



St. Moses the Black, born around 330, was a physically strong Ethiopian with a bad temper who made his living as a thief. He eventually became a Christian, however, and joined the monks in the Sketis desert. He was chosen for the priesthood and ordained. Berber nomads killed him during a raid on his monastery, which he refused to defend. He decided he would rather die than go against the admonishment of Jesus to turn the other cheek.

Saint Monica, an African laywoman, is a saint with whom most black women can readily and easily identify, because Monica epitomizes the present-day black woman.

Saint Monica was born in Thagaste in northern Africa about 331. She was a devout Christian and an obedient disciple of St. Ambrose. Through her patience, gentleness and prayers she converted her pagan husband. To her son, St. Augustine of Hippo whom she loved dearly, she gave thorough religious training during his boyhood, only to know the disappointment of seeing him later scorn all religion and live a life of disrepute. Before her death Monica had the great job of knowing that Augustine had returned to God and was using all his energies to build Christ's Church, and that her youngest daughter had become a nun.

Today many black mothers wonder what they did wrong, that their sons forsake the Church when they reached adolescence. Many women today need the hope that their prayers and tears will be rewarded, as were Monica's by the return of their children to the sacraments. Feast day August 27th.

Historians tell us that there is more intimate knowledge available about **Saint Augustine** than of any other individual in the whole world of antiquity. Augustine the Sinner is all too well known. There is knowledge of him as a convert and author of Confession, but little is known of him as a Father of the Church and as a saint.

Augustine was born in the little town of Tagaste, Africa, on November 13, 354. He claimed that he learned the love of God from his mother Monica's breast, and that her early Christian training influenced his entire life.

He was highly educated, having studied at Madaura, Africa, the University of Carthage, and Rome. He was brilliant -- actually a genius and he used his great abilities to lead men to love God.

His thousand of letters, sermons, and tracts, combined with 232 books instructed the Early Church and have relevance for the Church today. It is said that Christian scholars through the ages owe much to Augustine, and that the full impact of his psychology and his embryonic theology will be felt in years to come. Blondie writes, "The Augustinian outlook alone allows not only the Catholic philosophy, but also the fully human one."

Augustine was truly a saint. He lived an austere life, performing great acts of mortification and penance. He wrote, "I pray to God, weeping almost daily. I have decided to desert Christ's authority absolutely at no point."

His feast day is August 28th.

St. Peter Claver was a black man born in Spain. Ordained a priest in 1604, he dedicated his life to the spiritual welfare of slaves. He is known for healing illnesses such as leprosy. Pope Leo XIII canonized him in 1887.

Saint Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan. As a young girl, she was kidnapped by Arabs and sold into slavery. She ended up in Italy, where she received baptism and gained her freedom, joining a Canossian order of nuns. For the next 50 years, she practiced such Christian virtue that people loved her very much. She worked miraculous cures and was known as a friend to the poor and weak. She died in 1947. She was canonized October 2000. Her feast day is February 8.

St. Benedict the Black was born a slave in Sicily in 1526, gaining his freedom during adolescence. In his early twenties, someone made a racial slur about him, but he bore the insult as Jesus bore the Cross. A group of Franciscan hermits who witnessed the event invited him to join them. In 1564, he joined the Franciscan Friary in Palermo, Sicily, working in the kitchen for 22 years until he was elected superior of the group. While superior, he enacted a stricter interpretation of the Franciscan rule.

St. Martin de Porres (1579 - 1639) performed many miracles in the name of Christ including miraculous cures and the raising of the dead. This Peruvian friar was a holy and devout man who did much for the sick and poor. For instance, he raised \$2,000 a week for the poor from Lima's wealthy (a princely sum back then) and founded the city's first orphanage. Because of him, the Dominican friars dropped the stipulation that "no black person may receive the holy habit or take the profession of our order." His love of Christ compelled him to live a life of self-imposed austerity. He fasted continuously, never ate meat, and spent most of his time in prayer. He was venerated from the day of his death. People throughout the world still credit his intercession for miracles. Feast day November 3rd.

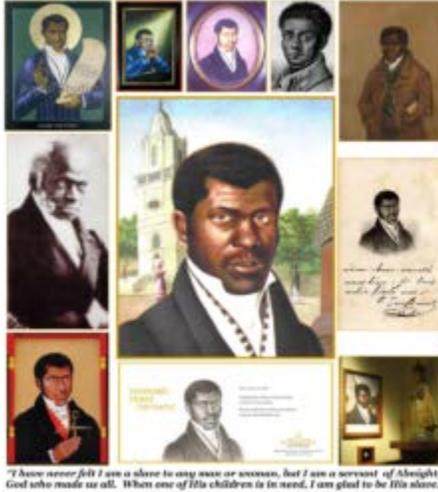
St. Antonio Vieira was born in Portugal. At 15, he entered the seminary, and eventually became a professor of rhetoric and dogmatic theology. He emigrated to Brazil, where he worked to abolish racial discrimination and slavery, and to alleviate deplorable conditions among the poor. He was canonized in 1897 on the two-hundredth anniversary of his death.

On the road to Sainthood

Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Clarisse Lange, OSP
Foundress, Oblate Sisters of Providence
 1794—1882



Venerable Pierre Toussaint
Philanthropist, Founder of Catholic charitable works
in the United States, 1766—1853



Venerable Henriette Delille
Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family
 1812—1862



Servant of God Father Augustus Tolton
First American Priest of African Descent
 1854—1897

