



AMERICAN HOLY ONES HAND IN HAND

By Bishop Joseph Perry, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Chicago



During business sessions of the US Bishops Conference, a diocesan bishop may rise to commend the life of a Catholic whom he wishes to pass to the Congregation for Causes of Saints in Rome for consideration for the church's highest honors of beatification and canonization. These solemn moments bring assurance to the pastors of the church that the gospel has indeed been sown in the soil of this land as represented by individuals who have lived the gospel of Jesus Christ with heroic seriousness.

Despite the young age of the nation, the Church in the United States has added to the great roster of *sancti et beati, venerabili et servi Dei* our own contributions to *the huge crowd which no one could count from every nation, race, people and tongue ... before the throne and the Lamb, dressed in long white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.* (Rv 7). It stirs our souls to see these great ones depicted in art, statuary and stained glass and titled to the places where we school, pray and serve in Christ-like charity.

I serve as vice-Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God Father Augustus Tolton (1854-1897), a former slave who is acknowledged as the first priest of African descent in the United States. His *positio*

has been approved by the Roman Historical Commission as of March 8, 2018 which now moves to examine proposed miracles attached to his Cause.

With great hope African American Catholics wait to see which of six pending candidates will surface as the first of our ethnic stripe to be so beatified and canonized. Just one will bring forward to the ears of our vast populace the noble narrative of blacks and their long sojourn of faith through enslavement, segregation, and the current era of questions about dignity and participation in a nation still ambivalent about the contribution of its black neighbors. Thus, we look forward to an improved era of peace, hope and forgiveness in America.



Pope Francis, @Pontifex

Jesus changes our sins into forgiveness and our fears into trust. In His Cross our hope is reborn again and again.

27 Mar 2018, Pope Francis on Twitter