
Black Catholic History Month Novena



How to Pray the Novena

During the month of November, the Catholic Church celebrates Black Catholic History Month to honor our rich African American heritage. This novena was created as an initiative of the Interracial Task Force of the Diocese of Dallas in cooperation with the Diocesan Ministries Office.

The novena may be prayed any time during the month of November.

Start by making the Sign of the Cross and reading the Novena Intention (and you are also free to add your own intentions):

✠ *Make the Sign of the Cross*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us lift our hearts in prayer to honor the great cultural diversity within the Church, to reclaim the sacredness of each human person created in the image and likeness of God, and to support the cause of canonization of the first African American saints.

Read the biography of the saint of the day, and briefly meditate on the life of the saint, of their virtue and service to God.

Then follow by praying the following prayers:

Prayer

Unique for each day

The Holy Rosary

✠ The Sign of the Cross
The Creed
The Our Father and, 3 Hail Mary for the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity
Glory Be
The Mysteries of the Rosary
Fatima Prayer after each mystery
Hail Holy Queen

Litany of Saints

Saint Monica,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Augustine,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Martin de Porres,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Josephine Bakhita,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Venerable Pierre Toussaint,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Venerable Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Venerable Mother Henriette Delille,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Servant of God Julia Greeley,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Servant of God Thea Bowman,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Holy Mother of God, Queen of the Most holy Rosary,	<i>pray for us.</i>

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

✠ *Make the Sign of the Cross*

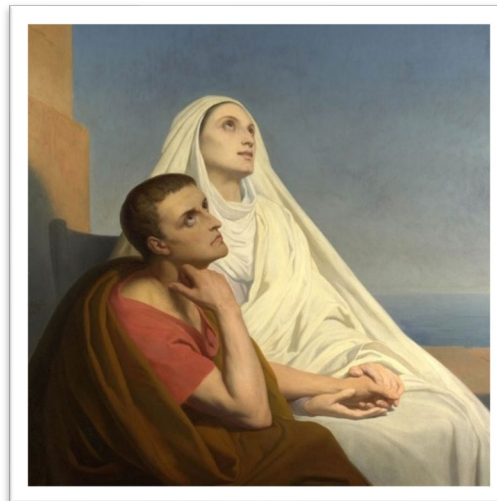
In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Day 1: Saint Augustine and Saint Monica

Brief Biography of the Saints

Today, we entrust our prayers to St. Monica and St. Augustine, her son. Monica lived her mission as a wife and mother in an exemplary way, helping her husband Patricius to discover the beauty of faith in Christ and the power of evangelical love. After his premature death, Monica courageously devoted herself to caring for her three children, including Augustine, who initially caused her suffering with his somewhat rebellious temperament.

As for Augustine, his whole life was a passionate search for the truth. In the end, not without a long inner torment, he found in Christ the ultimate and full meaning of his own life and of the whole of human history. In adolescence, attracted by earthly beauty, he "flung himself" upon it with selfish and possessive behavior that caused his pious mother great pain. But through a toilsome journey and thanks also to her prayers, Augustine became always more open to the fullness of truth and love until his conversion, which happened in Milan under the guidance of the Bishop, St. Ambrose. He thus remained the model of the journey towards God, supreme Truth and supreme Good.



Let us commend youth to the Virgin Mother of God so that, like Augustine, they may always strive for the fullness of Truth and Love which is Christ: he alone can satisfy the deepest desires of the human heart.

Excerpt taken from: vatican.va

Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Monica_and_Augustine.jpg)

Prayer

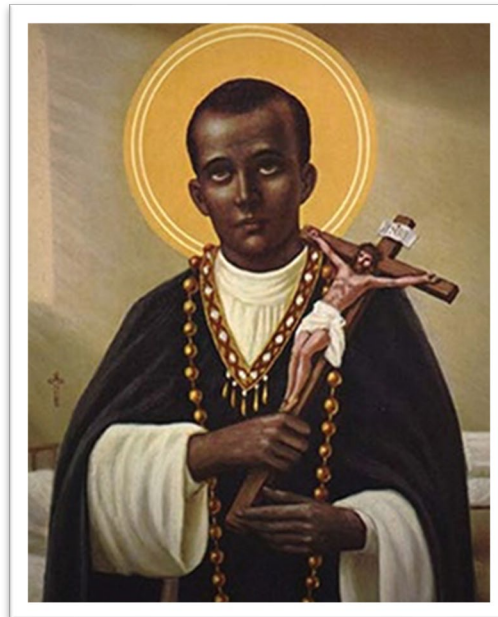
Renew in your Church, we pray, O Lord, the spirit with which you endowed your Bishop Saint Augustine that, filled with the same spirit, we may thirst for you, the sole fount of true wisdom, and seek you, the author of heavenly love. You also, mercifully accepted the motherly tears of Saint Monica for the conversion of her son Augustine, grant us, through the intercession of them both, that we may bitterly regret our sins and find the grace of your pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Source: The Roman Missal

Day 2: Saint Martin de Porres

Brief Biography of the Saint

Martín de Porres, born in Lima, Peru, was the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a black and possibly indigenous freed slave. The nobleman abandoned them. At 12, Martín was apprenticed to a barber-surgeon. The boy learned to cut hair and tend the sick. And increasingly, he prayed, until he was spending hours each night in conversation with God. The Lord was stirring his heart, calling him in love, but Martín was a poor, black boy with no father, in a country where the law prohibited descendants of the African slaves from becoming professed members of religious orders. Love was stronger than societal custom, however. It made Martín humble, and he asked to be accepted by the Dominican priory in Lima as a lay helper. Eight years of the humblest service, cutting the friars' hair, scrubbing, sweeping and tending to the needs of the poor, showed the prior, Juan de Lorenzana, that this "servant boy" had an extraordinary heart. So, when Martín was 24 and asked to be admitted as a professed brother, de Lorenzana decided to ignore the law and allow this young mulatto to take vows. When the friary fell into debt and the prior set out to sell some of the friary's valuables, Martín begged his brothers, "I am only a poor mulatto, sell me." When he was 34, Martín was put in charge of the priory's infirmary. There, all the love that had filled his heart through prayer could spill over in compassion for others. People felt the love in him. That heart followed the precept of charity – love of God and love of neighbor with a single, unified love – until Martín's death at the age of 59. In an almost superfluous sign, it was as if God smiled and agreed when Martín's body was found to be incorrupt 25 years after he died.



Excerpt taken from: [Vatican News](#)

Image Source: [Bishop Robert Barron/WordOnFire.org](#)

Prayer

O God, who led Saint Martin de Porres by the path of humility to heavenly glory, grant that we may so follow his radiant example in this life as to merit to be exalted with him in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Source: The Roman Missal

Day 3: Saint Josephine Bakhita

Brief Biography of the Saint

Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan in 1869. This African flower, who knew the anguish of kidnapping and slavery, bloomed marvelously in Italy, in response to God's grace, with the Daughters of Charity. Bakhita was not the name she received from her parents at birth. The fright and the terrible experiences she went through made her forget the name she was given by her parents. Bakhita, which means “fortunate”, was the name given to her by her kidnappers.

When bought by an Italian Consul, she was treated in a loving and cordial way for the first time since she was kidnapped. Bakhita was entrusted to the Canossian Sisters of the Institute of the Catechumens in Venice. After several months in the catechumenate, Bakhita received the sacraments of Christian initiation and was given the new name, Josephine. She did not know how to express her joy that day. Bakhita remained in the catechumenate where she experienced the call to be a religious, and to give herself to the Lord. Her humility, her simplicity and her constant smile won the hearts of all the citizens. Her sisters in the community esteemed her for her inalterable sweet nature, her exquisite goodness and her deep desire to make the Lord known. The fame of her sanctity has spread to all the continents and many are those who receive graces through her intercession.



Excerpt taken from: vatican.va

Image source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)

Prayer

O God, who led saint Josephine Bakhita from abject slavery to the dignity of being your daughter and a bride of Christ, grant, we pray, that by her example we may show constant love for the Lord Jesus crucified, remaining steadfast in charity and prompt to show compassion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Source: The Roman Missal

Day 4: Venerable Pierre Toussaint

Brief Biography

Venerable Pierre Toussaint, a philanthropist and founder of many Catholic charitable works, was born a slave in Haiti and brought from Haiti to New York as an apprentice under a popular hairstylist in the city. He eventually became the most sought-after hairdresser of high society women. Upon the death of his master, he gained his freedom and quickly succeeded as one of the country's first black entrepreneurs. He became quite wealthy, but instead of spending lavishly on himself, he supported the Church and the poor. He and his wife sheltered orphans, refugees, and others out on the streets in their home. He founded one of New York's first orphanages and raised money for the city's first cathedral. During yellow fever epidemics, Toussaint would risk his life to help others by nursing the sick and praying with the dying, "I have never felt I am a slave to any man or woman but I am a servant of Almighty God who made us all. When one of his children is in need, I am glad to be His slave."



Source: usccb.org

Image source: The National Black Catholic Congress

Prayer

Lord God, source of love and compassion, we praise and honor you for the virtuous and charitable life of our brother in Christ, Venerable Pierre Toussaint. Inspired by the example of our Lord Jesus, Pierre worshipped you with love and served your people with generosity. He attended Mass daily and responded to the practical and spiritual needs of friends and strangers, or the rich and the poor, the sick and the homeless of 19th century New York. If it is your will, let the name of Venerable Pierre Toussaint be officially raised to the rank of Saint, so that the world may know this Haitian New Yorker who refused to hate or be selfish, but instead lived to the full commandments of heaven and the divine law of love – love for God and for neighbor. By following his example and asking for his prayers, may we, too, be counted among the blessed in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg

Day 5: Venerable Mother Mary Lange

Brief Biography

Servant of God Mother Mary Lange was born Elizabeth Lange, a native of the Caribbean, and believed to be Cuban born of Haitian descent. She was the foundress and first Superior General of the Oblate Sisters of Providence (1829-1832), the first religious congregation of African American women in the history of the Catholic Church. On July 2, 1829, Elizabeth and three other women professed their vows and became the Oblate Sisters of Providence with the goal of educating and evangelizing African Americans. They educated youth and provided a home for orphans. Freed slaves were educated and at times admitted into the congregation. They nursed the terminally ill during the cholera epidemic of 1832, sheltered the elderly, and served as domestics at St. Mary's Seminary. Mother Mary Lange practiced faith to an extraordinary degree. It was her deep faith – in close union with Jesus – which enabled her to persevere against all odds. She lived through disappointment and opposition until God called her home in 1882 at the St. Frances Convent in Baltimore, Maryland.



Source: usccb.org

Image source: [The National Black Catholic Congress](http://TheNationalBlackCatholicCongress)

Prayer

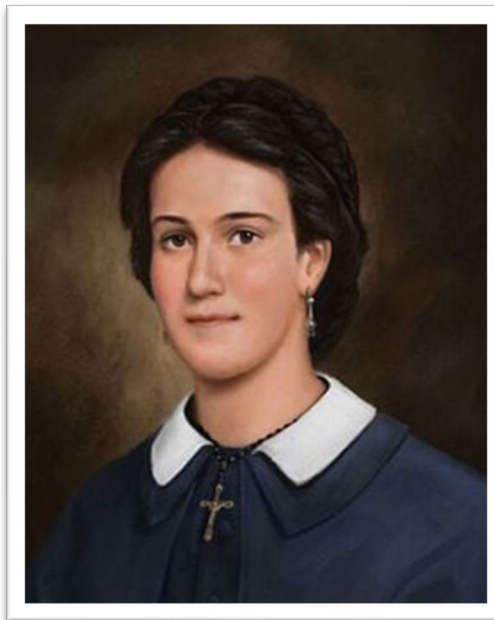
Almighty and eternal God, you granted Mother Mary Lange extraordinary trust in your providence. You endowed her with humility, courage, holiness and an extraordinary sense of service to the poor and sick. You enabled her to found the Oblate Sisters of Providence and provide educational, social and spiritual ministry especially to the African American community. Mother Lange's love for all enabled her to see Christ in each person, and the pain of prejudice and racial hatred never blurred that vision. Deign to raise her to the highest honors of the altar in order that, through her intercession, more fervent love of you. Heavenly Father, glorify your heart by granting also this favor (here mention your request) which we ask through the intercession of your faithful servant, mother Mary Lange.

Source: MotherLange.org

Day 6: Venerable Mother Henriette Delille

Brief Biography

Venerable Henriette Delille was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she would live her entire life. For the love of Jesus and responding to the Gospel's mandate, she was determined to help those in need. Henriette was also a person who suffered as she made her way through life, and she bore many crosses. She taught those around her that sanctity can be attained in following the path of Jesus. It was in this manner that she dealt with her troubles and major obstacles to achieve her goals. Some of the troubles Henriette met were the resistance of the ruling population to the idea of a black religious congregation; the lack of finances to do the work; the taunts and disbelief of people in her mission; the lack of support from both the Church and civil authority; and poor health.



However, Henriette practiced heroic virtue. She had faith, lived in hope, and practiced love. She was compassionate, forgiving, and merciful. She believed in justice and was not afraid to do what was right in the eyes of God. God blessed her efforts and, in 1842, she founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family. Henriette died 20 years later on November 17, 1862. Her funeral was held at St. Augustine Church. Her obituary stated, “. . . Miss Henriette Delille had for long years consecrated herself totally to God without reservation to the instruction of the ignorant and principally to the slave.”

Source: uscgb.org

Image source: [The National Black Catholic Congress](http://TheNationalBlackCatholicCongress)

Prayer

O good and gracious God, you called Henriette Delille to give herself in service and in love to the slaves and the sick, to the orphan and the aged, to the forgotten and the despised.

Grant that inspired by her life, we might be renewed in heart and in mind. If it be Your will may she one day be raised to the honor of sainthood. By her prayers, may we live in harmony and peace, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Source: HenrietteDelille.com

Day 7: Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton

Brief Biography

Venerable Augustus Tolton was the first U.S. Roman Catholic priest publicly known to be black when he was ordained in 1886. A former slave who was baptized and reared Catholic, Tolton formally studied in Rome. He was ordained in Rome on Easter Sunday at the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran. Fr. Tolton led the development and construction of St. Monica's Catholic Church as a black "National Parish Church", which was completed in 1893. Tolton's success at ministering to black Catholics quickly earned him national attention within the Catholic hierarchy. "Good Father Gus," as many called him, was known for his eloquent sermons, his beautiful singing voice, and his talent for playing the accordion.

Source: usccb.org

Image source: The National Black Catholic Congress



Prayer

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

Father in Heaven, Father Tolton's suffering service sheds light upon our sorrows; we see them through the prism of your Son's passion and death. If it be your Will, O God, glorify your servant, Father Tolton, by granting the favor I now request through his intercession (mention your request) so that all may know the goodness of this priest whose memory looms large in the Church he loved.

Complete what you have begun in us that we might work for the fulfillment of your kingdom. Not to us the glory, but glory to you O God, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are our God, living and reigning forever and ever. Amen.

Source: tolton.archchicago.org

Day 8: Servant of God Julia Greeley

Brief Biography

Servant of God Julia Greeley was born into slavery in Hannibal, Missouri sometime between 1833 and 1848. Freed by Missouri's Emancipation Act in 1865, Julia subsequently earned her keep by serving white families in Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico—though mostly in the Denver area. Julia entered the Catholic Church at Sacred Heart Parish in Denver in 1880 and was an outstanding supporter of all the parish. The Jesuits who ran the parish considered her the most enthusiastic promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus they had ever seen. Every month she visited on foot every fire station in Denver and delivered literature of the Sacred Heart League to the firemen, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. A daily communicant, Julia had a rich devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin and continued her prayers while working. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order in 1901 and was active in it till her death in 1918. As part of the Cause for Canonization, Julia's mortal remains were transferred to Denver's Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on June 7, 2017.



Source: usccb.org

Image source: The National Black Catholic Congress

Prayer

Heavenly Father, your servant Julia Greeley dedicated her life to honoring the Sacred Heart of your Son, and to the humble service of your children, especially the poor. If it be in accordance with your holy will, please grant this favor I now ask through her intercession. (mention your intercession) I ask also, in the Name of Jesus, whose Sacred Heart filled Julia's heart with love for all she met, that I may follow her example of humility and simplicity in loving you and my neighbor. Amen.

Source: juliagreely.org

Day 9: Servant of God Thea Bowman

Brief Biography of the Saint

Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA was a self-proclaimed, “old folks’ child.” Bowman was the only child born to middle-aged parents, Dr. Theon Bowman, a physician, and Mary Esther Bowman, a teacher. At birth, she was given the name Bertha Elizabeth Bowman. She was born in 1937 and reared in Canton, Mississippi. As a child, she converted to Catholicism through the inspiration of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity who were her teachers and pastors at Holy Child Jesus Church and School in Canton. During her short lifetime, many people considered her a religious sister undeniably close to God and who lovingly invited others to encounter the presence of God in their lives. She is acclaimed as a “holy woman” in the hearts of those who knew and loved her and continue to seek her intercession for guidance and healing.



Source: usccb.org

Image source: The National Black Catholic Congress

Prayer

Ever loving God, who by your infinite goodness inflamed the heart of your servant and religious, Sister Thea Bowman with an ardent love for you and the People of God; a love expressed through her indomitable spirit, deep and abiding faith, dedicated teaching, exuberant singing, and unwavering witnessing of the joy of the Gospel. Her prophetic witness continues to inspire us to share the Good News with those whom we encounter; most especially the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. May Sister Thea’s life and legacy compel us to walk together, to pray together, and to remain together as missionary disciples ushering in the new evangelization for the Church we love. Gracious God imbue us with the grace and perseverance that you gave your servant, Sister Thea. For in turbulent times of racial injustice, she sought equity, peace, and reconciliation. In times of intolerance and ignorance, she brought wisdom, awareness, unity, and charity. In times of pain, sickness, and suffering, she taught us how to live fully until called home to the land of promise. If it be your Will, O God, glorify our beloved Sister Thea, by granting the favor I now request through her intercession (mention your request), so that all may know of her goodness and holiness and may imitate her love for You and Your Church. We ask this through Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Source: sistertheabowman.com