to the soil that will enable it to grow and mature for the benefit of many. ‘How will this happen?’ Mary asked herself in Nazareth.... There is only one answer: remain in the shadow of the Spirit and allow yourself to be enveloped by His Power.

“Let our journey continue. Like a choir - many voices as though expressing one soul.”

Pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress

**INDIANAPOLIS
JULY 17 - 21, 2024**

with Bishop Mark Brennan and
the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston



Participate in this pivotal moment in the Church and draw into a deeper intimacy with our Lord. Join our diocese by registering today! Scan the QR code or click Book Now to attend this historic event.



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NATIONAL Eucharistic Congress

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Double

\$1,619

Single

Travel Insurance

Cancel for any reason ("CFAR") travel protection is highly recommended. See Travel Insured link:

www.travelinsured.com/agency?agency=47907&p=CTS21

A message from Bishop Mark Brennan on the National Eucharistic Congress

"It is going to be invigorating to see the faithful of WV at the National Eucharistic Congress representing their local parishes. I'm happy we are partnering with Corporate Travel, a Catholic company that specializes in Catholic pilgrimages, to ease the travel logistics burden for us."

-Bishop Brennan

Tour Inclusions

- NEC Congress Pass (5 Days)
- Four (4) nights' accommodations in or near Indianapolis
- Continental breakfast daily (pending hotel assignment)
- Roundtrip transportation from West Virginia to Indianapolis via deluxe motorcoach
- Daily transportation from hotel to the Indianapolis Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium
- Gratuities payable to motorcoach drivers

Tour Does Not Include

- Meals and beverages not specifically identified
- Items not specifically mentioned above



3 Step Registration Process

1. Scan the QR Code on the cover of the flyer or click [HERE](#) to access our online registration site.
2. Follow the prompts to enter your personal information, select your rooming configuration, enter payment information, and acknowledge our terms and conditions.
3. Upon completion, you will receive a confirmation email with your diocesan code and a video tutorial providing instructions for finalizing your registration on the official National Eucharistic Congress' website.



Payment Schedule:

\$750 per person deposit due upon registration

Remaining balance due April 17, 2024

All payments are non-refundable. By registering for this tour, you understand and agree to CTS Terms and Conditions and accept our CTS Liability Release. All cancellations must be received in writing.

Travel Insurance: The Archdiocese and CTS strongly encourage passengers to purchase CFAR (Cancel for Any Reason) travel insurance. See Travel Insured link: www.travelinsured.com/agency?agency=47907&p=CTS21

UNIMAGINABLE TERROR LEFT HER NAMELESS GOD'S GRACE FREED THIS RADIANT SAINT

HONOR SAINT JOSEPHINE MARGARET BAKHITA ON HER FEAST DAY FEBRUARY 8TH.

In 1876, Saint Josephine Margaret Bakhita was only seven, when she was captured by Arab slave traders in her Sudan village. She spent 12 years being bought and sold more than a dozen times by Arab and Turkish owners, who put her through excruciating circumstances – cutting, branding, beatings, and mental and moral torture. Being ripped from her loving home coupled with these traumatic experiences made her forget her birth name. Bakhita was the name given to her by her captors. She was traded several times and ended up in Italy, while there she served a kindhearted family and became their nanny. When that family traveled out of the country, they took her to the Canossian Daughters of Charity convent in Venice to care for her in their absence. She learned about God – the creator of all things, including the moon and stars to which she always loved.

When the family returned from one of their trips, St. Josephine did not want to leave. The sisters of the convent came to her aid and petitioned the Italian government to let her remain with the Canossian Sisters.

She was declared a free person, and in 1890, she received her Christian initiation - baptism, first holy communion, and confirmation. It was then she took that name Josephine Margaret Fortunata. (Fortunata is the Latin translation for her Arabic name, Bakhita).

In a Vatican article it is noted, “She was often seen kissing the baptismal font and saying: ‘Here, I became a daughter of God!’”

Saint Josephine became a novice with the religious order three years later and took her final vows in 1896. She was loved and cherished by her sisters, the children who attended the Canossian schools, and all she would speak to when she traveled to other convents to share her story to religious who were to depart to serve in Africa.

Vatican documents note, “Her humility, her simplicity, and her constant smile won the hearts of all the citizens. Her sisters in the community esteemed her for her inalterable sweet nature, her exquisite goodness, and her deep desire to make the Lord known.”

Her feast day marks the International Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking. She is a saint of great mercy and professed forgiveness for her captors saying, “I would

kneel and kiss their hands, for if that had not happened, I would not be a Christian or a religious today.”



Editor's note: The art accompanying this article is by Catholic artist Amy Heyse and is available at: WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/AMYHEYSEART.

The pendant St. Josephine is wearing in this portrait and others is one that the Canossian Sisters wore. It is double-sided with our Lady of Sorrows on the front, and the back side depicts the instruments of Jesus' suffering, as drawn by St. Magdalene of Canossa. It is believed that St. Josephine's medal was like a locket and like the Sisters, would place a written prayer between the images. We can only imagine her prayers. However, this quote from her makes one think her prayers were always for evangelization, “Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who do not know Him.”

Parents, Grandparents, and teachers – go to AMYHEYSE.COM/2023/02/HOW-TO-DRAW-ST-JOSEPHINE-BAKHITA/ for a tutorial for your budding artists on how to draw St. Josephine.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK CATHOLICS STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

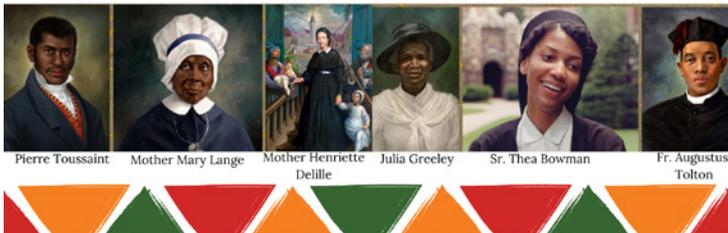
As we nation honor February as Black History Month, we recognize six significant souls of African American descent on the road to sainthood.

They faced the ugliness of racism and were treated less than human by society and even some hierarchy in the Church and Christian organizations. While we can't change our history, we can learn from their lives, become a better people – a better Church, and work and pray for a day hate and evil perish.



Black History Month

Honoring Gifts of Culture & Faith



- Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1776-1853) – taught us the importance of sharing our love of God through our words and actions. Venerable Pierre was born a slave to the Berard family in Haiti around 1766. The family moved to New York with Pierre when he was about 21. After they arrived, Mr. Berard died. Pierre learned how to be a hairdresser, a luxury service at that time for wealthy women. His earnings supported Mrs. Berard. It wasn't until she died about 16 years later that he became a free man. He was proud of his Catholic faith, sharing with all of his customers the beauty of Christ and the Church. His life was a life of charity – helping the sick, caring for the abandoned, and raising money for Mother (later saint) Elizabeth Seton's orphanage. He and his wife Juliette helped open the first Catholic school in New

York for black children, and a religious order of nuns for black women. Pierre also made it a priority to give to the appeal that built the first Cathedral in New York, the original St. Patrick's Cathedral. He was given a seat of honor at the dedication Mass, which was unheard of because of the color of his skin. He was originally buried in the cathedral cemetery, but in 1990 his remains were moved inside the cathedral among the cardinals and archbishops. Read more about him at ARCHNY.ORG

- Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange (birth is estimated circa 1784- died Feb. 3,1882) – founded the first black Catholic school! She organized the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first congregation of African American women religious in the history of the Catholic Church dedicated to black Catholic schools. It is believed she was born into an affluent Catholic family in Cuba. By 1813 she had relocated to Baltimore (a slave state before the Emancipation Proclamation). She used her own money and home to educate black children many of Caribbean descent. Fifteen years later the Church approached her to start a formal Catholic school for girls of color. She said she would, but also wanted to begin a religious order that would be the first congregation of women of African heritage. A year later she and three other black women professed vows as members of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. After the Civil War she opened an orphanage for black destitute children. Read about her life at: WWW.MOTHERLANGE.ORG
- Venerable Henriette Delille (1812 or 1813-1862) – American born in New Orleans, she was raised Catholic by her parents and wanted to be a religious sister. However, she was unable to join any congregation at the time, because of her race. So, she and a group of friends founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, a religious community of African American women. The congregation is still strong today continuing to serve youth, elderly, and the poor and needy.

This blessed woman is described as a humble and devout who “devoted herself untiringly for many years, without reserve, to the religious instruction of the people of New Orleans, principally slaves....”

In her honor, let us humble ourselves, quiet our world, and focus on the prayer she said, “I believe in God, I hope In God. I love. I want to live and die for God.” Read more about her at: WWW.SISTERSOFTHEHOLYFAMILY.COM/HENRIETTE-DELILLE

- Julia Greeley (born sometime between 1833-1848 and died 1918) – honored as a great disciple of the Sacred Heart by the Jesuit fathers of their parish in Colorado. She was called Denver’s Angel of Charity and a guardian of firefighters. Servant of God Julia Greeley was born in Missouri into slavery, but once freed she traveled to Denver Colorado, where she spent the rest of her life showing mercy, love, and charity to others. Read about her inspiring life at: JULIAGREELEY.ORG

- Sr. Thea Bowman (1937-1990) –was the daughter of a Mississippi doctor and a teacher, a granddaughter of slaves. This dynamic lady was proclaimed a “holy woman” in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Two years ago today, her cause for sainthood was approved by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and on June 1, 2018, she was declared a Servant of God.

She was eager to learn from other cultures, but also wanted to share the abundance of her African American culture and spirituality. She was the first non-white member of her congregation (the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration) in an all-white city in Wisconsin. Her friends, both religious and lay, said she had the uncanny gift and energy that brought people together. She was a highly acclaimed evangelizer, teacher, writer, and singer sharing the joy of the Gospel. Despite her debilitating battle with breast cancer, she did not let it stop her from speaking to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1989. She explained what it meant to be African American and Catholic. She enlightened the bishops on African American history and spirituality. She

urged them to continue to evangelize the African American community, to promote inclusivity and full participation of African Americans within Church leadership, and to understand the necessity and value of Catholic schools in the African American community. She seemingly touched the hearts of the bishops as evidenced by their thunderous applause and tears flowing from their eyes, after she brought them together all arm-in-arm to sing “We Shall Overcome.” Read more at: WWW.SISTERTHEABOWMAN.COM

- Father Augustus Tolton (1854-1897) – born a slave, Augustus and his mother escaped through the underground railroad to Quincy, Illinois. He went to the Catholic Church and was educated by priests and nuns. Despite unexpected discrimination and many roadblocks, Augustus Tolton became the first African American Roman Catholic priest in the US. Father Tolton was ordained in Rome and served as pastor of St. Boniface in Quincy, Illinois. He was known as “Good Father Gus,” who had eloquent sermons and a beautiful signing voice. His story, which is beautifully inspiring because of his genuine love of God and God’s people, but is also a poignant reminder of the pathetic but accepted discrimination and a racist taunting that occurred in society and even in the brotherhood of the priesthood and the Church hierarchy. His story is so impressive and illustrates his strong will, courage, and determination to let nothing stop him from serving the Lord. Take time to learn more about him at: TOLTON.ARCHCHICAGO.ORG.

Dear Jesus, as we observe Black History Month, we call upon your saving grace to help ensure that the dignity of all of our brothers and sisters of color is honored, celebrated, and respected in our parishes, communities, schools, and homes.

Help us to not only open our eyes and our hearts as we not only speak unity, but also think and act like you. Amen.



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THESE SAINTLY WOMEN

SAINTS AGATHA & SCHOLASTICA, PRAY FOR US!



ST. AGATHA

On Feb. 5, we honor St. Agatha. She is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass (the longest version of the Eucharistic prayer), recognizing her as a significant martyr in the Church. She was a woman of breathtaking beauty, but rejected all men for she considered herself a bride of Christ. For this she suffered unimaginably - raped, tortured, mutilated, and thrown in jail. However, the Church teaches us she was miraculously healed.

She prayed that God would have mercy on her and as she slept in her prison cell her soul was received in heaven. She died a martyr around the age of 22. Her story teaches us courage, commitment, and perseverance. When we are assaulted, or in the midst of life's worst trials, St. Agatha reminds us to keep our faith for God is always with us and His love will lead us to everlasting joy in heaven.

She is the patron saint of nurses, breast cancer, and rape victims.

Editor's note: the digital portrait is by an unnamed artist from Street Pixel Art in Lithuania and is available on Etsy.

ST. SCHOLASTICA

On Feb. 10th we remember the Memorial of St. Scholastica. She is best known as the twin sister of St. Benedict and lived in Italy around 480 AD. From her we should learn to prioritize God in our lives and honor our family.

There is little known about this saint, but what is commonly recalled was recorded by Pope Gregory the Great. He wrote about a time when St. Scholastica went to visit her brother, and both were talking about their spiritual life. It was time for him to go home to his monastery, but Scholastica pleaded for him to stay and talk longer. Benedict was adamant he had to leave. Much to his dismay Scholastica prayed God would keep her brother there. Then a storm began and "Benedict could not return to his monastery. He was upset with his sister, and she responded that what you would not grant to me, our loving God did."

Editor's note: the portrait of St. Scholastica is by Blair Piras of WWW.BLAIRBARLOWART.COM.





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DIOCESE OF
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FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Job is in miserable. Overwhelmed, restless, and hopeless. The Book of Job depicts his instinct to be pessimistic, difficult, and challenging God. While people try to console him and insist on God's mercy, Job ignores them and continues to wallow in misery in these verses.

Responsorial: Psalm 147

"Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted."

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Saint Paul speaks of his duty and desire to preach the Word of God to all people with confidence, humility, and unfailing energy. He is saying he evangelizes and shares the promises of Christ, not only because he himself believes, but so he too "may have a share in it." Earned!

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

After curing Simon's mother-in-law, Jesus healed many of diseases and demons in the town that gathered outside the woman's home. In the face of our great setbacks turn to Christ Jesus. Have faith in His love, mercy, and great healing.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

BIBLE.USCCB.ORG/BIBLE/READINGS/020424.CFM

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we all live fully alive in the Word of God, drive out the demons of hatred, apathy, and cynicism, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That leaders of all nations work together so basic health care may be available to all, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all discerning their vocation - to the diaconate, single life, married life, consecrated life, and the priesthood - that in whatever the Holy Spirit stirs. In they may consider the rewards of consecrating themselves to God for the sake of the gospel as Saint Paul did, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For the faithful, when we are burdened and face hopeless days and nights like Job, that the Lord gently guide us from despair to peace, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer

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MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.