

NOVEMBER – NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY MONTH

The National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus (NBCCC) of the United States voted on Tuesday, July 24, 1990 while meeting in convention at Fordham University in New York, to establish November as ***BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY MONTH***. The reason behind the selection of the month of November was the number of important dates to Catholics of African descent that fell within this month.

- ***Nov. 1 All Saints Day*** = an opportunity to review the lives of the hundreds of Saints of African descent in the first 300 years of the Church.
- ***Nov. 2 All Souls Day*** = a time to remember all those African lost to cruel treatment in the Middle Passage crossing of the Atlantic Ocean.
- ***Nov. 3 Martin de Porres*** became the first black American saint. He was canonized by Pope John XXIII on May 16, 1962. Throughout his life, St. Martin de Porres exemplified God's love for all people, regardless of their level in society.
- ***Nov. 13 The birth of St. Augustine*** in 354 A.D., the first Doctor of the Church from North Africa.
- ***Nov. 20 The death of Zumbi of Palmares*** in Brazil, South American founder of a free state for Blacks.

The first celebration of *Black Catholic History Month* began in November of 1990 in various cities in the United States with the celebration of St. Martin de Porres Feast day. The liturgy celebrated the 350th anniversary of St. Martin's transition from this life to eternal life. In Detroit on this day in 1990, Archbishop Adam Maida, the local Archbishop, was the celebrant for the Mass. Also present was the President of the NBCCC, Bro. Roy Smith, OSC. The Mass was held at St. Anthony Church.

In the world today there are 270 million people of African descent in the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world.

Worldwide Count of Black Catholics

- Africa = 141 Million
- Latin America = 105.9 Million
- Caribbean and North America = 21 Million
- In the United States alone, there are 3 million Black Catholics

There are 3 million African American Catholics in the United States.

- Of Roman Catholic parishes in the United States, 798 are considered to be predominantly African American. Most of those continue to be on the East Coast and in the South. Further west of the Mississippi, African American Catholics are more likely to be immersed in multicultural parishes as opposed to predominantly African American parishes.
- At present there are 16 living African American bishops, of whom 10 remain active.
- Currently, six U.S. dioceses are headed by African American bishops.
- There are 250 African American priests in the United States and 75 men of African descent in seminary formation for the priesthood.
- There are about 400 African American religious sisters and 50 religious brothers.
- The Black population in the United States is estimated to be just over 36 million people (13% of the total U.S. population).
- By the year 2050, the Black population is expected to almost double its present size to 62 million, and it will increase its percentage of the population to 16%.

Source: www.uspapalvisit.org/backgrounders/african_american.htm