



My Dear Parishioners,

Praised Be Jesus Christ! For the first time in four months, we are once again wearing green on a Sunday! Green is the color of Ordinary Time in the Church and in so many ways it's been a long time since we've been in

Ordinary Time! Even now, our times remain extraordinary with things like Covid, Protests, Riots and so much confusion. Nevertheless, the ordinary remains. The waking up each morning and going to bed at night; the 24 hour day and the 7 day week; the sun rising and the sun setting. These ordinary things have not changed and it's good to keep this in mind. For it's only to the extent that we acknowledge the ordinary stuff that we will ever be able to live well.

Saints are those men and women who accept the ordinary stuff and do something with it. They neither curse nor acquiesce to their times; they are not blind or hardened by injustice. They see all things and choose to live a different way. Aware and vulnerable to all the problems, injustice and hate, they live different. And that "different" brought healing and blessing, making even the ordinary extraordinary. I close with a short bio of the first African-American priest and soon to be saint, Fr. Augustus Tolton.

Peace,

Fr. Rogers

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Born in Brush Creek, Missouri in 1854, John Augustus Tolton began life with the odds stacked against him. He began life without his God-given rights of freedom, dignity and equality; he began life not as a human being, but as someone's personal property-as a slave of a white Catholic family. His early childhood coincided with the Civil War; his father, Peter Paul Tolton escaped slavery to join the Union Army while his mother, Martha, remained the maid of her owners. Augustus Tolton was raised in the Roman Catholic Church; his mother was baptized a Catholic because her owners were of the Catholic faith.

Despite adversities, human cruelties and hatred by his fellow man, Augustus Tolton had the love of Jesus Christ in his heart. In 1862, he and his family found the courage to escape slavery by bravely crossing the Mississippi River into Illinois. According to one report, when they reached freedom, Tolton's mother turned to him and said, "John, boy, you're free. Never forget the goodness of the Lord."

Even though racial conflict haunted Tolton most of his life, he remained devoted to service in the Catholic Church. With the blessing of a loving man of God, Fr. Peter McGirr, Tolton was allowed to attend St. Peter's Catholic School, an all-white parish school in Quincy, Illinois. Fr. McGirr and others mentored and tutored him as they began to realize that Tolton was destined to greatness. After Augustus entered St. Peter, Fr. McGirr, who was the school's pastor, baptized him and prepared him for his first Holy Communion. God indeed had a plan for this young black man's life and the will of God would be done.

Augustus Tolton devoted himself to serving God by making his life a living example of God's words. Unfortunately, no American seminary would accept a black man. Without allowing his faith in the Lord to falter, Tolton graduated from high school and Quincy College. In 1880, with Fr. McGirr's continued support, Augustus began his studies for priesthood in Rome.. He was an excellent student because everything he did and all he accomplished were to glorify God.

Augustus Tolton, born a commodity to be bought and sold... owned as a mere piece of property... blazed a trail while following God's calling. He learned to speak fluent English, German, Italian and Latin, Greek and African dialects. He became an accomplished and talented musician with a beautiful voice. For the first time in his life, Augustus experienced racial harmony and total acceptance within the church. By the Grace of God, he finally came to experience the love of his Church, the Catholic Church.