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Black Saints: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church

NCR Today
Black Saints

Nov. 25 Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church in Washington, DC, was formed because black Catholics were denied full participation in the parish life at St. Teresa's Catholic Church. The members of the "Mission of St. Teresa's" began the construction of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church. The parishioners used their own sweat equity to get it done. In August 1920 they began digging the foundation and mixing and pouring cement; work was performed in the evening after there after the day's labor. The land at Fort Stanton was purchased from Dr. J.C. Norwood, a black physician. Following a procession that began at Douglass Hall up the steep incline of Morris Road, chanting the litany of the Blessed Virgin, 525 church members watched as a twenty-five foot cross was placed atop their hill, and a new (but segregated) parish was begun for the black Catholics of Anacostia.

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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.

November is Black Catholic History Month.

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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