

Timothy Ryan
Theology 10
Period F
September 9, 2007
Black History Month

Black History Month 2007 (www.dioceseofgrandrapids.org)

- 1. Black History is American history.**
- 2. In 1987, Pope John Paul II held a historic meeting with Black Catholic leaders. What did he encourage them to do? What did he say about their role/relationship with the Church?**
In the meeting between Pope John Paul II and Black Catholic leaders, he encouraged them to share their cultural heritage with the Church. He stressed that the Church needed them as much as they needed the Church, as their involvement makes them part of the Church and helps express the universal nature of our faith.
- 3. What is the official song of the NAACP? What is the song about?**
The official song adopted by the NAACP is "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written by James Johnson in 1900. The song is about the faith that had allowed the African-American population of the United States to persevere through years of persecution and about the hope they had for a future free of said persecution.
- 4. In the Acts of the Apostles, Philip baptizes an Ethiopian eunuch. What type of the work did the Ethiopian do? Where is Ethiopia? What does "Ethiopian" mean?**
In Acts, the Ethiopian eunuch that Philip baptizes works as a court official and treasurer to the Queen of the Ethiopians. Ethiopia is located in Africa, and the term "Ethiopian", which refers to a colored person, is a Greek term which literally means "burnt" or darker-skinned.
- 5. How many black Catholics are there in the United States? How many throughout the world?**
Today, there are between 2.2 and 3.5 million black Catholics in the United States. Throughout the world, there are almost 200 million black Catholics.
- 6. In the U.S. there are ten active and five retired African American Bishops.**
- 7. Who was the first Black Bishop of the United States? When was he appointed a bishop? Where was his diocese?**
The first Black Bishop of the United States was Bishop James Healy, who was appointed bishop of the diocese of Portland, Maine in 1875.
- 8. Who was the first Black priest in the United States? Where was he from? When was he ordained?**
The first Black priest in the United States was Father Augustus Tolton of Illinois, who was ordained in 1886.

9. **Choose two of the saints listed, but one must have worked in the United States. For each provide the following: Name, Contribution, Date of Birth/Death, and Date of Canonization.**

St. Thea Bowman was a Franciscan sister who was an inspirational teacher and preacher at the Institute for Black Catholic Study at Xavier University in New Orleans. She was gifted in her ministry and teaching, often using music to educate, and contributed to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. She was born in 1937 and died on March 30, 1990 from cancer.

Saint Josephine Bakhita was a Canossian sister and former slave. She was kidnapped and sold as a slave at the age of nine, and was treated harshly until she became a nursemaid and Italy and was freed. She was taught by and soon joined the Sisters of Charity, where she lived a life of humility and prayer. Her main contribution was caring for victims and speaking out against injustice during World War I. She was born in 1869 in Sudan, and died in 1947 in Italy. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in October 2000.

10. **Who was Pierre Toussaint? In what stage of the canonization process is he? What does this mean?**

Pierre Toussaint was a former slave who began performing miracles after he was freed. Pope John Paul II declared Toussaint to be "venerable" in 1996, which is the first stage of the process of canonization.

11. **Why did Harriet Thompson write to Pope Pius IX in 1853? What movement began as a result of this?**

Harriet Thompson wrote to Pope Pius IX in 1853 to request that the Catholic Church extend its ministry to black Catholics in New York and to address the issue of racism. The Black Catholic Movement began as a result of her efforts.

12. **What is the documentary "Sister of Selma" about? Where and when did the events of this documentary take place?**

The documentary "Sister of Selma" is about the role of Catholic sisters in the Selma to Montgomery marches. These marches took place in Alabama in 1965 during the civil rights movement, and many of these sisters put themselves in danger to try and further the civil rights cause.

NBCC (www.nbcccongress.org)

1. **What is the purpose of the NBCC? (Look at the Bishops Mission Statement)**

The purpose of the NBCC is to represent African-American Roman Catholics in National Roman Catholic organizations, to evangelize and improve the conditions of African-Americans, and to encourage the participation of African-Americans in order to enrich the church.

2. **Why do you think that Black Catholics have their own Catholic Congress?**

As the Roman Catholic Church is predominantly white, Black Catholics have their own Catholic Congress in order to represent their needs in the church also, where they may unfortunately still feel discrimination or have their needs neglected, being a minority.

3. **Go to *Publications* (on this site) and write a summary of the first black Catholic priest of the United States.**

The first black Catholic priest of the United States, Father Augustine Tolton, was born a slave in 1854. Because of his race, he faced discrimination and was refused at every seminary he applied, eventually going to Rome to be ordained. He became pastor of St. Monica's Church in Chicago and established a center which became the focus of Black Catholic life in Chicago for 30 years.