

Our Walk of Faith as Catholics of African Descent

September 6th – History of Saints, Candidates and Disciples of African Descent

September 13th – St. Peter Claver

September 20th – St. Maurice of Thebes

September 27th – Blessed Benedict Daswa

October 4th – St. Ezana of Axum (Ethiopia)

October 11th – St. Kaleb (c. 520), also known as St. Elesbaan,

October 18th – St. Didymus the Blind

October 25th – Blessed Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa

November 1st – St. Martin de Porres

November 8th – Venerable Henriette DeLille

November 15 – Fr. Antonio Vieira

November 22nd – Pope Gelasius

November 29th – St. Ammon the Abbot

December 6th – Blessed Marie-Clementine Anuarite Nengapeta

December 13th – Pope Miltiades

December 20th – Venerable Teresa Chikaba

December 27th – Servant of God Maurice Michel Cardinal Otunga

January 3rd – St. Fulgentius of Ruspe

January 10th – St. Adrian of Canterbury

January 17th – St. Anthony of the Desert

January 24th – St. Apollos

January 31st – Servant of God Bernadete Mbawala

February 7th – Servant of God Mother Mary Lange

February 14th – St. Josephine Bakhita

February 21st – Blessed Fr. Augustus Tolton

February 28th – St. Simon of Cyrene
March 7th – St. Perpetua and Felicity
March 14th – St. Katherine Drexel
March 21st – St. John of Egypt
March 28th – Servant of God Thea Bowman
April 4th – St. Benedict the Moor
April 11th – Blessed Lucien Botvasoa
April 18th – St. Marcellinus
April 25th – St. Mark the Evangelist
May 2nd – Fr. Chester Smith
May 9th – Lucius of Cyrene
May 16th – St. Possidius
May 23rd – Brother Cyprian Davis
May 30th – St. Optatus
June 6th – St. Charles Lwanga
June 13th – Servant of God Julia Greeley
June 20th - Venerable Pierre Toussaint
June 27th – St. Cyril of Alexandria
July 4th – Blessed Raphael Rafiringa
July 11th – Mother Mary Theodore Williams
July 18th – Athanasius of Alexandria
July 25th – Pope Victor I
August 1st – Daniel Rudd
August 8th – St. Isidore Bakanja
August 15th – St. Monica
August 22nd – St. Augustine
August 29th – St. Moses the Black

SEPTEMBER 6TH – HISTORY OF SAINTS, AND DISCIPLES OF AFRICAN DESCENT

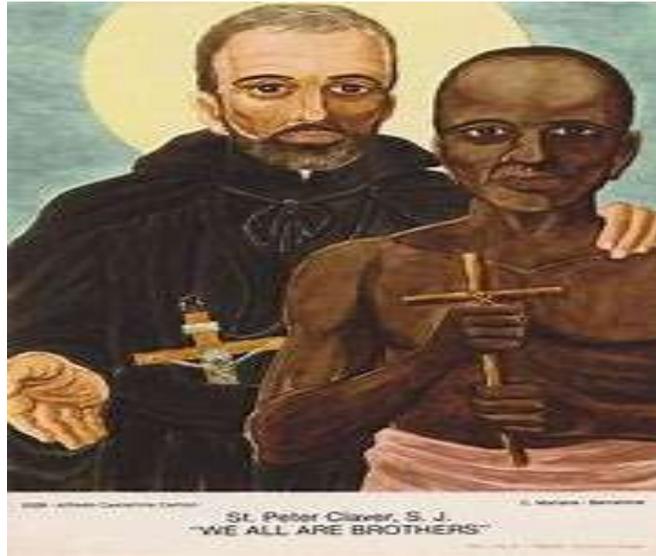
From the beginning the continent of Africa, its countries and people, have long been an integral part of Christianity. A biography of St. Mark the Evangelist states that he was sent to Alexandria, Egypt in 49AD to evangelize Roman Africa. While there, St. Mark became the first Bishop of Alexandria, Primate of Egypt and created the liturgy for the Church in Alexandria which exists today.

The growth, history and traditions of the early church are deeply embedded in the African continent. Three of the early popes, three of the thirty-five Doctors, and many early writers and theologians of the Church have connections to Africa. After Mark, Christian activity in Africa continued in the 1st century when the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Egypt was formed as one of the four original Patriarchs of the East (the others being Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem).

While the Islamic conquest in the 7th century resulted in a harsh decline for Christianity in northern Africa, the presence of the Catholic Church recovered and grew in the modern era in Africa as a whole. The Catholic Church membership rose from 2 million in 1900 to 140 million in 2000. In 2005, the Catholic Church in Africa, including Eastern Catholic Churches, embraced approximately 135 million of the 809 million people in Africa. In 2009, when Pope Benedict XVI visited Africa, it was estimated at 158 million. Most belong to the Roman Catholic, but there are also millions of members of the Eastern Catholic Churches. By 2025, one-sixth (230 million) of the world's Catholics are expected to be African.

Now is a very good time to familiarize ourselves with some of the people of God who walked by faith with the cross of Jesus as their guide. Over the next twelve months, St. Mary's will give a brief sketch of our walk through the sacrifice of some of the saints and others in their special tie to Africa and Christians of African descent. Through this walk we may rediscover a faith of our ancestors.

SEPTEMBER 13TH – ST. PETER CLAVER



Country of Origin: Spain

Birth and Death Dates: June 26, 1580 – September 8, 1654

Occupation: Jesuit missionary in South America

Walk of Faith: He volunteered for the Spanish colonies and was sent to the New Kingdom of Granada (South America), arriving in the port city of Cartagena, (now in the country of Columbia) in 1610. He studied six years of theology before being ordained a priest and lived in Jesuit houses at Tunja and Bogotá.

His mission to be of service to the slaves began when a ship landed in Cartagena. Accompanied by interpreters, he boarded every incoming slave ship carrying food and medicines, and visited the areas where the slaves were housed. He nursed the sick, comforted the distraught and terrified captives, and taught religion. During his 40 years of ministry it is estimated that he personally catechized and baptized 300,000 slaves. His mission extended beyond caring for slaves, however. He preached in the city square, to sailors and traders and traveled every spring to visit those he had baptized, and reminding slave owners of their duty to treat slaves humanely. Peter Claver dedicated his life to aid and assist African slaves, earning the title of “apostle of the Negroes” and the Apostle of Cartagena. He was canonized January 15, 1888 in Rome by Pope Leo XIII. His Feast Day is September 8

Sources: online Encyclopedia Britannica and Wikipedia

SEPTEMBER 20TH – ST. MAURICE OF THEBES



Place of Origin: Thebes (Luxor), Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: 250 AD – 287AD

Occupation: Commander of the Theban Legion of the Roman Army, Patron saint of the Vatican Swiss Guard. Feast Day is September 22

Walk of Faith: Maurice was an officer of the Theban Legion (1,000 men) of Emperor Maximian Herculus' army, which was composed of Christians from Upper Egypt. He was an acknowledged Christian at a time when early Christianity was considered to be a threat to the Roman Empire. He and his fellow legionnaires refused to sacrifice to the gods as ordered by the Emperor to insure victory over rebelling villagers in Gaul. When they refused to obey repeated orders to do so and withdrew from the army encamped near Lake Geneva Switzerland, Maximian ordered Maurice and every man of the legion put to death. To the end, they were encouraged in their constancy by Maurice and two fellow officers, Exuperius and Candidus. Their story was told by St. Eucherius, who became Bishop of Lyons about 434. Tradition says that the sword and spurs of Saint Maurice were part of the regalia used at coronations of the Austro-Hungarian emperors until 1916, and among the most important insignia of the Imperial throne.

Sources: online, Wikipedia, Saints and Angels, Catholic- online,

SEPTEMBER 27TH – BLESSED BENEDICT DASWA



Place of Origin: Thulamela, Local Municipality, South Africa

Birth and Death Dates: June 16, 1946 – February 2, 1990

Occupation: South African school teacher and principal.

Walk of Faith: Born Tshimangadzo Samuel Daswa, Benedict was a member of the Lemba people. After his father's accidental death, he worked to provide for his siblings and paid for their education. While living with his uncle in Johannesburg he was exposed to the Catholic faith. After two years of instruction, Daswa was baptized on April 21, 1963 taking the name of "Benedict" after Saint Benedict of Nursia, and chose "ora et labora" (pray and work) as his life's motto. He was confirmed three months later.

Benedict was an active member of the Catholic Church in South Africa. He served as a teacher and catechist, worked with adolescents and assisted families that endured economic hardship. He was a highly respected individual in his local community and became known for his honesty, truthfulness and integrity, even known to fetch students who decided to skip schools. In November 1989, heavy rains and lightning strikes plagued the area. When his village suffered strong storms again in January 1990, the elders decided that the lightning occurred due to magic and thus demanded a tax from all their residents to "sniff out" the witch who caused the storms. Refusing to believe this, Benedict said they were just a natural phenomenon and refused to pay the tax. On 2 February 1990, he was ambushed and killed because he wouldn't pay. On January 22, 2015, Pope Francis approved a decree that recognized his martyrdom on which allowed for his beatification.

Sources: online, Wikipedia, Catholic News Agency

OCTOBER 4TH — ST. EZANA OF AXUM (ETHIOPIA)



Place of Origin: Northern Ethiopia

Birth and Death Dates: 320AD – 360AD

Occupation: Monarch

Walk of Faith: Tradition states that 'Ezana succeeded his father Ella Amida (Ousanas) while still a child and his mother, Sofya served as regent until he reached adulthood. Ezana was an Ethiopian king whose reign marked a turning point in Ethiopian history because Christianity became the state religion, making him the first Christian king. Ezana is also remembered as having been a great builder, and he may have been responsible for the erection of the great obelisks still visible in the town of Axum. He sent his brothers, Shaiazana and Hadehan, to subdue the Beja people, who had been raiding trading caravans in the north. Ezana showed his diplomatic skill by his wise treatment of these people after they were conquered. Instead of suppressing or enslaving them, he lavished wealth upon them and had them resettled in a fertile area within Axum where they were able to live in prosperity and peace. His military conquests completed the downfall of the kingdom of Kush, which had once ruled Lower Egypt.

Through such men as Frumentius, Axum maintained close contacts with the Christian nations of the eastern Mediterranean. There is no official and explicit record of Ezana's conversion to Christianity, but the fact of this event is shown by the changes in the symbols used in Axumite coins. Ezana's fifth and last known inscription pays tribute to the Christian god for the first time. Along with his brother, Saizana, 'Ezana is regarded as a saint by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, with a feast day of October 1st.

Sources: Encyclopedia.com, Britannica.com, Wikipedia

OCTOBER 11TH — ST. KALEB (ST. ELESBAAN)



Place of Origin: Ethiopia

Birth and Death Dates: 6th Century AD

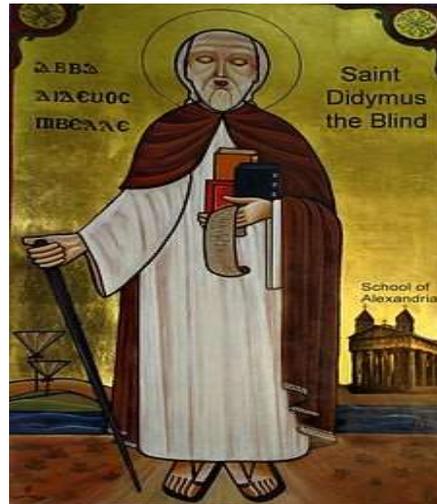
Occupation: Monarch

Walk of Faith: Ethiopia was ruled by the black King St. Kaleb or Elesbaan (after he became a hermit), who was raised from childhood in the Catholic Faith. King Elesbaan ruled his country with wisdom and was esteemed by his people. At that time Ethiopia was part of the Eastern Roman Empire, under Justinian I. Across on the Red Sea, Arabia had fallen to Dunaan, a King who adhered to Judaism. He was a despotic ruler, persecuting the Bishops and clergy and destroying the churches. Around 4,000 Catholics were killed without trial after suffering many cruelties. Emperor Justinian called on King Elesbaan to chastise the usurper. The King gathered his army and crossed the Red Sea to punish the affront to Catholic honor. Elesbaan landed in Arabia, defeated Dunaan and executed him. Then he restored St. Gregentius to his episcopal see, rebuilt the churches and remained in the country until Ebrahamos, who was Catholic, was elected King of the Arabs.

Once his mission of justice and peace was accomplished, he returned to Ethiopia and ruled there for some years more, carefully instructing his son in the Catholic Religion. Then he renounced his title and turned over the Kingdom to his son. Disguised as a hermit, he retired to a monastery in the mountains. There he lived as a simple religious dedicated to prayer, obedience and work. He died with a reputation of sanctity on October 27, 532. Often he is pictured as a solitary hermit holding a cross and with a crown at his feet.

Source: www.traditioninaction.org/SOD/j251sd_Elesbaan_10_27.html

OCTOBER 18TH — ST. DIDYMUS THE BLIND



Place of Origin: Alexandria, Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: 313AD – 398AD

Occupation: Theologian; Dean of the Theological School of Alexandria

Walk of Faith: Blind from the age of 4, Didymus excelled in scholarship because of his incredible memory. He found ways to help blind people to read, experimenting with carved wooden letters similar to Braille systems used by the blind today. He was a loyal follower of Origen, and opposed Arian and Macedonian teachings.

Second and Third Councils of Constantinople condemned many of his works. As a result of his condemnation, many of his works were not copied during the Middle Ages and were subsequently lost.

He staunchly defended the doctrine of the Trinity. Thoroughly Trinitarian, Didymus' repeatedly emphasizes that God's essence is beyond essence, and used a term only seen in the early Church writings of Cyril of Alexandria. Combating the heresies of the Manichaean Docetists and Apollinarians, Didymus insisted on the fullness of the human nature of Christ. He concludes there must be two natures united in Christ, not speculating on precisely how these work together but restricting himself to the expression "a single Christ. He continually uses the formula "*treis hypostaseis, mia ousia*" (three persons, one substance) which according to St. Athanasius, has become the catholic watchword.

Source: Catholic Encyclopedia; Encyclopedia Britannica; Wikipedia; Tentmaker

OCTOBER 25TH – BLESSED DAUDI OKELO AND JILDO IRWA



Place of Origin: Uganda

Birth and Death Dates: Daudi Okelo (1902 ca.-1918) and Jildo Irwa (1906 ca.-1918)

Occupation: Catechists

Walk of Faith: The martyrs **Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa** were two young catechists from Uganda at the beginning of the 20th century. They belonged to the Acholi tribe, a subdivision of the large Lwo group whose members even today live mostly in the North of Uganda, but they are also present in Southern Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Congo. They lived and were martyred in the years immediately following the foundation of the mission of Kitgum by the Comboni Missionaries in 1915.

Daudi is described as young man of peaceful and shy character, diligent in his duties as a catechist and loved by all. He never got involved in tribal or political disputes. Jildo was much younger than Daudi. He was quite intelligent and was of great help to Daudi in gathering the children for the instruction. Decisions taken by the District Commissioner caused tensions in the villages; thereby allowing raiders and other elements to take advantage of situation to get rid of the new religion brought by Daudi. In this environment, both young men were martyred for their beliefs.

The martyrdom of these two young catechists is very meaningful for Uganda. They remained faithful to their assignment to spread the Gospel by words and deeds, and courageously catechized in a place outside the influence of their own ethnic clan. They are a symbol of environment a sign of the catholicity and unity of the Church. Having lived during a period of tribal fights, colonial interests and still flourishing domestic slavery, they represent the integrity of a Gospel that always protects and safeguards personal dignity and promotes peace among peoples, ethnic groups and cultures. For this, even today they are remembered in their land as Christ's true "witnesses by blood".

Source: Biography: Vatican News Services

NOVEMBER 1ST – ST. MARTIN DE PORRES



Place of Origin: Lima, Peru

Birth and Death Dates: 9 December 9, 1579 – 3 November 3, 1639

Occupation: Peruvian lay brother of the Dominican Order. His feast day is November 3.

Walk of Faith: Martin was the illegitimate son to a Spanish gentlemen and a freed slave from Panama, of African descent. His father abandoned his family when his sister was born. In Peru, by law, all descendants of African were not allowed to become full members of religious orders. However, after eight years, Martin was granted the privilege to take his vows as a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic by the prior Juan de Lorenzana who decided to disregard the law. Martin grew to become a Dominican lay brother in 1603 at the age of 24. Ten years later, after was presented with the religious habit of a lay brother, and assigned to the infirmary where he would remain in charge until his death. He became known for encompassing the virtues needed to carefully and patiently care for the sick, even in the most difficult situations.

Martin's life reflected his great love for God and all of God's gifts. It is said he had many extraordinary abilities, including aerial flights, bilocation, instant cures, miraculous knowledge, spiritual knowledge and an excellent relationship with animals. Martin also founded an orphanage for abandoned children and slaves and is known for raising dowry for young girls in short amounts of time. During an epidemic in Lima, many of the friars in the Convent of the Rosary became very ill. Locked away in a distant section St. Martin de Porres was beatified by Pope Gregory XVI on October 29, 1837 and canonized by Pope John XXIII on May 6, 1962. He has become the patron saint of people of mixed race, innkeepers, barbers, public health workers and more. His feast day is November 3.

Source: Saints and Angels – Catholic online

NOVEMBER 8TH – VENERABLE HENRIETTE DELILLE



Place of Origin: New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Birth and Death Dates: March 11, 1813 - November 17, 1862 ·

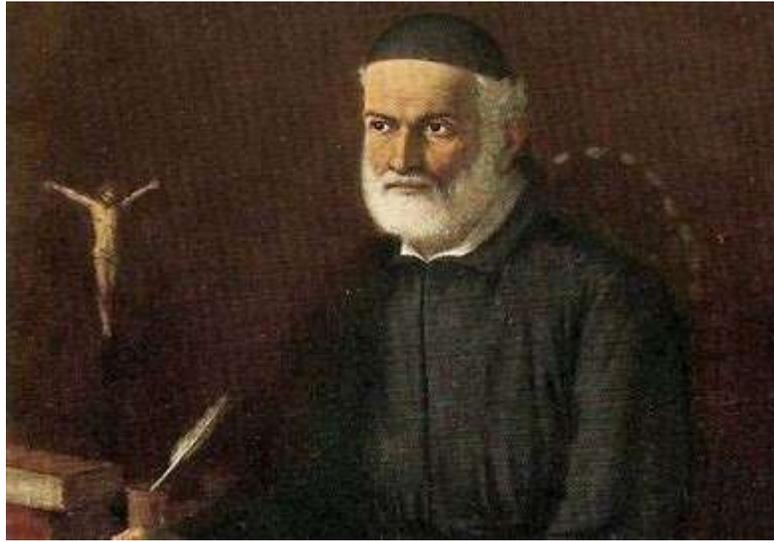
Occupation: Mother, founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family

Walk of Faith: Born a free woman of color, she proclaimed at her confirmation: "I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God." In 1836 after providing for her mother, she used the proceeds from the sale of her estate to found a small unrecognized congregation or order of nuns, which she named the Sisters of the Presentation. In 1837, Father Etienne Rousselon of New Orleans secured formal recognition of the new congregation from the Pope. Henriette took the title of Mother in the order. In 1842, the congregation changed its name to the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Mother Delille continued a life of service to the poor of New Orleans by responding to the needs of the enslaved, elderly and sick; care and education for the poor; acting as Godmother to many children; and as a witness to marriages. She died Sunday, November 16, 1862. The Order is active today serving the poor by operating schools for children, as well as nursing and retirement homes in Louisiana, Washington, D.C, Texas, Arkansas, and California in the United States; and a mission in Belize. In 1988 her order and Archbishop Philip M. Hannan opened the cause for her canonization with Rome. Her cause was endorsed "unanimously" in 1997 by the United States Catholic Bishops and given the title Venerable on March 27, 2010.

Sources: Wikipedia, OSV news, Sisters of the Holy Family

NOVEMBER 15 – FR. ANTONIO VIEIRA



Place of Origin: Lisbon Portugal

Birth and Death Dates: February 6, 1608 – 18 July 18, 1697

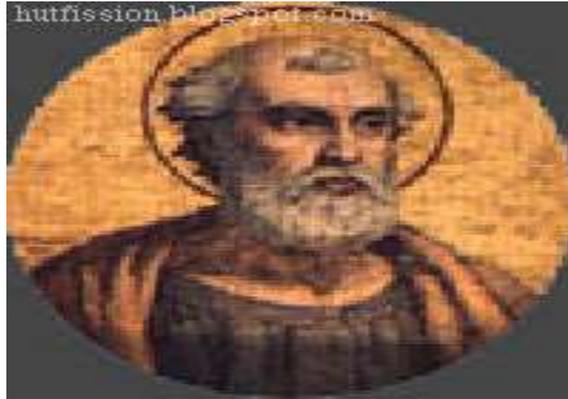
Occupation: Jesuit Priest

Walk of Faith: Born in Lisbon to a Mulatto mother and Portuguese father, he was raised in Brazil. Vieira used the pulpit to propound measures for improving the general and economic condition of Portugal. He became also noted as a writer, particularly of pamphlets that advocated the creation of companies of commerce, and denouncing as unchristian a society which discriminated against New Christians (Muslim and Jewish converts).

In 1654, he went to Portugal to lead the cause of the Indians who were being exploited by the governors. In April 1655, he obtained a series of decrees which placed the missions under the Jesuits, with him as superior, and prohibited the enslavement of the natives, except in certain specified cases. He organized the missions with a population of 200,000. After a time, however, the colonists, attributing the shortage of slaves to their loss of profits, began actively to oppose Vieira. He was exiled first to Porto and then to Coimbra; but in both these places he continued his work of preaching, and the reform of the Inquisition. To silence him his enemies, he appealed to the Pope and drew up a two hundred page report on the Inquisition in Portugal, which resulted in Pope Innocent XI suspended it in Portugal for seven years (1674–81). Vieira returned to Portugal with a papal bull exempting him from the jurisdiction of the Grand Inquisitor. In January 1681 returned to Brazil and resided in Bahia. In 1687, he became superior of the province and lived there until his death.

Sources: Wikipedia

NOVEMBER 22ND – POPE GELASIUS



Place of Origin: Rome Italy

Birth and Death Dates: 410AD – 496AD

Occupation: Pope

Walk of Faith: African by birth, born a Roman Citizen, he was employed by his predecessor to draft papal documents. During his pontificate he called for strict Catholic orthodoxy, more assertively demanded obedience to papal authority, and, consequently, increased the tension between the Western and Eastern Churches. He succeeded Pope Felix III in March 492 as Pope and combatted the Acacian Schism that had arisen in the East as a result of Rome's refusal to accept the *Henotikon*—a peace formula designed by the Eastern Roman emperor Zeno to reconcile the dissident advocates of the unorthodox doctrine that the human and divine in Christ constitute one nature. During that long, bitter struggle, Gelasius maintained papal authority, making him one of the great architects of Roman primacy in ecclesiastical affairs. He was the first pope to be called "Vicar of Christ."

His writings include more than 100 treatises and letters. Among his acts, in 494 he changed the Lupercalia, a Roman pagan festival, into the Feast of the Purification (now known as the Presentation of the Lord. to purify"), to the month of February, it was unrelated to the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also commonly denominated "Candlemas", which latter feast commemorates the fulfillment of the Holy Family's ceremonial obligations pursuant to Mosaic law 40 days after the birth of the first son.

Gelasius was the most prolific author of the early Supreme Pontiffs. A great mass of his correspondence survives: 42 letters according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 37 according to Rev. Philip V. Bagan and fragments of 49 others, which are archived in the Vatican and that expound to Eastern bishops the primacy of the Supreme Pontiff.

Sources: Wikipedia, Catholic Encyclopedia online, Encyclopedia Britannica

NOVEMBER 29TH – ST. AMMON THE ABBOT



Place of Origin: Mariotis, Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: Unknown

Occupation: Hermit

Walk of Faith: Ammon (or Amoun), was a 4th-century Christian founder of one of the most celebrated monastic communities in Egypt.^[1] He was subsequently declared a saint. Saint Athanasius mentions him in his life of Saint Anthony. Pushed into marriage by his family at the age of 20, he managed to persuade his bride to take a vow of chastity together with him based on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. They lived together this way for 18 years, when at her wish, they parted, and he retired to Scetis and Mt. Nitria, where he lived 22 years, visiting his sister-wife twice a year. She had founded a convent in her own house.

He cooperated with Saint Anthony and gathered his monks under his direct supervision, thus forming a monastery from sole hermits. Traditionally, he is supposed to have been the first hermit to have established a monastery in Kellia. His piety and fame drew others to this site. He is considered to have died at the age of 62 years. He is venerated as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox, Byzantine Catholic, Coptic Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.

The date of his death is considered to have occurred around 320AD. St. Anthony the Great asserted that he "saw the soul of Amoun borne by angels to heaven". St. Athanasius's history of St. Antony preserves this information. There are generally seventeen or nineteen *Rules of Asceticism* accredited to him; the Greek original exists in manuscript; and was republished in the Latin version of *Gerardus Vossius. Twenty-two Ascetic Institutions* of the same Amoun, or one bearing the same name, exist also in manuscript.

Sources: Wikipedia

DECEMBER 6TH — BLESSED MARIE-CLEMENTINE ANUARITE NENGAPETA



Place of Origin: Wamba, Haut-Uele District, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Birth and Death Dates: December 29, 1939 – December 1, 1964

Occupation: Sister

Walk of Faith: Born Anuarite Nengapeta, she was a Congolese Roman Catholic member of the Sisters of the Holy Family. Her mother had herself and all six of her daughters baptized in 1945. Anuarite ran away from home to join the convent, despite her mother's disapproval. She formally entered the religious life on August 5, 1959, assuming the name of "Marie-Clémentine". Her short religious life was dedicated to teaching and serving as a cook and sacristan. In 1964, a rebellion broke out across the nation and the Simba rebels opposed the indigenous monks and sisters because of their suspicion that these religious were cooperating with foreigners. The rebels stormed her convent on November 29, 1964 and loaded all sisters into a truck. Nengapeta was killed December 1, 1964 by Colonel Pierre Olombe after she ward off his attempt at rape.

The beatification cause commenced under Pope Paul VI on 14 April 1977 and she became titled as a Servant of God. Pope John Paul II approved this cause on June 9, 1984 and beatified her on August 15, 1985 during his visit to Zaire. She is the first Bantu woman elevated with her beatification.

The Anuarite Woman of Courage in the D.R.C. Prize was established in 2009, named after the late sister to honor her courage and strength. The prize is meant to recognize and honor the vital contribution of women to the development of democratic values in the nation. On an annual basis a cash prize is awarded to a Congolese woman who helped to make her area a better place through hard work and dedication.^[1]

Sources: Wikipedia, Catholic Saints, Vatican News

DECEMBER 13TH – POPE MILITIADES



Place of Origin: Northern Africa

Birth and Death Dates: Unknown

Occupation: Pope

Walk of Faith: St. Miltiades served as pope under Constantine from July 2, 311, to January 10, 314. Shortly after he became pope, the Church's persecution under the Roman emperors ended with an edict of toleration and the ascension of a new Christian emperor, Constantine I. Properties that had been taken from the Church were returned, and Constantine gave Pope Miltiades the Lateran Palace as his residence.

At Constantine's request, Miltiades presided over the first Lateran synod dealing with the early stages of the Donatist controversy. The Lateran Council was held October 2 – 4, 313. The process was modeled on Roman civil proceedings, with Miltiades insisting on strict rules of evidence and argument. This frustrated the Donatists who left the council without presenting their case, which led Miltiades to rule in favor against them. The council ended after only three sessions. The pope retained Caecilianus as bishop of Carthage and condemned Donatus' teachings of rebaptism of bishops and priests. The adverse rulings failed to stop the continuing spread of Donatism across North Africa. The Donatists again appealed to the Emperor, who responded by convening the Council of Arles in 314 but it too ruled against the Donatists. By the time the council was convened, Miltiades had died on 10 or 11 January 314. He was buried in the Catacomb of Callixtus at the Appian Way and venerated as a saint.

Sources: Wikipedia, NBCCongress.org

DECEMBER 20TH – VENERABLE TERESA CHIKABA



Place of Origin: West Africa

Birth and Death Dates: ? 1676 – December 6, 1748

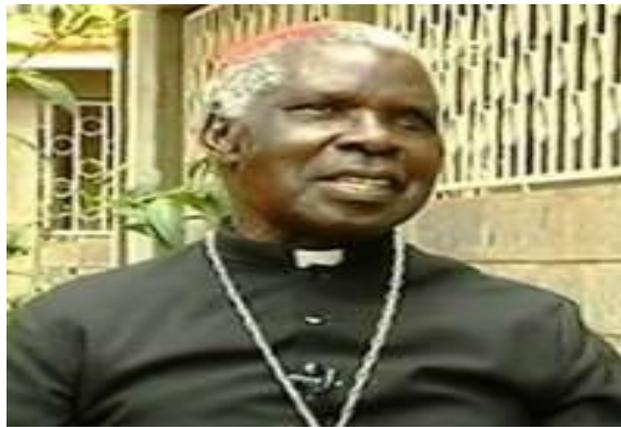
Occupation: Dominican Sister

Walk of Faith: Her birth name was Chicaba when she was kidnapped and sold into slavery at the age of nine. She was believed to be born in present-day eastern Ghana and that her parents were Ewe. She was sent to the island of São Tomé, where she was baptized and given the name Teresa de Santo Domingo. During her childhood she was exported to Spain and purchased by Juliana Teresa Portocarrero y Meneses, the third wife of the Marquis of Mancera, who had been Viceroy of Mexico. Favored the marchioness, Teresa she was treated to cruelly by other staff.

In 1703, her owner died, giving her freedom and a dowry to enter the Dominican convent in Salamanca. She attempted to join but was denied by the local bishop, who only granted her permission to work as a maid for the religious community. Some years later, he relented and she made final vows as a “white veiled” religious sister. However, because of her race, her tasks in the community remained the same as before. Over time, Teresa gained recognition as a healer and a sister with prodigious religious gifts. The annuity bequeathed her in the marchioness’ will as well as donations from people who sought her prayers allowed her to gain ascendancy among the other nuns. She was known for the care she gave to the poor, sick and down-hearted. Her acts of charity, her mystical experiences, and her fame as a healer or miracle worker moved her order soon after her death to commission two portraits of her for purposes of local veneration.

Sources: Wikipedia, Angelfire.com, eafricandominicans.org

DECEMBER 27TH – SERVANT OF GOD MAURICE MICHEL CARDINAL OTUNGA



Place of Origin: Kenya

Birth and Death Dates: January, 1923 – September 6, 2003

Occupation: Cardinal – Roman Catholic Prelate

Walk of Faith: was a Kenyan Roman Catholic prelate and cardinal who served as the Archbishop of Nairobi from 1971 until his resignation in 1997. His father the chieftain of the Bakhome (or Bukusu) tribe. His mother named him "Simiyu" at birth. However, his father renamed him "Otunga" which meant a staff the old lean on for support. He converted to Roman Catholicism and was given the name "Maurice Michael" when baptized in 1935 and confirmed September 29, 1939. He refused to become his tribe's chieftain after his father resigned from the position in 1947. In 1956, he was made the Titular Bishop of Tacape. In 1960, Pope John XXIII later transferred Otunga to the new Diocese of Kisii. Otunga attended the four sessions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and was promoted as the Titular Archbishop of Bomarza in 1969. Pope Paul VI nominated him as the Coadjutor Bishop of Nairobi on November 15, 1969, becoming the Archbishop of Nairobi on October 24, 1971. Pope Paul VI elevated him into the cardinalate in 1973 as the Cardinal-Priest of San Gregorio Barbarigo alle Tre Fontane. He retired in 1997 citing age and ill health

He served as the Vice-President of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) and a member of the permanent committee of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). He served on various departments in the Roman Curia as is the norm for a cardinal. Those appointments were: Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes.

Sources: Wikipedia, www.cardinalotunga.org, <https://biography.jrank.org/>

JANUARY 3RD – ST. FULGENTIUS OF RUSPE



Place of Origin: Thélepte, Tunisia

Birth and Death Dates: 465AD – 533 AD

Occupation: Abbot and Bishop

Walk of Faith: Fulgentius was bishop of the city of Ruspe, a Roman province of North Africa in modern day Tunisia, during the 5th and 6th century. As a young man, he was held in wide public respect for his conduct of his family's business. This helped him to acquire a post as a procurator or tax collector of Byzacena. He quickly grew tired of the material life, and this combined with his religious studies, particularly his study of Augustine of Hippo convinced him to become a monk. He founded several monastic communities not only in Africa, but also in Sardinia. As a theologian, his writings show that he was fluent in Greek and Latin and was in strong agreement with Augustine of Hippo. He wrote frequently against the heresies of Arianism (a nontrinitarian Christological doctrine) and Pelagianism (a heterodox Christian theological position which holds that the original sin did not taint human nature and that humans have the free will to achieve human perfection without divine grace). Arianism was denounced by the council of Nicea in 325AD and Pelagianism was denounced by the Council of Orange in 529 AD. In 499, he was forced to flee to Northwestern Tunisia with the Abbot Felix when a local Arian priest had them arrested and tortured after learning the pair was preaching the orthodox Nicene Creed. Fulgentius writes in his *Letter to Peter on the Faith*: "Hold most firmly and never doubt that the same Holy Spirit, who is the one Spirit of the Father and the Son, proceeds from the Father and the Son. For the Son says, 'When the Spirit of Truth comes, who has proceeded from the Father,' where he taught that the Spirit is his, because he is the Truth."

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Britannica.com](#)

JANUARY 10TH – ST. ADRIAN OF CANTERBURY



Place of Origin: Northern Africa

Birth and Death Dates: 635 AD – 710AD

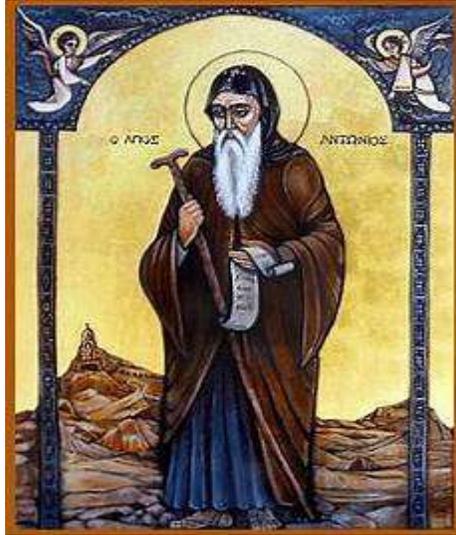
Occupation: Abbot

Walk of Faith: Adrian, also spelled Hadrian was an African scholar in Anglo-Saxon England and the abbot of Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's in Canterbury. He was a noted teacher and commentator of the Bible. Adrian was, according to Bede, an abbot of a monastery near Naples, when the Pope Vitalian sent him, together with Theodore of Tarsus to England. Venerable Bede describes Adrian (or Hadrian, as he calls him in the *Ecclesiastical History*), as not only a distinguished theologian, but eminently accomplished in secular learning; he and Theodore, we are told, traveled to all parts of England, gathered multitudes of scholars around them wherever they appeared, and employed themselves daily by instructing those who flocked to them not only in the truths of religion but in the several branches of science and literature currently cultivated. Bede particularly mentions the metrical art, astronomy, and arithmetic, physical science, and mathematics. Bede maintains that their pupils spoke the Greek and Latin languages as readily as their native tongue. A record of the teaching of Theodore and Adrian is preserved in the Leiden Glossary. (Manuscripts maintained in the Netherlands)

Adrian is said to have lived for 39 years after he came to England, and presided over the monastery until his death. He was buried at his monastery at Canterbury. Regarded as a saint, his relics were re-deposited in the new monastery on January 9, 1091

Sources: Wikipedia, Franciscan Media.org

JANUARY 17TH – ST. ANTHONY OF THE DESERT



Place of Origin: near Herakleopolis Magna in Upper Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: 251AD – 356 AD

Occupation: Monk

Walk of Faith: Anthony of the Desert is also as the **Father of All Monks**. Anthony was not the first ascetic or hermit in Christianity, but he was the first to organize his disciples into a community and his example was the inspiration for similar communities throughout Egypt and elsewhere. He dictated his sermons and works in Coptic, but they were later translated into Greek. He is venerated as a saint in the Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

Most of what is known about Anthony comes from the *Life of Anthony* written in Greek around 360 by Athanasius of Alexandria. Later translated into Latin, it depicts Anthony as an illiterate and holy man who through his existence in a primordial landscape has an absolute connection to the divine truth. In the *Life*, the devil fought many battles with Anthony. Once, according to Athanasius, the devil fought Anthony by afflicting him with boredom, laziness, and thoughts of women, which he overcame by the power of prayer. The Latin translation helped the *Life* become one of the best known works of literature in the Christian world during the Middle Ages. Translated into several languages, it played an important role in the spreading of the ascetic ideal in Eastern and Western Christianity. It has also served as an inspiration to Christian monastics in both the East and the West, and helped to spread the concept of Christian monasticism, particularly in Western Europe.

Sources: Wikipedia, stanthonylc.org/about/who-is-saint-Anthony, stanthonylc.org/about/who-is-saint-Anthony

JANUARY 24TH – ST. APOLLOS



Place of Origin: Alexandria, Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: First Century

Occupation: Christian preacher

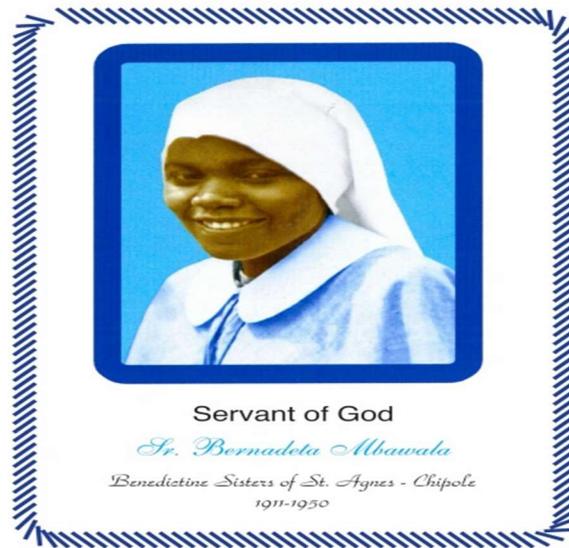
Walk of Faith: The Acts of the Apostles refers to Apollos as a devout Jew native to Alexandria. The name "Apollos" was probably short for Apollonius or Apollodorus. A contemporary colleague of St. Paul the Apostle, he played an important role in the early development of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He is mentioned in several books of the New Testament. Apollos is first mentioned as a Christian preacher who had come to Ephesus (probably in 52 or 53AD), where he is described as "being fervent in spirit: he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John"(Acts 18:24-25). Priscilla and Aquila, a Jewish Christian couple who had come to Ephesus with the Apostle Paul, instructed Apollos: "When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18: 26-27). Acts also says that he arrived in Achaia with a letter of recommendation from the Ephesian Christians and assisted the church with their faith(Acts 18:28).

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (AD 55) mentions Apollos as an important figure at Corinth. Paul describes Apollos' role at Corinth: "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*"(1stCor.3:6) Apollos is mentioned one more time in the New Testament. In the Epistle to Titus, the recipient is exhorted to "speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way" (Titus3:13). St. Jerome wrote that Apollos was so dissatisfied with the division at Corinth that he retired to Crete with Zenas; and that once the schism had been healed by Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Apollos returned to the city and became one of its elders.

Apollos is a saint in the Anglican Communion, Coptic Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Roman Catholic Churches

Sources: Wikipedia, biblehub.com, biblewise.com

JANUARY 31ST – SERVANT OF GOD SR. BERNADETE MRAWALA



Place of Origin: Likuyufusi, Tanzania

Birth and Death Dates: October 27, 1911 – November 29, 1950

Occupation: Benedictine Sister of St. Agnes

Walk of Faith: Born in 1911, Bernadette had such poor health that her mother, a devout Christian dedicated her to God if she would survive. Bernadette did indeed offer her life to God when she made profession as a Benedictine Nun in 1934. While continuing to suffer greatly with physical maladies, she was much beloved by her community for her prayerful life as she offered her suffering without complaint. She was known for her love of neighbor, obedience, humility and perseverance in the midst of her ailments, and was universally regarded by all who knew her for her exceptional holiness. When she died at the age of 39 her short life became such an inspiration that many who knew her already considered her a Saint.

Sources: Wikipedia, chipolebenedictine.org

FEBRUARY 7TH – SERVANT OF GOD MOTHER MARY LANGE



Place of Origin: Santiago de Cuba (Cuba.)

Birth and Death Dates: 1792 – February 3, 1882

Occupation: Founder of the Oblate Sisters of Providence

Walk of Faith: She was born Elizabeth Clarisse Lange, in 1794 in Santiago de Cuba (Cuba.) After leaving Cuba, she finally settled in 1813 in Baltimore, Maryland where there was a great influx of French-speaking Catholic refugees from the Revolution. There was no free public education for African American children in Maryland, so she used her own money and opened a school in her home. Her work was well known and in 1828 Father James Hector Joubert, encouraged by the Archbishop of Baltimore, presented her with an idea for creating a religious congregation for the education of African American girls. She accepted the idea and cofounded the Oblates Sisters of Providence, the first congregation of African American women religious in the history of the Catholic Church on July 2, 1829, Elizabeth, who took the name Mary, was foundress and first superior general of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. She served the Oblates as superior general from 1829 to 1832, and again from 1835 to 1841. She died February 3, 1882. The Oblate Sisters continue in Maryland, Florida, New York, and, Costa Rica.

William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, opened a formal investigation into Mother Lange's life and works of charity in 1991. The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine for the Causes of Saints approved the cause of her sainthood in 2004, and Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore celebrated a canonical celebration at the transfer and blessing of Mother Lange's remains.

Sources: Wikipedia, motherlange.org

FEBRUARY 14TH – ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA



Place of Origin: Darfur region of southern Sudan in the village of Olgossa

Birth and Death Dates: 1869 – February 8, 1947

Occupation: Sister

Walk of Faith: Born in the Darfur region of southern Sudan of the Daju people, Josephine was kidnapped at the age of 7 by Arab slave traders. Although she was just a child, she was forced to walk barefoot over 600 miles to a slave market in El Obeid. She was sold in slavery several times, and given the name Bakhita, which means *fortunate*. While a slave in the Sudan, her skin was marked by a process resembling both scarification and tattooing, which was a traditional practice throughout Sudan using white flour, salt and a razor. The flour was used to draw patterns on the skin and then the razor cut deeply along the lines before filling the wounds with salt to ensure permanent scarring. A total of 114 intricate patterns were cut into her skin. During this time, she was also forced to convert to Islam.

In 1885 she was given to Augusto Michieli, who took her to Italy. There, Bakhita was drawn to the Catholic Faith and was baptized and confirmed, taking the name Josephine. When the family returned to Africa, Josephine did not want to go. During the ensuing court case, the Order of Canossian Sisters and the patriarch of Venice intervened on Josephine's behalf. The judge concluded that since slavery was illegal in Italy, she had actually been free for several years. Josephine entered the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa in 1893 and made her profession three years later. In 1902, she was transferred to the city of Schio (northeast of Verona), where she assisted her religious community through cooking, sewing, embroidery, and welcoming visitors at the door. She once said, "Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who do not know Him. What a great grace it is to know God!" She was beatified in 1992 and canonized eight years later.

Sources: Wikipedia,

FEBRUARY 21ST —BLESSED FR. AUGUSTUS TOLTON



Place of Origin: Ralls, County, Missouri

Birth and Death Dates: April 1, 1854– July 9, 1897

Occupation: Priest

Walk of Faith: The son of two slaves, Augustus was born on April 1, 1854 in Ralls County, Missouri. His father hoping to gain freedom at the outbreak of the Civil War, escaped to the North serve in the Union Army and he was killed. His widowed mother and her children made their way to freedom and settled in Quincy, Illinois. They attended mass freely, but attempts to attend Catholic school were met with opposition from White parents. The problem was resolved when the school's Sisters of Notre Dame decided to privately tutor the children.

As Augustus grew older he began displaying an interest in the priesthood. His parish priests, Fathers McGuirr and Richardt, encouraged him in this pursuit, but had great difficulty getting him enrolled in any diocesan seminaries. Because of this, they began his education in theology themselves. In 1878, St. Francis Solanus College (now Quincy University) a Franciscan college, admitted him as a special student. Two years later he was enrolled at the college of the Propaganda Fidei in Rome. After completing his courses there, Augustus Tolton was ordained on April 24, 1886 at the age of 31. He returned to the United States in July 1886, delivering his first mass at St. Benedict the Moor, a largely black church in New York City, before returning to his hometown of Quincy as pastor at St. Joseph Church where he remained for two years. In Quincy, Fr. Tolton was very popular. His next assignment was Saint Augustine (later Saint Monica) on Chicago's south side, where he would spend the rest of his life. It also became the center from which he ministered to all the Black Catholics of Chicago. He addressed the First Catholic Colored Congress in Washington DC in 1889. He died July 9, 1897. On June 12, 2019, the Congregation recognized Fr. Augustus Tolton as Venerable.

Sources: Wikipedia, Toltonchicago.org

FEBRUARY 28TH — ST. SIMON OF CYRENE



Place of Origin: Cyrene in eastern Libya

Birth and Death Dates: unknown

Occupation: unknown

Walk of Faith: Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke as the man who carried the cross of Jesus to Calvary. Since Cyrene was located in modern day Libya, many have suggested that Simon was a dark-skinned African man who had come to Jerusalem to worship during the Passover. The known facts given about Simon of Cyrene include the following. First, he was a worshiper of the God of the Jews. This likely meant he was a dispersed Jewish man who had returned for the Passover celebration. Second, he was a father and had brought his two sons to celebrate the Passover. Their names are given in Mark 15:21 as Alexander and Rufus. They were likely old enough to travel to Jerusalem from Cyrene (likely 12 or older at the time). There is no mention of their mother at this time.

However, it is believed that this Rufus is the same Rufus mentioned in Romans 16:13: "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well." If so, the mother of Rufus was certainly a Christian by this time, as was Rufus, both serving in Rome among the Roman believers. The people from Cyrene were among the first Christian believers at the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). Perhaps Simon, Alexander, and Rufus were among those who heard and believed. If so, the connection of Rufus in Romans 16:13 would not be surprising. In addition, some believers from Cyrene fled Jerusalem following the death of Stephen (Acts 7) and began sharing their faith in Antioch. Some also link Simon himself with the "men of Cyrene" who preached the Gospel to the Greeks in Acts 11:20.

Source: Wikipedia, Compelling truth.org

MARCH 7TH – ST. PERPETUA AND FELICITY



Place of Origin: Carthage

Birth and Death Dates: 182AD – 203AD

Occupation: noblewoman and her slave

Walk of Faith: *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* is a diary by *Vibia Perpetua* describing their imprisonment as a Christian in 203, completed and published after her death. It is one of the oldest and most notable early Christian texts. Along with their experiences, the text also contains the accounts of the visions of Saturus, another Christian martyred with Perpetua. Perpetua and Felicity were catechumens, Christians being instructed in the faith but not yet baptized, when they were arrested and executed. They were put to death along with others at Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.

Perpetua's account opens with conflict between her and her father, who wishes her to recant her belief. Perpetua refuses, and is soon baptized before being moved to prison. After the guards are bribed, she is allowed to move to a better portion of the prison, where she can keep and nurse her child. Throughout the text, accounts are told of her father's repeated attempts to get her to recant her beliefs and visions she experiences. She is brought to a hearing before the governor Hilarianus and the martyrs confess their Christian faith. Her slave Felicitas gives birth to a daughter despite her initial concern that she would not be permitted to suffer martyrdom with the others, since the law forbade the execution of pregnant women. On the day of the games, the martyrs are led into the amphitheater. At the demand of the crowd they were first scourged, before they were executed. It is said that they gave each other the kiss of peace then died. They are venerated as saints in the Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches.

Sources: Wikipedia, catholic.org/saints

MARCH 14TH – ST. KATHERINE DREXEL



Place of Origin: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA

Birth and Death Dates: November 26, 1858 – March 3, 1955

Occupation: Founder of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacraments

Walk of Faith: Drexel was the daughter of an American financier. Her mother died when Katherine was five weeks old. The family was active in charitable works and distributed food, clothing, and money from their home twice a week. In her travels, she seen the poverty and destitution of Native Americans on reservation lands. When her father died in 1885, she and her sisters inherited a vast fortune. Believing that all people should have access to education, she continued that by founding and endowing schools and churches for African Americans and Native Americans in the South and West. In January 1887, she had a private audience with Pope Leo XIII to discuss a need for nuns to staff her mission schools. The pope challenged her to devote her life and fortune to the missions. In 1889 she became a novice with the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In February 1891 she took her final vows and, with a few companions, founded the Blessed Sacrament Sisters for Indians and Colored People, of which she was superior general.

Mother Drexel began a vast building campaign with the founding of St. Catherine's Boarding School for Pueblo Indians in Santa Fe, New Mexico (1894); an African American girls at Rock Castle, Virginia, (1899); more schools in Arizona and Tennessee (1903); in 1915 founded a school for African Americans that would become Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1925. At the time of her death, she had used more than \$12 million of her inheritance for her charitable and apostolic missions, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament had grown to some 500 members in 51 convents, and established 49 elementary schools, 12 high schools, and Xavier University.

Sources: Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, katherinedrexel.org

MARCH 21ST – ST. JOHN OF EGYPT



Place of Origin: Lycopolis, Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: 305AD – 394AD

Occupation: Monk

Walk of Faith: John spent his early adult years as a carpenter. When he was 25, he left everything he knew to seek God in the desert with prayer. He spent a decade with a hermit, taking direction from him and learning self-surrender. When the hermit died, John traveled and visited other monasteries for five years.

Finally, John settled at the top of a steep hill near Lycopolis, Egypt, and carved three small cells out of rock. He slept in one, used another for work and living space, and prayed in the third. Then he walled these cells up with himself inside and lived this way until he died in his 90s. He left a small window through which he could speak to people and receive food and water they might bring him. He only ate after sunset, and his diet was mostly dried fruit and vegetables—nothing cooked over a fire. He spent five days a week in conversation with God alone, and two days a week, he conversed with people seeking spiritual direction and advice. Crowds would gather on those two days to hear him preach.

Other ascetics and hermits saw him as an example and a father, and many people sought him out for wisdom, including the emperor. John was given the gift of seeing the future and knowing details from the lives of people he had never met. He was known and admired by the great saints of his time, including St. Augustine and St. Jerome. The cell he lived in was discovered in the early 1900s.

Sources: Wikipedia, FaithND, Catholic.org

MARCH 28TH — SERVANT OF GOD THEA BOWMAN



Place of Origin: Yazoo City, Mississippi

Birth and Death Dates: December 29, 1937 – March 30, 1990

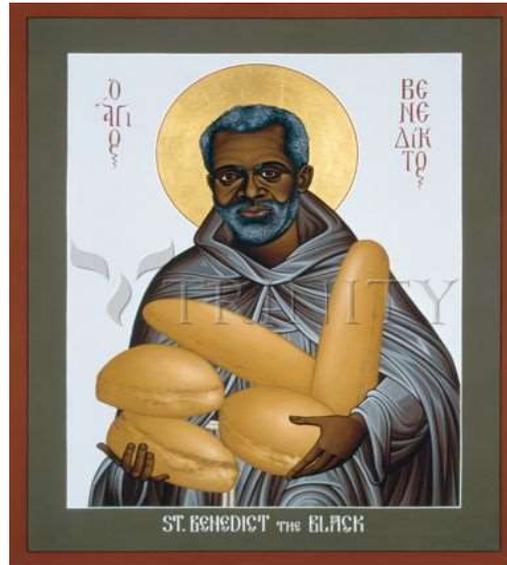
Occupation: Educator

Walk of Faith: Born Bertha Bowman, Thea was reared in a Methodist home. At the age of nine, with her parents' permission, she converted to Catholicism. She joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Bowman earned her B.A. in English from Viterbo University (1965); a M.A. (1969) and Ph.D. (1972) from Catholic University of America; and an honorary Doctorate in Religion from Boston College (1989). After 16 years of teaching, she accepted the invitation from the bishop of Jackson, Mississippi to become the consultant for intercultural awareness. In this role she crossed the country doing talks that would combine singing, gospel preaching, prayer and storytelling to break down racial and cultural barriers. She called on Catholics to celebrate their differences, retain their cultures, and to reflect their joy at being one in Christ. She helped found and served on the faculty of the Institute of Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans; helped organize the 1987 Black Catholic Congress; was the director of Intercultural Awareness for the Diocese of Jackson; and was involved in the publication in 1987 of *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal*.

In 1984, Sr. Thea was diagnosed with breast cancer. She prayed "to live until I die." Sr. Thea continued her gatherings seated in a wheelchair. In 1989, the U.S. bishops invited, and she accepted, the opportunity to speak at their conference on Black Catholics. Sr. Thea Bowman died March 30, 1990. A cause for canonization has been opened for Bowman. She has been designated a Servant of God.

Sources: Wikipedia, Sistertheabowman.com

APRIL 4TH – ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR



Place of Origin: San Fratello, Sicily

Birth and Death Dates: 1526 – April 4, 1589

Occupation: Monk

Walk of Faith: Benedict was born to African slaves who were granted freedom before his birth because of their "loyal service". A peasant, Benedict had no formal education. During his youth, he worked as a shepherd and was quick to give what he had earned to the poor. When he was 21 years old he was invited to join an independent group of hermits who followed the Rule for hermit life written by St. Francis of Assisi. Benedict gave up all his earthly possessions and joined them. He served as the cook for the community and at the age of twenty-eight became their leader.

In 1564, Pope Pius IV disbanded independent communities of hermits and Benedict was assigned to Palermo to the Franciscan Friary of St. Mary of Jesus. He started at the friary as a cook, but he was soon appointed as the Master of novices, and later as Guardian of the community. Benedict accepted the promotion, and successfully helped the order adopt a stricter version of the Franciscan Rule of life. He was widely respected for his deep, intuitive understanding of theology and Scripture, and was often sought for counseling. He also had a reputation as a healer of the sick and had the ability to read minds. Combined, these characteristics continued to draw many visitors to him. As he enjoyed cooking, he returned to kitchen duty in his later years. Benedict died at the age of 65 and, it is claimed, on the very day and hour which he had predicted. He is considered the Patron saint of people of color in the United States.

Source: Wikipedia, Roman-catholic-saints.org

APRIL 11TH – BLESSED LUCIEN BOTOVASOA



Place of Origin: Vohipeno, Madagascar

Birth and Death Dates: 1908 – April 14, 1947

Occupation: Teacher and a professed member from the Secular Franciscan Order.

Walk of Faith: Botovasoa was baptized and received his First Communion in 1922. He completed his studies in 1928 at the Jesuit college of Saint Joseph. As a teacher, he made it a practice after each lesson to read about the lives of the saints to those students who wanted to hear about them, often added his own comments and words of encouragement. He and his wife had five children; his wife was pregnant with their final child at the time of his murder. Botovasoa was among the first to enter the Crusaders of the Heart of Jesus, joining August 18, 1935 before becoming its treasurer in 1936. He was fluent in Chinese, German and French, and was a singer, musician and even parish choir director.

He desired to become a religious while still being married. In 1940, he found out about the Secular Franciscan Order and was invested in the habit and the order on December 18, 1944. His wife feared that he would abandon her to become a religious but he assured her he was happy being married. Botovasoa often fasted and dressed in plain beige trousers and a khaki shirt for he stressed that "it's the color of the clothes that tertiaries wear". In 1947 there was general unrest in the region and priests and nuns were being rounded up. On the day of his death, he was at home with his wife and children when four men knocked on his door at 9:00pm requesting he go with them to see the chief. The chief pronounced the death sentence at 10:00pm and Botovasoa was led off to be executed. Pope Francis approved the fact that Botovasoa was killed in hatred of his faith on May 4, 2017 and decreed that the late Franciscan was to be beatified on April 15, 2018.

Sources: Wikipedia, Catholicsaints.info,

APRIL 18TH – ST. MARCELLINUS



Place of Origin: North Africa

Birth and Death Dates: ? – 374AD

Occupation: Bishop

Walk of Faith: Saint Marcellinus was born in Africa of a noble family; who with two other Christians wanted to evangelize Gaul. They went to Pope Saint Damasus who sent them to Eusebius, bishop of Verceil,. He encouraged their mission and warned them that they might have to suffer. The three were ordained, and Marcellinus was consecrated bishop of Embrun by Eusebius and the bishop of Valencia. Saint Domninus was later consecrated bishop of Digne by Saint Marcellinus, and energetically protected his flock from the errors of Arius; eventually Saint Vincent succeeded him there.

Marcellinus built at a chapel at Embrun where he spent his nights in prayer, after evangelizing and healing all day. By his pious example, earnest words and miracles, he converted many to Christianity. A striking miracle was that the waters in the nearby baptistery were increased, without the human intervention, to accommodate great numbers of catechumens who, during the feast of Christmas, would be baptized. The same event occurred again at Easter, and the sick were healed by the waters. These miracles lasted for five hundred years and were verified by Saint Gregory of Tours and Saint Adon of Vienne

Saint Marcellinus died at Embrun about the year 374, and was interred there. Saint Gregory of Tours, who speaks of him in terms of highest praise, narrates some of the countless miracles which multiplied at his tomb.

Sources: Lives of the Saints, The Fatima Center, Book of Saints

APRIL 25TH – ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST



Place of Origin: Cyrene, in the Pentapolis of North Africa (now Libya)

Birth and Death Dates: 5AD – 68AD

Occupation: Evangelist

Walk of Faith: Tradition holds that Mark is author of the Gospel of Mark, the shortest of the gospels and probably written first. His name in scripture was John Mark and he mentioned in several places in the New Testament. A cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), followers of early church assembled in his mother's home in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). He was considered a disciple of Peter, not one of the 12 apostles. He accompanied Barnabas and Paul on a missionary journey (Acts 12:25). He later traveled with Peter as an interpreter (1 Peter 5:13). Tradition says that Mark wrote down the sermons of Peter, thus composing the Gospel according to Mark (*Eccl. Hist.* 15–16), before he left for Alexandria in the third year of Emperor Claudius (AD 43). Tradition holds that after Peter was martyred in Rome, John Mark went on to establish the church in Alexandria, Egypt, becoming its first bishop. He is considered to be the founder of the Church in Africa. The Coptic Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria, and the Coptic Catholic Church trace their origins to this original community. St. Mark lived out his years in Alexandria, where in 68AD when he died as a martyr while being dragged through the streets.

Mark's Gospel was probably written between 60 and 70 A.D., and was based upon the teachings of St. Aspects of the Coptic liturgy can be traced back to Mark himself. His feast day is celebrated on April 25, and his symbol is the winged lion. A later and somewhat legendary tradition states that early in the 9th cent., Mark's remains were taken from Alexandria and placed under the church of St. Mark in Venice.

Sources: Wikipedia, the Lives of the Saints, Catholic-online,

MAY 2ND – FR. CHESTER SMITH SVD



Place of Origin: Chicago, Illinois

Birth and Death Dates: May 3, 1959 – April 8, 2020

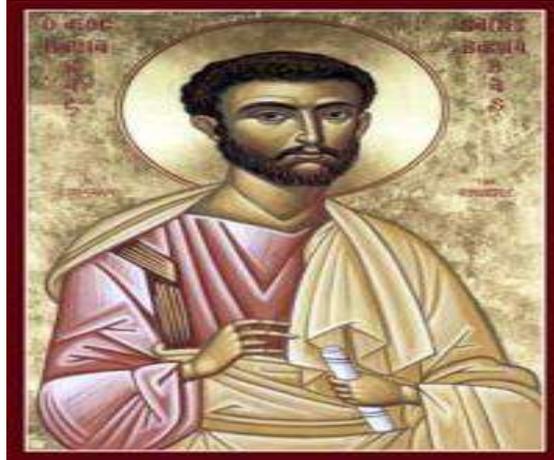
Occupation: Priest

Walk of Faith: Father Chester Smith SVD, half of the first set of African-American twins to become Catholic priests, died suddenly on April 8 at age 60. Father Smith grew up in Chicago's inner city and rose to become an international leader in African-American ministry and youth outreach. As teenagers, the brothers attended Divine Word Seminary High School in East Troy, Wis., and then Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa, where Chester earned a bachelor's degree in sociology. In 1982, the Smith twins professed religious vows in the Society of the Divine Word at Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Father Smith was an associate pastor at St. Anselm and St. Elizabeth parishes in Chicago, and St. Nicholas in St. Louis. He founded Ambassadors of the Word, a peer group ministry program that fosters youth rites of passage and cross-cultural experiences; organized the National Black Catholic Men's Conference; and served as president of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus from 2006 to 2010. He and his brother developed Boyhood to Manhood, a parish-based program to help young Black men. A founding member of the Bowman Francis Ministry Team, he helped design and implement retreats, leadership programs, and revivals that celebrate African and African-American culture within the context of the Catholic Church. Father Smith also co-authored two books.

Sources: nebula.wsimg.com, divineword.org/obituaries, chicagosuntimes.com

MAY 9TH – LUCIUS OF CYRENE



Place of Origin: Cyrene in eastern Libya

Birth and Death Dates: 1st Century AD

Occupation: Disciple, Founder of the Church at Antioch

Walk of Faith: Lucius of Cyrene is considered one of the founders of the Christian Church in Antioch, then part of Roman Syria. He is considered to have been the first bishop of Cyrene. He is mentioned by name in Acts 13:1, together with Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger, and Manaen as one of the "prophets and doctors" that were members of the church there, following the account King Herod's Death. The account in Acts 13 further states that they were praying and fasting, when the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul to undertake missionary journeys. Acts also has a discussion of how "men from Cyprus and Cyrene were instrumental in preaching about the Lord Jesus to the Greeks.

"So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord." Acts 11:19-21

"The Dictionary of African Christian Biography makes this observation" What is most notable about these five is their racial, cultural, and social diversity" (Arnold, 133). Their representative diversity emphasizes "the cosmopolitan character of the church of God used at the foundation of the Gentile mission"(Keener, 1982). "

Sources: Wikipedia, Dictionary of African Christian Biography (dacb.org)

MAY 16TH – ST. POSSIDIUS



Place of Origin: Northern Africa

Birth and Death Dates: 370 AD – 437 AD

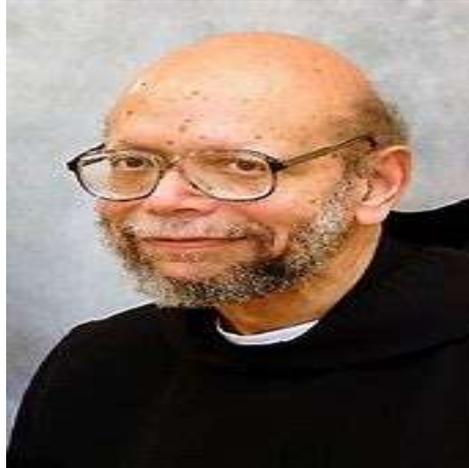
Occupation: Bishop of Calama (Northeastern Algeria)

Walk of Faith: A convert from paganism, Possidius was a contemporary and friend of Augustine. He wrote the first known biography about Augustine and included in this document a complete list of Augustine's writings. Documents from that time reflect that he was a let's it be known that he was one of the clergy of Augustine's monastery. There began a 40 year friendship that ended when St. Augustine died.

He followed Augustine's example and established a monastery at Calama in the Roman province of Numidia and in 397 was named bishop. There he faced opposition initially from the Donatists (404), and later the Pelagianism (416). In 404, he narrowly escaped death when Donatist extremists beat him and set fire to the house he was visiting. Twice he went to Italy to defend his Church. He was present at the Councils of the African Church in Carthage in 403 and 407, and was chosen along with Alypius and Augustine to represent the Catholic Bishops at the famous meeting with the Donatists in Carthage in 411, where he took an active role. In 416, he assisted at the Council of Milevum, where he joined with Augustine and three other bishops to compose a letter against Pelagianism to Pope Innocent I. In 430, when the Germanic Vandals invaded Africa, he fled to Hippo and was present at the death of Augustine. During this time of exile, Possidius completed his famous book, *The Life of Augustine*. In 437, documents reflect that Possidius and two other bishops were persecuted and expelled from their dioceses by the Arian Vandal king, Gaiseric. Possidius died in Apulia, shortly thereafter.

Sources: Wikipedia, midwestaugustinians.org, catholic.org

MAY 23RD – BROTHER CYPRIAN DAVIS OSB



Place of Origin: Washington, DC, USA

Birth and Death Dates: September 9, 1930 – May 18, 2015

Occupation: Priest, church historian

Walk of Faith: A convert to Catholicism in his teens, Clarence John Davis was interested in becoming a priest or monk. At this time in US history, many monastic communities did not accept African Americans. However after high school, Davis joined the seminary of St. Meinrad Archabbey, a Swiss - American Benedictine Congregation, in Indiana. He became a novice on July 31, 1950, took the monastic name Cyprian on August 1, 1951 and was ordained a priest on May 3, 1956. He became the first African American to join the monastic community of St. Meinrad. Davis received a S.T.L. from the Catholic University of America (1957), before going to the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium studying church history, obtaining a licentiate (1963) and a doctorate (1977). He returned from Belgium in 1963, and taught church history at St. Meinrad, and eventually became the school's first professor emeritus in 2012.

Cyprian Davis returned to the home in the midst of the civil rights movement. Attending the March on Washington he spoke about the place of African Americans in the Catholic Church. He was involved in writing two pastoral letters on race, "Brothers and Sisters to Us" (1979) and "What We Have Seen and Heard" (1984), wrote six books, dozens of articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia and dictionary entries, and received a grant from the Lilly Endowment to the study the black church,. The resulting publication was his award-winning *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (1990). He was a founding member of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (1968); and belonged to the American Catholic Historical Association and the Society of American Archivists

Sources: Wikipedia, saintmeinrad.edu/seminary-blog/ commonwealmagazine.org/

MAY 30TH – ST. OPTATUS



Place of Origin: Mila, Algeria

Birth and Death Dates: ? – 397 AD

Occupation: Bishop

Walk of Faith: Optatus was a convert contemporary of St. Augustine. He was a Bishop of Milevis, in Numidia, in the fourth century, and is best remembered for his writings against Donatism. His (untitled) works against the Donatists were an answer to Parmenianus, the successor of Donatus in the church at Carthage. St. Jerome tells us it was in a series of books written under Valens and Valentinian (364-75). Seven of those books have survived. St. Optatus deals with the entire controversy between Catholics and Donatists, and episcopal succession at Carthage. This mild doctrine is a great contrast to the severity of many of the Fathers against schism. Donatists and Catholics were agreed as to the necessary unity of the Church. The question was where is this One Church? Optatus argues that it cannot be only in a corner of Africa; it must be the *catholica* (universal) throughout the world. He replies: "We must examine who sat first in the chair, and where. You cannot deny that you know that in the city of Rome upon Peter first the chair of the bishop was conferred, in which sat the head of all the Apostles, Peter, whence also he was called Cephas, in which one chair unity should be preserved by all, lest the other Apostles should each stand up for his own chair,..." His argument was that the chair of the One church was established by Peter in Rome. In another place he reminds the Donatists "For what is an altar but the seat of the Body and Blood of Christ?" Optatus defends the willingness of the Catholics to receive back the Donatists to unity without difficulty, for there must be always sinners in the Church, and the "cockle is mixed with the wheat; but charity covers a multitude of sins."

Sources: Wikipedia, Catholic Encyclopedia, Catholic-online

JUNE 6TH – ST. CHARLES (KALOLI) LWANGA



Place of Origin: Buganda, Uganda

Birth and Death Dates: January 1, 1860 – June 2, 1886

Occupation: Catechist/Martyr

Walk of Faith: Lwanga was born a tribal member of the Buganda in the Kingdom of Buganda, located the central and southern part of modern Uganda. A convert, he was baptized on November 15, 1885. He served as chief of the royal pages and later major-domo in the court of King Mwanga II of Buganda. that undermined the authority of his office, Mwanga felt that Christianity undermined his authority as ruler and that Christian converts abandon their new faith under penalty of death. He executed many Anglicans and Catholics between 1885 and 1887, including Lwanga and other officials in the royal court.

One of 22 Ugandan martyrs, Charles Lwanga is the patron of youth and Catholic action in most of tropical Africa. He protected his fellow pages, aged 13 to 30, from the homosexual demands of the king and encouraged and instructed them in the Catholic faith during their imprisonment for refusing the ruler's demands. For his own unwillingness to submit to the immoral acts and his efforts to safeguard the faith of his friends, Charles was burned to death at Namugongo on June 3, 1886, by Mwanga's order. He is venerated by the Anglican Communion, Lutheran and Catholic churches. When Pope Paul VI canonized these 22 martyrs on October 18, 1964, he also made reference to the Anglican pages martyred for the same reason. The Basilica of the Uganda Martyrs was built at the site of the executions and serves as their shrine. The Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga senior (Luganda: Bannakaroli Brothers) were founded in 1927 as an indigenous religious congregation of Ugandan men committed to providing education to the disadvantaged youth of their country.
Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Catholic.org/saints](#), [franciscanmedia.org](#),

JUNE 13TH – SERVANT OF GOD JULIA GREELEY



Place of Origin: Hannibal, Missouri, USA

Birth and Death Dates: (1843-48) – June 7, 1918

Occupation: cook, nanny and member of the Third Order of St. Francis

Walk of Faith: Often called Denver's "Angel of Mercy" (or "Angel of Charity") Julia Greeley was born into slavery, in Hannibal, Missouri, between 1833 and 1848. While she was still a young child, a cruel slave master, in the course of beating her mother, caught Julia's right eye with his whip and destroyed it. Freed by Missouri's Emancipation Act in 1865, Julia subsequently made a living working for white families in Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico. Eventually she settled in to Denver, Colorado where she became a parishioner of Sacred Heart Parish in 1880. The Jesuits who ran the parish considered her their most enthusiastic promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Whatever she had to spare, she shared with the poor of her community. When her resources were inadequate, she begged for food, fuel, and clothing for those in need. To avoid embarrassing the people she helped, Julia did most of her charitable work under cover of darkness through dark alleys. Every month she visited on foot every fire station in Denver and delivered literature of the Sacred Heart League and other Catholic literature. It did not matter if they were Catholic or of another denomination. Annually, she sold fifty subscriptions to *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart* and approximately 200 Catholic almanacs, though she could not read, write or count. She was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis at St. Elizabeth's church, and was active until her death on June 7, 1918. She was buried in a Franciscan habit. As part of the Cause for Canonization, Julia's body was transferred to Denver's Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on June 7, 2017.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Juliagreeley.org](#), [archden.org](#)

JUNE 20TH - VENERABLE PIERRE TOUSSAINT



Place of Origin: San Dominique (Haiti)

Birth and Death Dates: June 27, 1766 – June 30, 1853

Occupation: Slave, hairdresser, philanthropist

Walk of Faith: Born in San Dominique (now Haiti), Pierre arrived in New York City in 1787, together with 4 other slaves, his owners and their household fleeing the rebellions that were the results of the French Revolution. Pierre was apprenticed to a local hairdresser, where he learned the trade quickly. When his master died, Pierre supported his master's widow and the other slaves and was freed shortly before the widow's death in 1807. Pierre took the surname of "Toussaint" in honor of the hero of the Haitian Revolution. He married Marie Rose Juliette, whose freedom he had purchased and adopted Euphémie, his orphaned niece. Both preceded him in death.

Pierre Toussaint was a benevolent and devout figure in the New York Catholic church community, donating to various charities and generously assisting blacks and whites in need. He and his wife opened their home to orphans and educated them; nursed abandoned people who were suffering from yellow fever; supported St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum; and also raised funds to build the original St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Vincent de Paul Church. He died June 30, 1853. In recognition of Pierre Toussaint's virtuous life, the late Cardinal Terence Cooke introduced Pierre's cause for canonization at the Vatican in 1968. In December 1989, the late Cardinal O'Connor had the remains of Pierre Toussaint transferred from Lower Manhattan to St. Patrick's Cathedral in midtown Manhattan where he is buried as the only lay person buried alongside former Cardinal-Archbishops of New York City. On December 17, 1997, Pope John Paul II declared Pierre Toussaint, Venerable.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Franciscanmedia.org](#), [haiti.org/dt_team/pierre-toussaint](#)

JUNE 27TH — ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA



Place of Origin: Didouseya, Egypt, modern-day El-Mahalla El-Kubra

Birth and Death Dates: 375—died June 27, 444

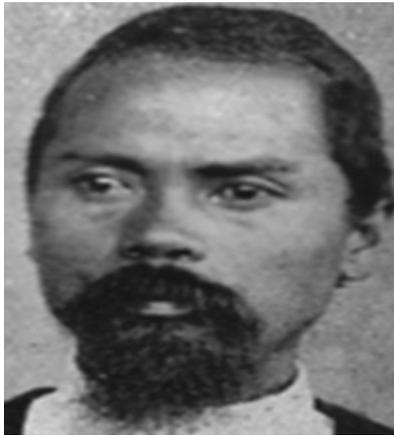
Occupation: Archbishop (Patriarch) of Alexandria

Walk of Faith: Not much is known about his early life. He is considered one of the thirty-five Doctors of the Church. Cyril succeeded his uncle Theophilus as the bishop of Alexandria in 412, when the city was at the height of its influence and power within the Roman Empire. As a Christian theologian and bishop, he was actively involved in the complex doctrinal struggles of the 5th century. He is chiefly known for his campaign against Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, whose views on Christ's nature and that of his Mother, Mary. The religious argument involved the relation of the divine and human within Jesus Christ. Cyril emphasized the unity of the two in one Person, while Nestorius so emphasized their distinctness that he seemed to be splitting Christ into two Persons acting in concert. The conflict escalated on Cyril's insistence that the Virgin Mary be called Theotokos (Greek: God-bearer) to describe the intimate union of the two natures in the Incarnation. Nestorius refused to accept such terminology, and their dispute was referred to a general council at Ephesus in 431 where Nestorius's view was declared heretical.

He came in conflict with the civil administration over the zeal with which he championed orthodoxy. He closed the churches of the Novatians, a schismatic sect that denied the power of the church to absolve those who had lapsed into idolatry during persecution. He also was involved in the expulsion of Jews from Alexandria following their attacks upon Christians. Riots ensued, and Cyril, who if not directly responsible at least had done nothing to prevent them, was forced to acknowledge the authority of the civil government.

Sources: Wikipedia, Britannica.com, catholic.org/saints

JULY 4TH – BLESSED RAPHAEL-LOUIS RAFIRINGA FSC



Place of Origin: Antananarivo, Madagascar

Birth and Death Dates: November 3, 1856 – May 19, 1919

Occupation: Religious, Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Walk of Faith: Named "Firinga" at birth, Rafael-Louis's father was a senior official to Queen Ranavalona I of Madagascar and captain of slaves belonging to the noble tribe of Hova. He met missionaries from the De La Salle Brothers in 1866 and after this meeting told his father of his desire to go to school to teach. Baptized during adolescence, he joined the school October 24, 1869; join the congregation in 1876, and was vested in the habit of the congregation on March 11, 1877. On November 21, 1879, he made his profession as the first native of Madagascar to join. He was elected in 1883 as president of the Catholic Union of nationwide Madagascar and made his perpetual profession November 14, 1889.

During his lifetime, all missionaries were expelled from Madagascar. Raphaël-Louis confronted this difficult situation with faith-driven superhuman courage that proved successful. As a sign of their recognition of this, the French authorities decorated him with the the Medal of Civil Merit on May 2, 1903 for his role in facilitating peace between Madagascar and France. As a result of his remarkable literary effort, he was named a member of the Madagascan Academy. On December 24, 1915 he was arrested and his room was ransacked and manuscripts were confiscated. An inquest started focusing on his writings and officials tried to prove that he was part of the secret V.V.S. sect and took all he owned. He was exonerated at trial on February 18, 1916; but conditions while confined ruined his health. He died on 19 May 1919 following his final reception of the sacraments. He was beatified on 7 June 2009.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [lasalle.org/en/lasallian-holiness/](#) [dacb.org](#)

JULY 11TH — MOTHER MARY THEODORE WILLIAMS



Place of Origin: Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

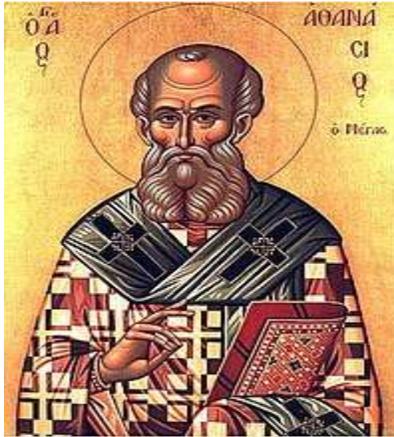
Birth and Death Dates: February 11, 1868 – July 14, 1931

Occupation: Founder, Mother Superior of the Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary

Walk of Faith: Barbara Williams was born in Louisiana where she was educated by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart and from the Sisters of the Holy Family, the second oldest society of African American religious in the United States. Knowing from childhood that she wanted to serve God, at 19, she entered the Sisters of Saint Francis Convent in Louisiana, but that order was disbanded by the Archbishop in 1913. She then entered the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore where she was received as a novice, and given the name Sister Mary Theodore but left two years later. From there she became a receptionist in a Washington, D.C. convent • She never abandoned hope of returning to religious life and held on to her habit • Her director, Father John Fenlon, a priest associated with the faculty of The Catholic University of America, who encouraged her not to give up on her vocation. In September 1916, Elizabeth joined Father Lissner, a French-born missionary serving Georgia's Black Catholics, whose dream was to start a community for Black women. She took her vows as Mother Mary Theodore and became Mother Superior of the Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary • In 1923, invited by New York's Archbishop Patrick Hayes, they came to Harlem to start St. Benedict's Day Nursery for working parents. As Harlem became a center for African-American life, Hayes made outreach a priority. In 1929, she affiliated with the Franciscans, so the Sisters became known as the *Franciscan* Handmaids of Mary. Overworked and sick with pneumonia, She died on July 14, 1931.

Sources: goodblacknews.org, cmswr.org/community/franciscan-handmaids

JULY 18TH — ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA



Place of Origin: Alexandria, Egypt

Birth and Death Dates: 296(or298) AD - May 3, 373 AD

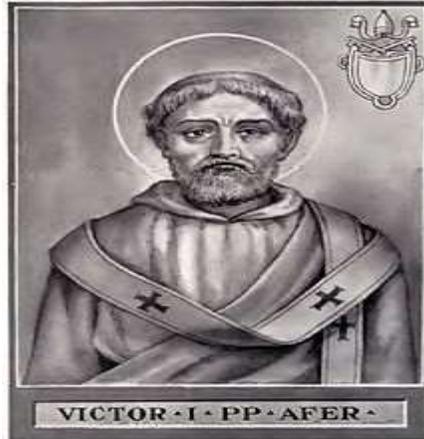
Occupation: Archbishop

Walk of Faith: "Black Dwarf "by his enemies, the short, dark-skinned Egyptian bishop was the 20th bishop of Alexandria. His intermittent episcopacy spanned 45 years (June 8, 328 – May 2, 373), of which over 17years were spent in five exiles, when he was replaced by the order of four different Roman emperors. Athanasius was a Christian theologian, a Church Father, the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism, and a noted Egyptian leader of the fourth century. In 325, at the age of 27, Athanasius began his leading role against the Arians as a deacon and assistant to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria during the First Council of Nicaea. Roman emperor Constantine the Great had convened the council in May–August 325 to address the Arian position that the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, is of a distinct substance from the Father. Three years after that council, Athanasius succeeded his mentor as archbishop of Alexandria. He struggled against the Emperors Constantine, Constantius II, Julian the Apostate and Valens over their attempts to control of the Church

Gregory of Nazianzus called him the "Pillar of the Church". His writings were well regarded by subsequent Church fathers in the West and the East, who noted their devotion to the Word-become-man, pastoral concern and interest in monasticism. Athanasius is considered one of the four great Eastern Doctors of the Church in the Catholic Church. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, he is labeled as the "Father of Orthodoxy". Athanasius is the first person to identify the same 27 books of the New Testament that are in use today. He is venerated as a saint in the Coptic Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental, Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran churches, and the Anglican Communion.

Sources: Wikipedia, christianitytoday.com/history/people/theologians,britannica.com

JULY 25TH — POPE VICTOR I



Place of Origin: Leptis Magna near Carthage (or Tripolitania) Africa

Birth and Death Dates: ? – 199AD

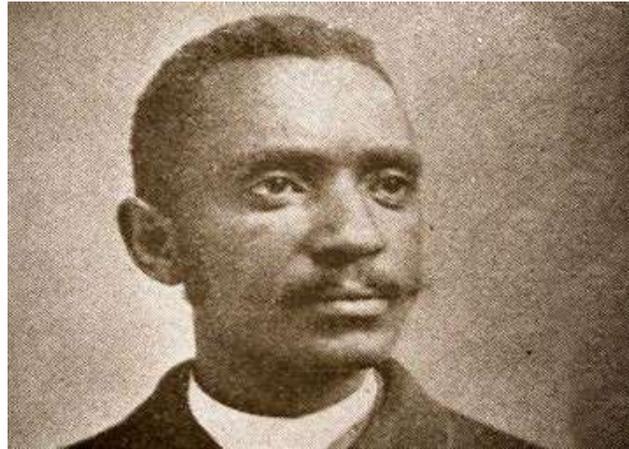
Occupation: Pope

Walk of Faith: Of Berber origin, it is believed that he became pope in 189 and the year of his death was 199. He was the first bishop of Rome born in the Roman Province of Africa. Victor is best known for his role in the Easter controversy, in which he attempted unsuccessfully to require that all Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus on Sunday, rather than in relation to the Jewish calculation of Passover. He was also actively involved in ridding the Roman church of Gnosticism(early Christian religious movement teaching that salvation comes by learning esoteric spiritual truths that free humanity from the material world, believed in this movement to be evil) and other heresies, including Adoptionism (asserted that in his human form Jesus Christ was the adopted son of God) and possibly Montanism(principally in Asia Minor a belief in the imminence of the Second Coming, practiced an ascetic lifestyle, and revered prophets and prophecy).

According to St. Jerome, Victor was the first Christian author to write theological works in Latin. Before Victor's time, Rome celebrated the Mass in Greek, and he may have been the first Roman bishop to use a Latin liturgy. Latin masses, however, did not become widespread until the latter half of the fourth century. Although he is traditionally venerated as a martyr, there is no evidence of his martyrdom in the historical records. Indeed, he seems to have been the first pope to have enjoyed close connections to the imperial household. His reign was marked by improved and peaceful relations with the Roman state.

Sources: britannica.com, Wikipedia, newworldencyclopedia.org

AUGUST 1ST – DANIEL RUDD



Place of Origin: Bardstown, Kentucky, USA

Birth and Death Dates: August 7, 1854 – December 3, 1933

Occupation: Journalist, Founder, National Black Catholic Congress

Walk of Faith: Born to slave parents, Rudd and all 11 of his siblings were baptized in the Catholic Church. He started his journalism career in Springfield, Ohio in 1881 with the Sunday News. While at the News, Rudd was a printer, reporter, and editor. He believed that the press played a large role in black advancement and national issues and problems such as legal segregation, equality for women, lynching, discrimination, employment, labor strife, and public-school segregation. He wanted to include all the injustices facing people of color everywhere, but specifically Africa and Latin America. Rudd also thought that editors and journalists had the ability to persuade and educate Catholic, business and civic leaders. In 1885, Rudd began his first Catholic newspaper called the Ohio Tribune; he later changed the name to the American Catholic Tribune. The heads of the diocese of Baltimore, Cincinnati and Columbus Ohio, Philadelphia, Covington, Ky., Richmond, Va., Vincennes, Ind., and Wilmington, Del. were all listed on the masthead of the newspaper as bishops who endorsed the newspaper. In 1887, Rudd began believing that the newspaper was important in promoting the church as a transformational institution that was capable of bringing equality and social justice for African Americans. A year later, Daniel moved the company to Cincinnati, where he started featuring articles that spoke out on black issues such as segregation and discrimination. Rudd's mission and philosophy came through: "The Catholic Church alone can break the color line. Our people should help her to do it." In 1889, Rudd helped organize the Colored Catholic Congress (now the National Black Catholic Congress). He was also a leader of the Afro-American Press Association, and a founding member of the Black Lay Catholic Movement. He died at the age of 79.

Sources: Wikipedia, aleteia.org, cruxnow.com, catholic365.com

AUGUST 8TH – ST. ISIDORE OF BAKANJA



Place of Origin: Bokendela, Congo Free State

Birth and Death Dates: 1887 - August 15, 1909

Occupation: Layperson

Walk of Faith: A member of the Boangi tribe, Bakanja worked as a bricklayer or on farms as a boy. He was converted to Christianity in 1906 and was given the Christian name of Isidore, through the ministry of Cistercian missionaries in what is today the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* (formerly known as the "Congo Free State" *Belgian Congo*). He was a very devout convert and catechist. Bakanja had a great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary that he expressed this through recitation of the Rosary and by being invested in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. His employer's agent had ordered him to cease sharing the Gospel as well as remove the scapular that he wore as a witness to his faith. Many colonists believed that Christianity promoted justice and fair treatment among the African people and tried to stamp out any signs of rebellion. His refusal to comply with the demands of his supervisor resulted in his being brutally beaten and chained.

As a result of the beating and persistent ill treatment he received, his wounds became severely infected and his supervisor sought to keep him from the view of the plantation's inspector. However, Bakanja was discovered and taken to the inspector's home for treatment. His condition deteriorated so severely that no further medical attention could help him. He died August 15, 1909 of the same year as a result of the wounds inflicted in "punishment" for his faith and which he bore patiently while forgiving his aggressor. Isidore Bakanja is considered a strong witness to the grace of reconciliation that can be experienced between peoples of different races.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [meditationsfromcarmel.com](#), [saintsresource.com](#)

AUGUST 15TH – ST. MONICA



Place of Origin: Thagaste, Numidia, Algeria

Birth and Death Dates: 332 AD – 387 AD

Occupation: Wife and Mother

Walk of Faith: Saint Monica was an early Berber Christian saint and the mother of St. Augustine of Hippo. She was known for her outstanding Christian virtues, particularly the suffering caused by her husband's adultery, her mother-in-law's cruelty and her prayer life dedicated to the reformation of her son, Augustine. When she was very young, she was married off to the Roman pagan Patricius, who shared his mother's violent temper. Patricius' mother lived with the couple and the duo's temper flares proved to be a constant challenge to young Monica. While Monica's prayers and Christian deeds bothered Patricius, he is said to have respected her beliefs. Three children were born to Monica and Patricius: Augustine, Navigius, and Perpetua. Her husband would not allow the children to be baptized. For years Monica prayed for her husband and mother-in-law, until finally, one year before Patricius' death, she successfully converted them.

As time passed, Perpetua and Navigius entered the religious life, but unfortunately Augustine became lazy and uncouth. This greatly worried Monica, so when Patricius died, so she sent the 17-year-old Augustine to Carthage for schooling. He did not change. Legend says that Saint Monica weeping every night for her son Augustine. She prayed for her son's conversion for 17 years, and at last, her prayers were answered. Augustine was baptized, ordained as a priest, and eventually became bishop of Hippo in North Africa. They traveled together, believing that they should evangelize the Word of God throughout Africa. However, Monica passed away in the Roman city of Civitavecchia. Augustine wrote extensively of her pious acts and life with her in his *Confessions*. She is venerated in the Anglican Communion, Oriental Orthodox, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic Churches.

Sources: Wikipedia, Catholic.org

AUGUST 22ND – ST. AUGUSTINE



Place of Origin: Thagaste, Numidia, Algeria

Birth and Death Dates: November 13, 354 - August 28, 430 AD

Occupation: Bishop of Hippo

Walk of Faith: Viewed as one of the most important Church Father of the Early Latin (Roman Catholic) Church, it has been said that Augustine's writings influenced the development of Western philosophy and Western Christianity. His many important works include *The City of God*, *On Christian Doctrine*, and *Confessions*. In his youth he was drawn to the major Persian religion, Manichaeism, and later to Neoplatonism. After his baptism and conversion to Christianity in 386, Augustine developed his own approach to philosophy and theology, accommodating a variety of methods and perspectives. Believing the grace of Christ was indispensable to human freedom; he helped formulate the doctrine of original sin. When the Western Roman Empire began to disintegrate, Augustine imagined the Church as a spiritual City of God, distinct from the material Earthly City. His thoughts profoundly influenced the medieval worldview. The segment of the Church that adhered to the concept of the Trinity as defined by the Council of Nicaea (325AD) and the Council of Constantinople (381AD) closely identified with Augustine's *On the Trinity*.

Augustine is recognized as a saint and Doctor of the Church in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Christian and the Anglican Communion Churches; Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation because of his teachings on salvation and divine grace(especially Martin Luther) held Augustine in preeminence among early Church Fathers.

Source: Wikipedia, britannica.com, catholic.org

AUGUST 29TH – ST. MOSES THE BLACK



Place of Origin: Ethiopia

Birth and Death Dates: 330AD – 405AD

Occupation: Monk and priest

Walk of Faith: Moses was the servant of a government official in Egypt who was dismissed from his job when suspected of theft and murder. A large, imposing Ethiopian, he then became the gang leader of bandits who terrorized the Nile Valley with violence. He converted from a life of crime and lavishness to one of asceticism (austerity and self-denial), but struggled with transition. Below are three examples of his faith in action:

Moses was attacked by a group of robbers in his desert cell. He fought back, overpowered the intruders, and dragged them to the chapel where the other monks were at prayer. He told the brothers that he did not think it is Christian to hurt the robbers and asked what he should do with them. The robbers themselves repented and joined the community as brothers. Moses was zealous in all he did, but became discouraged when he concluded he was not perfect enough. Early one morning, the abbot of the monastery, took Moses to the roof and together they watched the sun come up. The abbot said to Moses, "Only slowly do the rays of the sun drive away the night and usher in a new day, and thus, only slowly does one become a perfect contemplative." Once, when a brother committed a fault, Moses was invited to a meeting to discuss an appropriate penance. Initially refusing to attend, he came with a leaking jug filled with water (in another version a basket of sand) carried on his shoulder. When he arrived, the others asked why he was carrying the jug (basket). He replied, "My sins run out behind me and I do not see them, but today I am coming to judge the errors of another." On hearing this, the assembled brothers forgave the erring monk. Moses became the spiritual leader of a colony of hermits in the Western Desert. Later, he was ordained a priest.

Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [catholic.org](#), [orthodoxroad.com](#).