

The Stations of Color



There is neither Jew nor Greek, there
is neither slave nor free person,
there is not male and female; for you
are all one in Christ Jesus.

(Gal. 3:28)

Pastor's Introduction

We have previously seen an expansion of the Stations from a devotion centered on the Passion and the Cross to other important elements of salvation history. Here at Holy Family Parish in Mitchellville, MD, we annually supplement the *Stations of the Cross* with the *Stations of the Resurrection*, sometimes called the *Via Lucis*. More recently we have added the *Stations of the Nativity* for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This newly proposed devotion arose from an extended reflection upon the images of Black holy men and women depicted for a while in the church and permanently in our Prayer Center. We have chosen to call this devotion the *Stations of Color*.



In the annals of Black history, I am troubled about how Bishop James Augustine Healy (1830-1900) had to conceal his Black roots. This tragedy immediately reminds me of a story told by my dear friend, the late **Auxiliary Bishop Leonard Olivier** of Washington, D.C. (died in 2014). He shared his own biography as a light-skinned Black who was told that he might enter the diocesan seminary if he did not reveal to anyone that he was Black. He adamantly refused and told them that he was not ashamed of who he was. He would eventually join the Divine Word Missionaries, an order that has purportedly always welcomed men of color into their ranks. We should all be inspired by such integrity. It is for this reason that these stations are dedicated to Bishop Oliver.

Rev. Joseph Jenkins

THE PATTERN BETWEEN STATIONS

The number of the station is announced and the name of the saint or holy person is introduced. For example, “The first station – St. Martin de Porres.” The dialogue before the biography is taken from Psalm 89:14.

The presider says:

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne.”

The congregation responds:

“Steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.”

The reader presents the short biography.

After the reading, the congregation recites in unison the prayer that follows.

Between the stations, everyone sings a verse of “We Shall Overcome.” (see at the end of the booklet)

THE SELECTION OF HOLY MEN & WOMEN

The holy men and women listed in this devotion are reflective of the Church around the world but with an emphasis on the United States. Only a few are canonized saints, but many are on the road to declared sainthood. Most are Black or mixed race, but those of European stock are also included— given that striving for justice is an inclusive work for all of God’s children.

While this effort is a compilation from various sources, many thanks for the inspiration and collaboration of Sherry Pollock.

FIRST STATION

St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639) was of Spanish and African descent. He was the first Dominican professed Black brother in 1603. Martin de Porres is called “Father of the Poor” because of his charitable acts and his dedication to prayer. Ministering in Lima, he established an orphanage and hospital for abandoned children and reached out to care for slaves who were taken from Africa and being unloaded in Peru after a miserable journey. He was canonized as a saint in 1962.



Prayer - Most gracious and loving God, help us to understand better the sin of racial injustice. Help us to examine our own biases and prejudices first. We pray for humility and generosity of spirit to recognize that we are all wonderfully made; the differences in skin color, language, and traditions are the artistry of your love. We pray to live as St. Martin de Porres. He challenges us to rise above our ego, and to live the two main principles of your commandments: love of God and love of neighbor. In Jesus' name, we profess the inherent dignity of every person. St. Martin de Porres, pray for us. Amen. (USCCB)

SECOND STATION

St. Peter Claver (1580-1654) was born at Verdu, Catalonia, Spain, in 1580, of impoverished parents descended from ancient and distinguished families. In 1610, he landed at Cartagena (modern Colombia), the principal slave market of the New World, where a thousand slaves were taken every month. After his ordination in 1616, he dedicated himself by special vow to the service of the Black slaves— a work that was to last for thirty-three years. He labored unceasingly for the salvation of the African slaves and the abolition of the slave trade. Through his efforts three hundred thousand souls entered the Church. He died in 1654. He is known for healing leprosy and other ailments. He was canonized on September 1, 1887.



Prayer - O God, who made Saint Peter Claver a slave of slaves and strengthened him with wonderful charity and patience as he came to their help, grant, through his intercession, that, seeking the things of Jesus Christ, we may love our neighbor in deeds and in truth. Amen.
(Roman Missal/USCCB)

THIRD STATION

Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853) was born a slave in Haiti and brought to New York as an apprentice hairstylist. Upon his master's death, he gained freedom and quickly became one of the country's first Black entrepreneurs. He and his wife sheltered orphans, refugees, and others in their home. He founded an orphanage and raised money for the city's first cathedral. During epidemics, he would risk his life to help others by nursing the sick and praying with the dying.



Prayer – O God, inspired by the example of Jesus, Pierre worshipped You with love and served your people with generosity. He attended daily Mass and responded to the practical and spiritual needs of friends and strangers, of the rich and the poor, the sick and the homeless in New York. If it is your will, let him be officially raised to the rank of Saint, so that the world may know and imitate this Haitian New Yorker who refused to hate or be selfish, but instead lived to the full the commandments of heaven and the divine law of love. Amen.

FOURTH STATION

Venerable Mother Mary Lange (1789-1882), a native of the Caribbean, was the foundress and initial Superior General of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first religious congregation of African American women in the U.S. On July 2, 1829, Elizabeth and three other women professed their vows with the goal of educating and evangelizing African Americans. Freed slaves were educated, and a number joined them. They taught children, provided a home for orphans, nursed the dying during an epidemic, sheltered the elderly, and served as domestics at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD.



Prayer - Mother Lange's love for all enabled her to see Christ in each person, and the pain of prejudice and racial hatred never blurred that vision. O God, deign to raise her to the highest honors of the altar in order that, through her intercession, more souls may come to a deeper understanding and a more fervent love of You. Amen.

FIFTH STATION

Venerable Mother Henriette Delille (1813-1862) lived her whole life in New Orleans, Louisiana. Out of a love for Christ, she dedicated her life to helping those in need. She bore many crosses but taught those around her that sanctity can be attained in following the path of Jesus. She said: "I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God." Despite massive resistance to her desire to establish a Black religious congregation, she forged ahead despite the lack of funds and taunts from those who opposed her, including both Church and civil leadership. She made the impossible possible and in 1842 founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. Her obituary read: "For the love of Jesus Christ, she made herself the humble servant of slaves."



Prayer – O good and gracious God, You called Henriette Delille to give herself in service and in love to the slaves and the sick, to the orphan and the aged, to the forgotten and the despised. Grant that inspired by her life, we might be renewed in heart and in mind. If it be your will may she one day be raised to the honor of sainthood. By her prayers, may we live in harmony and peace, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

SIXTH STATION

Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), was the first U.S. Roman Catholic priest publicly known to be Black when ordained in 1886. He was baptized a Catholic while still a slave. Every American seminary refused him so he formally studied and was ordained in Rome on Easter Sunday at the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran. Fr. Tolton completed in 1893 the building of St. Monica Catholic Church in Chicago as a Black “National Parish Church.” His success at ministering to Black Catholics earned him national recognition. “Good Father Gus,” as many called him, was known for his eloquent sermons, his beautiful singing voice, and his talent for playing the accordion.



Prayer - O God, we give You thanks for your servant and priest, Father Augustus Tolton, who labored among us in times of contradiction, times that were both beautiful and paradoxical. His ministry helped lay the foundation for a truly Catholic gathering in faith in our time. We stand in the shadow of his ministry. May his life continue to inspire us and imbue us with that confidence and hope that will forge a new evangelization for the Church we love. Amen.

SEVENTH STATION

St. Charles Lwanga (1860-1886) and the Ugandan martyrs were faith-filled witnesses among the Royal Pages. Charles urged his executioners to repent and to become Christians. As the flames consumed him, he cried out, "My God! My God!" Soon after, the rest of the boys were tortured and killed in the same manner. They died praying aloud the Lord's Prayer. In all, 22 young men and boys were martyred and later declared Catholic saints. Additionally, twenty-three Anglicans were martyred with them. The Martyrs of Uganda were beatified in 1902 and canonized by Pope Paul VI on October 18, 1964.



Prayer - Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions, the flame of faith burned in your hearts, while the flames of your executioners consumed your earthly bodies. The witness you gave through your martyrdom became the spark that ignited faith in Christ in all of Uganda and across Africa. Please pray for us, that we will have the faith that you had so that God can take each suffering and cross we endure and transform it into good. Saint Charles and Companions, pray for us. Jesus, we trust in You. Amen. (MY CATHOLIC LIFE)

EIGHTH STATION

Bishop James Augustine Healy (1830-1900)

served as the Bishop of Portland, Maine from 1875 until his death in 1900. Born into slavery to the Healy family of Georgia, James Healy was the son of a White plantation owner and a mixed-race enslaved woman. He was later freed, educated overseas, and ordained a priest in 1854. Two of his brothers (ten children in all) also became priests— Patrick (first African American Jesuit and president of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.) and Alexander (rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, Mass.). Bishop Healy participated in the historic third Plenary Council of Baltimore from Nov. to Dec. 1884, and was appointed to serve on the Commission for the Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians. Given his predominately European ancestry, he passed for White— setting up a situation of “don’t ask, don’t tell.” That did not stop the rumors.



Prayer – Dear Lord, while Bishop Healy’s life is impressive; it saddens us that he had to conceal his roots in order to get ordained and to serve. Given the scandals of our times, may we be both transparent and honest as a Church. May we be the people we claim to be. Bishop Healy may have refused to join the now defunct Colored Catholic Congress; however, he spoke of the promise given to us as people of faith: “We are of that Church where there is neither barbarian nor Scythian, slave nor freeman, but Christ is all and in all.” Amen.

NINTH STATION

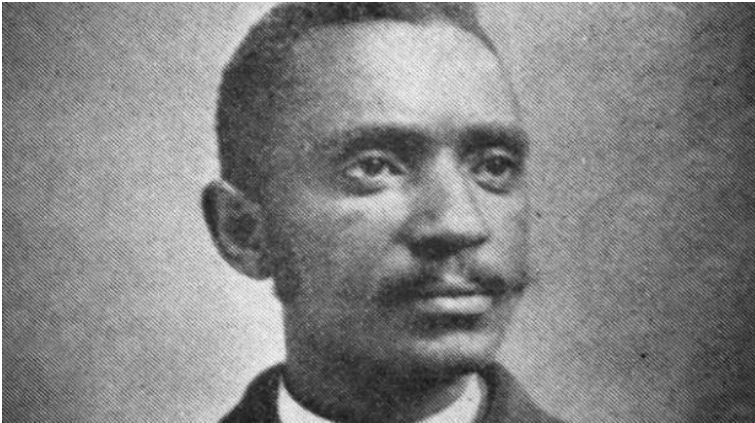
Servant of God Julia Greeley (1833/48-1918), was born into slavery in Hannibal, Missouri. Freed by Missouri's Emancipation Act in 1865, Julia subsequently earned her keep by serving White families in Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico—though mostly in the Denver area. Julia entered the Catholic Church at Sacred Heart Parish in Denver in 1880 and was an outstanding supporter of the parish. The Jesuits who ran the parish considered her the most enthusiastic promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus they had ever seen. A daily communicant, she had a rich devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin and even prayed while working. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order in 1901 and was active till her death in 1918.



Prayer - Heavenly Father, your servant Julia Greeley dedicated her life to honoring the Sacred Heart of your Son, and to the humble service of your children, especially the poor. We ask in the Name of Jesus, whose Sacred Heart filled Julia's heart with love for all she met, that we may follow her example of humility and simplicity in loving You and our neighbor. Amen.

TENTH STATION

Daniel Arthur Rudd (1854-1933) was born into slavery on August 7, 1854, in Bardstown, Kentucky. He was owned by the Haydon family, prominent Catholics. He was priced as a child at \$250. After the Civil War his father died and he moved to Springfield, Ohio, to complete his high school education. Inspired by his egalitarian faith, he believed the Church could be a powerful force in healing the Black community and reshaping a racist society. He became a notable journalist and an early Civil Rights leader. In 1885, he started the first newspaper printed by and for Black Americans. He also established the Colored Catholic Congress (forerunner to the NBCC).



Prayer – Our words of prayer must be joined to works of charity and the pursuit of justice. Arthur argued: “The Black man of this country, abused, downtrodden, and condemned, needs all the forces which may be brought to bear in his behalf to elevate him to that plane of equality. The HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH offers to the oppressed a material as well as a spiritual refuge. We NEED the Church, the Church WANTS us. Investigate brethren!” Lord, give us the grace to spread the word and to make a difference. Amen.

ELEVENTH STATION

St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947) was kidnapped and sold as a slave in Sudan at age 7. She suffered severe beatings and deliberate scarring. A later owner brought her to Italy, where she became a babysitter. Given that slavery was illegal in Italy, a court ruled her free. Becoming a Catholic, she joined the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa religious community. She was canonized in 2000.



Prayer - St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church. Assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free. Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith. Help all survivors find healing from their wounds. We ask for your prayers and intercession for those enslaved among us. Amen. (USCCB)

TWELFTH STATION

St. Katharine Drexel (1858-1955) was an American heiress, philanthropist, religious sister, educator, and foundress. Taking vows in 1891, she is known for her selfless service to the oppressed, surrendering her life and fortune. In 1922 the KKK targeted Mother Katharine and her work. The sisters received a letter that “threatened to tar and feather the White pastor at one of Drexel’s schools and bomb his church in Beaumont, Texas.” The sisters prayed. A few days later, a tornado came and destroyed the KKK headquarters. They were never threatened again.” She constantly affirmed that it is love and joy that attracts people to the truth and ultimately changes hearts. She urged, “Press forward and fear nothing.”



Prayer - Ever loving God, You called Saint Katharine Drexel to teach the message of the Gospel and to bring the life of the Eucharist to the Black and Native American peoples. By her prayers and example, enable us to work for justice among the poor and oppressed. Draw us all into the Eucharistic community of your Church, that we may be one in You. Amen. (USCCB)

THIRTEENTH STATION

Blessed Fr. Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi (1903-1964)

was an Igbo Nigerian priest of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Onitsha. He entered the seminary against the wishes of his parents. As a priest he lived an austere life in comparison to the other clergy. He built his own home using adobe mud brick. He would eat poorer food than what the local people ate. He walked or rode a bicycle for long distances in his work. His lifestyle shocked the Nigerian Catholics, who were not accustomed to this kind of priest. He became extremely popular and loved among the four parishes that he served. He also stood up against the oppression of women within the traditional culture and advised women to fight back against those who would rape or mistreat them. He later became a Trappist monk at Mount Saint Bernard Monastery in England. He had a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Prayer - O God, who granted many graces to your servant Priest and Monk, Cyprian Michael Tansi, choosing him as your faithful instrument for evangelization and sanctification of your people, grant also that we may spend our lives, loving You and our neighbor and serving the Church. Amen.

FOURTEENTH STATION

Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman (1937-1990) was the only child born to middle-aged parents, a physician and teacher. Raised in Canton, Mississippi, as a youth, she converted to Catholicism through the inspiration of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. She would join the Franciscans and as a Black Catholic religious sister, make a name for herself as a teacher, musician, liturgist and scholar. She did much to revitalize Catholic ministry toward African Americans, becoming an evangelist among her people. She died of cancer in 1990.



Prayer - Gracious God imbue us with the grace and perseverance that You gave your servant, Sister Thea. For in turbulent times of racial injustice, she sought equity, peace, and reconciliation. In times of intolerance and ignorance, she brought wisdom, awareness, unity, and charity. In times of pain, sickness, and suffering, she taught us how to live fully until called home to the land of promise. We pray that all may know of her goodness and holiness and may imitate her love for You and your Church. Amen. (DIOCESE OF JACKSON)

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY PRAYER

God of Mercy and God of Love, while celebrating our diversity, we place our African American Families before You today.

May we all be proud of our history and never forget those who paid a great price for our freedom.

Bless us one by one, and keep our hearts and minds fixed on higher ground.

Help us to live for You and not for ourselves and may we cherish and proclaim the gift of life.

Bless our parents, guardians, grandparents, relatives and friends.

Give us the amazing grace to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Help us as your children to live in such a way that the beauty and greatness of authentic love is reflected in all that we say and do.

Give a healing anointing to those who are less fortunate, especially the motherless, the fatherless, the homeless, the broken, the sick and the lonely.

Bless our departed family members and friends. May they be led into the light of your dwelling place, where we will never grow old, where we will share the fullness of redemption and shout the victory for all eternity.

This we ask in the precious name of Jesus, our Savior and Blessed Hope.

Amen.

(Adapted from Fr. James Goode, OFM, Evangelist)

Hymn Between Stations

Stations 1-3

We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome, someday
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, someday

Stations 4-6

We are not afraid
We are not afraid
We are not afraid, today
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, someday

Stations 7-9

We are not alone
We are not alone
We are not alone, today
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, someday

Stations 10-12

We shall live in peace
We shall live in peace
We shall live in peace, someday
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, someday

Stations 13-14

We shall all be free
We shall all be free
We shall all be free, someday
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, someday

Traditional/Public Domain



Laying the cornerstone in 1890, Holy Family Church was built by Black tenant farmers and sharecroppers, many from old slave families. We were charged with the care of Black Catholics for 100 square miles. Her flock suffered the pains of segregation and yet they took solace in their faith.

These stations focus not on our Lord's path to the Cross but on the lives of holy people who have paved our course as Christians to equality and greater racial and ethnic justice.

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