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Black Saints: Sr. Thea Bowman

NCR Today

Black Saints

Nov. 19 Sister Thea Bowman

Did you know that a little Methodist girl born, Bertha Bowman, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, grew up to be a renowned Roman Catholic nun, teacher and scholar?

Sr. Thea Bowman became Catholic when she was nine years old. She later went to college and then became the first African American to join the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Wis. After 16 years of teaching at the elementary, secondary and college levels, Sr. Thea Bowman was invited to be a special consultant for the Catholic Church. She gave presentations around the country aimed at bridging racial and cultural divisions. She combined her gifts of singing and gospel preaching, with prayers and storytelling. Sr. Thea Bowman was diagnosed with bone cancer in 1984. Yet, she continued her fight against the evils that drive people apart, from her wheel chair, until her death at age 53 in 1990. Sr. Thea Bowman said she prayed "to live until I die" to live fully. And that she did.

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More about Black Catholic history

Blacks in Catholic Christianity have a long and vibrant history.

Much of that history is generally unknown to Black Catholics as well as to the rest of the faithful. On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate this long history and proud heritage of Black Catholics. During this month we celebrate the presence of our ancestors who kept the faith and are models of living the Gospel

life.

Sign up for our daily Black Catholic Saints email during the month of November to learn more about these holy men and women.

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