



THE DRUM

Black Catholic Initiative Newsletter

APRIL 2021

Letter From the Director



Thank God Almighty We Are Free At Last

Happy Easter!

Jesus has risen from the dead and, as believers, we are free (Galatians 5:1).

Free to receive complete protection from Jesus no matter how bad the situation is or how dire it looks.

Free to know that, if we are truly repentant, he will forgive us our sins no matter how bad we mess up.

Free from worry and anxiety knowing that “the One who lives in us is greater than the one living in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Free to know that even when things are taken from us or we are corrected, if we remain close to God through his son Jesus, we will “bear much fruit” (John 15:5).

Free to know that if we regularly “eat his flesh and drink his blood” (John 6:54), we will have eternal life with him in Heaven where “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:17).

Wow, that truly is a lot to be joyful and hopeful about!

However, a key question for us in the Black Catholic community is: Can we be a people of freedom, joy and hope in a world that seems increasingly full of despair, brokenness and injustice? Can we still be hopeful when so much has been taken from us and we don't understand why? Like the early Apostles, can we be bold missionaries of the joy of the Risen Christ in a world that, in many cases, resists that message?

God our Father reminds us that, by giving us his only begotten Son (John 3:16) as a sacrificial Lamb, the answer to these questions is a resounding yes! So as the world tries to challenge our sense of Easter joy, Lord help us to “be of good cheer” (John 16:33, KJV).

As we continue the joy of Easter, as COVID begins to melt away and cold air gives way to springtime, there are many things to be hopeful about in our black Catholic community:

Black Catholic Virtual Mini-Summit

Cardinal Cupich and Bishop Perry will gather with pastors and deacons with their wives on May 12, 2021 to discuss the hurt experienced in the black Catholic community and to discuss ways that we can grow the Black Catholic church in Chicago.

\$2 million of new funding for Black Catholic Community

Two separate grants of \$1 million each were made by the Lilly Foundation. One is to fund a Tolton Spirituality Center and the second is to spread the social justice model developed at St. Sabina to other parishes/churches across the country. Both are a recognition by Lilly that there are aspects of black Catholic spirituality in Chicago that are worth scaling up and replicating.

Pilot Alpha for Black Catholics

Alpha is a way for believers and unbelievers to encounter the love of God and experience the joy of Christian community. It is a tool of evangelization. Parishes across the diocese have used Alpha as a way to create a “culture of invitation” which is essential to how we grow the Church. A pilot group of leaders from the Black Catholic community will experience Alpha starting April 22.

Finally, we have been talking about maintaining Easter joy in the darkness of our world. This is challenging, yet it is what God calls us, as his Disciples, to do. When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene at the tomb on Easter Sunday morning, he told her to tell the other disciples what she had seen, and Scripture says, “they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy” (Matthew 28:8). Lord, help us, like St. Mary Magdalene, to go about the work of announcing your Gospel to the world while we are “afraid and yet filled with joy.”

On the path of Discipleship with you,

Cliff Barber

Director, Black Catholic Initiative

Faith Lived and Witnessed

Faith Lived and Witnessed is a new section of the Drum that highlights the faith journey of Black Catholics in the Archdiocese of Chicago who live their faith in their daily lives. It is also an opportunity for our community to highlight and celebrate the work of committed Black Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Growing in relationship with Christ and the Church through Youth Ministry

I thought it would never happen — well at least not to me. Church was never my outlet when I was younger. After graduating college, I felt like I was missing a piece to my puzzle in life. I was invited by the pastor to serve as the youth minister at St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Chicago after I graduated college and it has been a huge blessing in my life. It was the piece of the puzzle that I was missing. Creating a Ministry called Youth on the Move, I gained several brothers and sisters in Christ. I made friendships with priests, deacons, Archdiocese of Chicago parish staff members and parishioners throughout this journey. It cemented my place in the parish and gave me an opportunity to give back to my parish.

Being a youth minister has taught me how to grow physically, mentally and spiritually on my journey of faith. Mentoring young people takes energy, time and wisdom. As I mentor those younger in age and faith, I must also seek out mentors for my own walk with God, people who give me wisdom to pass on to those younger disciples to whom I minister. I have been blessed to be mentored in faith by others, which allows me to be a mentor to the youth. As I look back on this journey for the past five years and how youth ministry has changed my life, I am thankful for this opportunity to be a leader in my parish.

This opportunity has shown me that the church is so much more than a building — the Church is a community of believers and all of us have a part to play. I'm grateful that I am able to use the skills that God has given me to lead others closer to Him.

What does ministry mean to me? Ministry to me is serving my God because I am one of His disciples. We are all called to do ministry and even minister, but in all kinds of different ways. The important distinction between what kinds of ministry we do is not who we are, what job we do or even what abilities we have it, is the calling to serve God. God equips us with a unique calling to play a specific role in accomplishing his mission on earth as we make disciples. Ministry is about giving ourselves and our time, talents and resources to bless and help others. When we serve in ministry, we will find our greatest joy and most fulfillments in life.

Sharing what Christ has done for me is contagious. My testimony, no matter how simple or complex, shows others just how great God is and what He can do in one's life. I want my testimony to be "Kianda was a great youth leader who lead others to Jesus." As I talk about Jesus, I am constantly teaching how to exemplify His love in our lives; we're not just pouring His love into other people, we're also strengthening our own walk with God! How amazing is this story, how God has worked in my life.



Kianda L. Boyd, Youth Minister

Kianda has been in ministry since the age of 25 and has served in various ministries such as praise dancer, Eucharistic minister, Pastoral council, Youth Minister and Young Adult Coordinator at St. Katharine Drexel Parish on Stony Island in Chicago. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal/Social Justice from Lewis University in Romeoville, IL and a Master of Science in Criminal/Social Justice from Lewis as well. She is currently enrolled in Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, IL for a Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies as an Augustus Tolton Scholar.

The benefits of the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program

I remember my first semester of graduate school at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago, IL. It was the same year that my son was beginning his freshman year of high school. I was instantly overwhelmed. It had been more than 20 years since my graduation from Howard University. I was also working full time as a Pastoral Associate at St. Columbanus Church. More importantly, I had to ensure that my son was acclimating well into his high school experience and adjusting to the rigorous academic demands that he now faced. I found out that one of the requirements of my graduate school program was to participate in the Lay Ecclesial Ministry (LEM) Formation Program at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake (USML). WOW! I was dumbfounded at the thought of yet another thing to be attentive to. To my surprise, LEM was one of the most enjoyable aspects of my entire graduate school experience. According to the USML website, “The Archdiocese of Chicago is committed to forming lay ecclesial ministers in their human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions.” Through my participation in LEM, I was stretched beyond what I previously knew to be my human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. I discovered what faith in action actually looked like from people who were actively and passionately working in ministry. “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists

and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

My three-year commitment to LEM included a weekend retreat at the beginning of each school year, always led by dynamic facilitators. It also included monthly formation days, held on Saturdays at USML. This is where we were introduced to diverse speakers, theologians and professors who were committed to conveying topics that were essential to the development of our Catholic identity. These subjects went beyond our roles within the parishes where we worked in ministry. The formation days taught me to think about things differently; to look at occurrences, people and situations through a spiritual lens. I also learned to be more reflective; to spend time immersed in prayer before almost every aspect of my day-to-day interactions. And I learned to follow God’s call. Although I was being equipped with the educational facts that I learned from my classes at CTU, I was now acquiring the tools necessary to embrace the peace in my heart to know that God was directing my steps.

I invite you to consider LEM, or something similar. Take this opportunity to grow within an institution that forms our priests because the Church needs lay leaders, people just like you and me. All of us could be working in ministry, doing the work of God. “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” (Colossians 3:23 NLT)



Jennifer Corliss Reid, the Pastoral Associate at St. Columbanus Catholic Church, is a native Chicagoan who grew up and currently resides on the South Side of the city. She is also the proud mother to her son Jordan, a photography student at Columbia College Chicago. She received her undergraduate degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and her Master of Arts and Pastoral Studies from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, IL. After working in the social service field for more than 20 years, Jennifer found her calling to work in ministry by pursuing and accepting a position at the Church where she grew up. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled in graduate school to gain theological knowledge, spiritual practices and learn ministerial skills and pastoral abilities.

New Pastors Named to Black Catholic Parishes



St. Martin de Porres Parish on the West Side welcomed Fr. Thadeo Mgimba as their new pastor beginning this past March. Fr. Tom Walsh stepped down after a long and fruitful ministry to the

parish. Fr. Thad was the pastor of St. Gerard in Markham and Ascension/St. Susana in Harvey.



The Bronzeville Parish Grouping comprised of Corpus Christi, St. Anselm, St. Elizabeth, St. Ambrose, and Holy Angels welcomes Fr. Bob Kelly, SVD as their new pastor. Fr. Bob is the current

pastor of St. Anselm on 60th and South Michigan. The new combined parish will be at Holy Angels on Oakwood Boulevard.



St. Thomas the Apostle in Hyde Park welcomes Fr. Michael Trail as their new pastor beginning July 1st. Fr. Trail is currently serving as associate pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel In Lakeview.

In Memoriam – Felicia Horton



The Archdiocese of Chicago and the Black Catholic Initiative mourn the passing of Felicia Horton, associate director of marketing and enrollment for the Office of Catholic Schools. Felicia passed away from natural causes on Friday, March 5, 2021. Felicia joined the OCS in the fall of 2016. Having previously served as the enrollment director for Seton Academy in South Holland, Felicia worked as a marketing and enrollment manager for vicariates III, V, and VI before becoming the associate director. Her positive attitude and love of Catholic education was evident to those who worked with her. Felicia was active in her parish and will undoubtedly be missed by all who knew her. Eternal rest grant her, O Lord!

New Names for Parishes in RMC

As more parishes continue the process of renewal through Renew My Church, several parishes have received new names as part of their new reality:

- St. Columbanus to have the temporary name of Ss. Dorothy, Columbanus and St. Clotilde until final name is decided.
- St. Philip Neri, St. Bride, Our Lady of Peace and Our Lady Gate of Heaven to become St. Josephine Bakhita.
- The Bronzeville grouping of Corpus Christi, St. Anselm, St. Ambrose, St. Elizabeth and Holy Angels are still discerning the new name of their parish.

Fr. Tolton 135th ordination anniversary April 24th



Saturday, April 24 commemorates the 135th anniversary of Fr. Augustus Tolton's ordination to the priesthood at St. John Lateran Basilica, Rome. Join me in praying the

prayer on Saturday for a miracle that would advance him to beatification. Recall he belonged to the Diocese of Alton (now the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois). Following difficulties with his first assignment in Quincy, IL, Archbishop Patrick Feehan of Chicago invited him here to work with a small group of Black Catholics worshipping

downtown at 9th and Wabash where Old St. Mary's was situated first. On July 9, 1897 he collapsed outside the Meyer Center at 36th and Ellis Street after leaving the train station while returning from a priests' retreat. The Sisters of Mercy were asked to take him in and they worked on him for about eight hours until he succumbed to the effects of heat-stroke. This happened during one of Chicago's famous heat-waves that gripped the city for about ten days of 105 degree temperatures. His parish of St. Monica at West 36th Street and Dearborn Street today would be located in Vicariate VI. Let us ask him for his blessing — we who have come after him doing what he did working with the poor and marginalized.

Canonization Prayer for Fr. Tolton's Intercession

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

2010 Bishop Joseph N. Perry

Imprimatur

Francis Cardinal George

OMI Archdiocese of Chicago

To report any spiritual or physical favors
granted through prayer in Father Tolton's
name, please write:

The Office of the Cardinal
Archdiocese of Chicago
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60653