



HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Washington, DC

March 20, 2022

African American Marriages at Holy Trinity, 1795-1815

by Peter J. Albert

Holy Trinity's sacramental registers – chronological lists of baptisms and marriages – give us a rich access to the lives and voices of our founders in faith at this parish. The entries recording African American marriages in these early registers follow a set formula: date; the couple's names and, if Black, sometimes a note indicating their race and whether they were enslaved or free; if enslaved, mention of the person who claimed them and had licensed their marriage; lastly, names of the witnesses. Usually, the permissions were noted early in the entry, even before the names of the couple being married. Take this entry, for example (*Editor's note: The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the transcriptions that follow are rendered as found in the original*):

[n.d.] with Licence from respective proprietor[s] Married Jerry, slave of J. Theldkeld, to Margaret slave of Ann Sanders, before Many Witnesses –

*Liddy Butler
Margaret slave of Ann Sanders
Grand Mother of the bride*

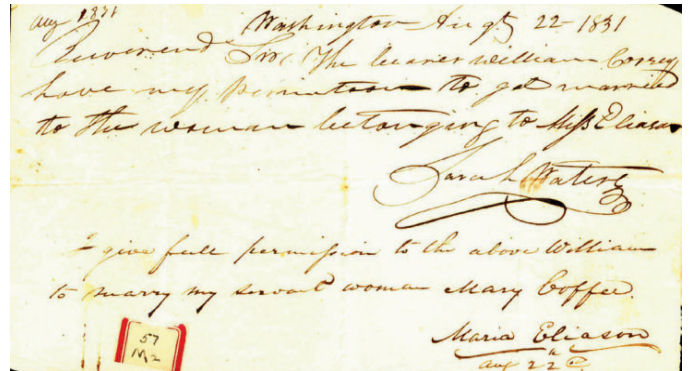
Examples of these licenses to marry can be viewed online at the Georgetown Slavery Archive site. This one, for example, dates from 1831:

*Washington Augt. 22-1831
Reverend Sir, The bearer William Correy have my permitson to
get married to the woman belonging to Miss Eliason*

*Sarah Waters
I give full permission to the above William to marry my servant
woman Mary Coffee.*

*Maria Eliason
Aug 22d.*

The importance of permission to marry – and the importance,



too, of sanction of marriages by the Church – is evident in the recurrence of the enslaved among the African Americans listed in Holy Trinity's early marriage registers. Of the 54 marriages involving Black couples recorded in the registers between 1795 and 1815, 38 (70%) were between enslaved people, and 9 more (17%) were between an enslaved and a free African American. Only 7 (13%) were between two free Black individuals – “Nigri sed liberi” (Black but free) as carefully noted in one of the entries.

Still, some enslavers might hesitate to sanction a church wedding, since church recognition of slave marriages could bolster the claims of slaves as they bargained to maintain their relationships with their spouses. Where permissions could be secured, they were carefully stipulated in the record of the marriage. For example:

*Novr 16 1800
Married with licence from respective Masters Joseph property of
J. Theldkeld
Susana property of Wm Keech
before many witnesses slaves*

*Dennis
Rebecca &c –*

continued on page 5

MAIN CHURCH

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Lenten Food Drive Hosted by 7th Grade Students

When: **March 26-27** (at each Mass)
What: Non-perishable items for food distribution partners

SOME Snack Bag Drive

When: **March 26**, 10am-12pm Corner of O & 36th St.
What: Snack bags for So Others Might Eat

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FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK

Ephrata-Be opened. These words from Scripture set the tone of Cardinal Wilton Gregory’s homily to the members of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC). This past Monday, some 70 of these adult volunteers, many of whom are Holy Trinity parishioners, assembled for their annual retreat at St. Patrick’s Church in downtown Washington. The Cardinal’s inspiring homily served as a preparation for the IVC community to view an exhibit titled, “Invisible Words” at the nearby MLK Center Library. On the library’s 5th floor the volunteers could gaze upon the 70 signs that a social activist named Wendy Abrams bought from the homeless, or unhoused persons.

All of us have seen such signs held by men, women and sometimes children near the stoplights of our city streets. As we encounter these unhoused persons, how often do we face the question, to give or not to give? How often do we really read the words on the sign and on the face of the person in need? The exhibit invited the viewer to meditate upon the words without being distracted by the question to give, or not to give? Moreover, each participant in the IVC retreat was invited to list one or two of the phrases that most struck them. These framed phrases evoking embarrassment particularly jumped out at me:

“Not my proudest moment. Never thought this could happen, Waiting on SSDI. Heart problems.”

“Financially embarrassed. Anything is a blessing. Please help me.”

“Please help. I am very embarrassed, ashamed and severely depressed to be begging but my shoes got stolen. I’m only working three nights a week and I’ve got a 4 year old.”

“This is awkward for me too.”

The framed cardboard phrases, some with spelling errors, made visible other emotions, such as:

“Taday is my birthday. Lost my mom on the 18th. If you can find compassion to help me in my dyer circumstances.”

“Poverty and homelessness will never be eliminated but they can be humiliated. I want to remind all fortunate people of what they’ve forgotten: the unfortunate.”

“Please help one sleep indoors tonite.”

According to the latest count on any given night there are 5,111 homeless persons in the District of Columbia; 681 unsheltered persons (i.e. persons “on the street”); 3,352 persons in emergency shelters; and 1,078 persons in transitional housing facilities.

About 50 of these individuals are served as “guests” by our Holy Trinity parishioners at the Saturday Suppers at Mt. Zion Methodist Church. The face of each of our guests reminds one of what Jesus proclaimed in the 25th Chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel. In looking into the faces of our guests and the framed phases of the exhibit, one does indeed “see the signs” of Christ.

The “Invisible Words” exhibit is scheduled to run Sunday through June 30. I encourage you to see it.

DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

The parish community prays for all of the dead every day at Mass. However, we encourage parishioners to mention specific persons by name during the General Intercessions when invited to do so by the presider.

Parishioners may also request that a specific person be remembered by name at a particular weekday Mass by calling or visiting the receptionist's desk in the Parish Center during normal office hours.

Names must be submitted one week in advance. Persons to be so remembered at weekday Masses this week are:

Week of March 21, 2022

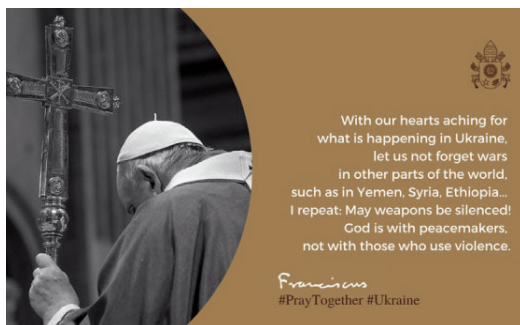
Monday	8:00am	
	5:30pm	
Tuesday	8:00am	
	5:30pm	
Wednesday	8:00am	
	5:30pm	Bill Nounan+
Thursday	8:00am	
	5:30pm	
Friday	8:00am	Li Gennenjs+
	5:30pm	
Saturday	8:00am	Dorothy Loquuko+

Pray for those who are sick: *For those we hold in our hearts*

Pray for those who are dead: *For those we hold in our hearts*

PRAYER REQUESTS

To add a name to these prayer lists, please email parishlife@trinity.org or call (202) 903-2801. You must be an immediate relative of the one to be remembered, or have express permission in order to add a name to these lists. The names on this prayer list will be mentioned aloud at Sunday Mass during the General Intercessions and will be published in the parish eLetter and bulletin.



NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION

Welcome to Holy Trinity! We invite you to join our parish. You may register at www.trinity.org/register. Questions about registering can be directed to registration@trinity.org. New parishioner orientations are held several times throughout the year. See the bulletin, eLetter (sign up at www.trinity.org/eLetter) and website for announcement of dates and times.

SACRAMENTS

Mass Schedule (Check bulletin or website for Holy Days)

Weekdays: 8:00am & 5:30pm (in the Chapel on N St.)

Note: Please see schedule for daily Mass times.

Chapel is open on weekdays between Masses.

Saturday: 8:00am — Chapel; 5:30pm Vigil — Church

Sunday: 7:30am, 9:00am, 11:30am, 5:30pm — Church;

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Every Saturday from 4:30pm–5:15pm or by appointment

Sacramental Preparation:

Persons desiring to receive certain sacraments at Holy Trinity need to be registered parishioners and are expected to participate in a preparation program. For more information or to register, contact the appropriate staff person:

- Infant Baptism: readmin@trinity.org, (202) 903-2808
- First Reconciliation/Eucharist: Anne Marie Kaufmann, (202) 903-2846
- Youth Confirmation: Anne Marie Kaufmann, (202) 903-2846
- Adult Confirmation: Anne Marie Kaufmann, (202) 903-2846
- Marriage Preparation: readmin@trinity.org, (202) 903-2808

Baptisms and Weddings:

- To schedule a Baptism or Wedding, contact Kathleen Haley at baptisms@trinity.org or weddings@trinity.org, respectively.

Sacrament of the Sick

Communal anointing is celebrated seasonally in the Chapel of St. Ignatius. Call the parish to request the sacrament at home or in the hospital.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process of conversion and faith formation for individuals who are interested in living the Christian life in the Catholic tradition. Those who want to learn more about the possibility of becoming Catholic are welcome to come to the Inquiry meetings held every Tuesday evening at 7pm in the Faber Room, Holy Trinity Parish Center. Please contact Anne Koester at akoester@trinity.org or (202) 903-2825. Holy Trinity also offers RCIA adapted for children and youth who are not Baptized (ages 7 through high school). Please contact Anne Marie Kaufmann at akaufmann@trinity.org (202) 903-2846 for more information.

LGBTQIA+ MINISTRY

Holy Trinity's commitment to accompany one another in Christ invites us to be more deeply aware of the diversity of our community and more welcoming to those who are marginalized by society or the Church. Our lay-led ministry embraces individuals who are **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer, intersex, asexual** and their families and friends. More information and upcoming meetings can be found at www.trinity.org/lgbtqia or by emailing LGBTQIA@trinity.org.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

PPC members share leadership responsibility with our pastor. As advisors to the pastor, PPC members assist the pastor in discerning, articulating and communicating to other parishioners the identity and mission of the parish, and they assist the pastor in assuring fidelity to that identity and mission. Contact President Tania Chomiak-Salvi at ppcpresident@trinity.org and Vice President Jennifer Dorsey at parishcouncil@trinity.org.

PRAY



PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

10 April

Vigil, 9:00am 11:30am, 5:30pm. Masses begin in Trinity Hall with Procession with palms to the Church

THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM 14-16 April

14 April	9:00am	Holy Thursday Morning Prayer
	8:00pm	Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
15 April	9:00am	Good Friday Morning Prayer
	4:00pm	Stations of the Cross
16 April	9:00am	Holy Saturday Morning Prayer & Preparation Rites
	8:00pm	The Great Easter Vigil

**All liturgies are celebrated in the Church*

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

17 April	7:30am	Mass in the Church
	9:30am	Mass in the Church
	9:30am	Mass in Trinity Hall
	10:00am	Mass at Holy Rood Cemetery
	11:30am	Mass in the Church
	11:30am	Mass in Trinity Hall

Praying in Sacred Space

**Lenten Saturdays, 4-5pm, Zoom
(April 2, 9)**

All are invited to prepare for Easter and encounter the Lenten scriptures in a way St. Ignatius introduces us to in the Spiritual Exercises. During the hour, savor the contemplative silence and share with others who are seeking God's presence during this time of returning to the Lord. Come to one session or all — no preparation necessary. All are welcome! Registration link may be found on the website and eLetter. For more information, contact Catherine Heinhold at cheinhold@trinity.org.

In Our Forbearers' Footsteps

A Pilgrimage to Remember Our Forgotten Black Parishioners
April 2, 2022, 9:30am - 1:30pm

In 1923, over 350 Black parishioners left Holy Trinity to found Epiphany Parish because of the ongoing segregation they faced here. They were motivated, one of them said, "by the same need and desire for freedom to worship that was one of the main reasons that our great nation was explored and settled." As part of our Ignatian Year commemorations, we will gather at Holy Rood Cemetery to pray and remember those brothers and sisters, asking God to help us see both our past and our present reality new in Christ. We will then walk/bus to Holy Trinity to continue our prayer and remembrance together. More information and registration here: trinity.org/ignatian-spirituality/in-our-forbearers-footsteps/

A Lenten Afternoon of Word and Song

March 27, 2pm, Church

As part of your Lenten prayer, attend "A Lenten Afternoon of Word and Song," presented by Holy Trinity Music Ministry. Come and be fed spiritually by readings of Pope Francis, Thomas Merton and Karl Barth. Be fed musically by the singing of Lenten hymns, choral anthems, organ and bassoon music written by composers J.S. Bach, Brahms, Buxtehude and Samuel Barber. Featured will be Dr. Kathleen DeJardin, Director of Music and Conductor, Matthew Ogden, Associate Director of Music and Bassoonist, and Rev. James Brobst, OMI, organ, and Holy Trinity lectors. All are invited to this Lenten afternoon of word and song.

LEARN

Women Who Stayed Winter Series: Women Who Seek Wisdom

For our winter series, we will welcome three speakers and for the fourth week we will gather in a hybrid manner (hopefully!). The first 3 weeks will continue as Zooms at 5:30pm. The final week will be an opportunity for participants over the past two years to gather at 7pm in McKenna Hall in person or via Zoom to reflect and pray together. Please register on our website.



March 21: Gathering the Graces & Wandering in Wisdom

LGBTQIA+ Ministry March Meetings

Men's Discussion Group

March 21, 7pm, Upper Room & Zoom

Register for all discussion groups at trinity.org/lgbtqia-ministry/



SERVE

HT Migrant Team

The HT Migrant team currently accompanies 15 individuals/families from eight countries. We are preparing to welcome an Afghan family through a partnership with welcome.us. How can you help?

* Donate grocery cards. (Aldi, Trader Joe's Safeway are preferred and may be left in the collection basket or dropped off at the parish center.)

* Volunteer!

- Accountants and tax experts needed to assist with tax filings and to teach budget literacy.
- Bike Repair person needed to service donated bikes.
- * Make a financial donation to the HT Migrant Team.

trinity.org/social-justice/migrants-refugees

African American Marriages at HT *continued from page 1*

The witnesses of record at these marriages were usually Black, although former enslavers might also serve:

eodem Die [April 9, 1804] with licence from respective Masters Viz Charles Boarman & George Fenwick Married Sam & Henny before their Masters & many other witnesses

Often, enslaved and free African Americans collaborated as witnesses at marriages:

April 3. 1803 with Licence from their Master James Neville married Richard procter & Liddy Green before these witnesses

*Liddy Butler
Pol – slaves
Suck &c*

A number of African Americans served as witnesses at more than one of these marriages. Liddy and Lucy Butler, for example, who appeared so often as sponsors in Holy Trinity's baptismal records, were called upon again, with Lucy a witness on three occasions and Liddy five times. Various other members of the enslaved community at Holy Trinity also apparently served more than once, although this is difficult to establish definitively since only their first names are given in the record.

Members of the bride or groom's families served as witnesses in at least 9 of these 54 early marriages:

*April 13, 1800
Married with permission from Master & Mistress Viz Mr Joseph Semmes & Miss Mary Doyne. George. & Monica before the following witnesses*

*Charles Pater [father] spouse
Anne Mater [mother] spouse
Ralph Butler &c –*

Even if enslaved, an entire family or even the larger community might well gather together for a wedding:

*May 3d 1801
Married with liberty from Mrs Mary Fenwick her two slaves William & Sarah before the greatest part of ther family –*

Or, again:

*1807
April 12. Married with liberty from respective owners (Viz Mr Clemt Sewall & Miss Eliza Lee) jerard & lucy before a great number of persons in Trinity Church*

*as also before Richard Queen.
Ignatius Clarke –*

And, as with the marriage of David Thomas and Philis (she was enslaved), and the baptisms of their children Hariot and Sarah Ann, noted in the previous article in this series, one can trace in parish records some of the births born to these unions, the creation of these new families in our parish.

Holy Trinity's early sacramental registers offer us precious shards of evidence, fragments of memory from the lives of African American founders of our parish, suggestions of their nascent

families, hints of their networks of relationship. Reading in these registers we are only able to see dimly, but the registers do enable us to begin to make out the presence of our Black brothers and sisters from so long ago, the shape of their lives here in our parish.✠

This article has been edited for print. To read the unabridged version and for citations, please visit curavirtualis.org/post/african-american-marriages-at-holy-trinity-1795-1815

CONNECT

Welcome Daniel Markham

Joining us at Mass this weekend is Daniel Markham, a writer from Illinois on a year-long trip across the country, attending Mass in every state in the country, plus here in the District and Puerto Rico. At each parish he visits, he will write about someone or something taking place there, with the collection of stories published in the 2022 book, *52 Masses*. He will be available after Mass if you're interested in sharing information about our parish or learning about his experiences and hopes for the book.

Gardening Committee to Meet Saturdays

Starting April 2

The Gardening Committee will meet on Saturdays starting April 2 to prepare the Holy Trinity gardens for the upcoming Easter Season and the annual Garden Party to be held May 13. Members will meet at 9am between the Chapel and the shed on **April 2, 9, 16, 30 and May 7**. Gardeners should bring a bottle of water and gloves. Contact Stephanie Philbin with questions. stephaniep@starpower.net.

Grief Support Group

Holy Trinity's Grief Support Group began its spring session. These sessions will meet on six consecutive Saturdays beginning March 5 from 10:30am until 12:30pm. Information is available on the parish website. To register, please contact Peggy Cloherty 301-320-1775 mlcloherty@verizon.net or Joe Brittain 202-658-8791 jbrittain3@verizon.net.

The Separated, Divorced, & Widowed Support Group

The group meets Monday evenings at 8:00pm on Zoom, except on the 2nd Saturday of each month, when it meets in person at Holy Trinity. Please contact Jack Harllee at jackharllee@gmail.com for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Trinity is Hiring!

- 4th Grade Assistant Teacher
- Substitutes Teachers

For more information, visit htsdc.org/careers

- Coordinator of Youth Ministry
- Receptionist
- Administrative Assistant

For more information, visit trinity.org/jobs



Sunday, March 20

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15 | 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12 | Luke 13:1-9

Monday, March 21

MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

2 Kings 5:1-15ab | Luke 4:24-30

9:00am

Morning Prayer

Zoom

7:00pm

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Women's Discussion

Zoom

8:00pm

Separated/Divorced/Widowed Support Group

Zoom

Tuesday, March 22

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Daniel 3:25, 34-43 | Matthew 18:21-35

6:00pm

Ignatian Training Program

Zoom

7:00pm

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

McKenna Hall

7:30pm

Pray the Rosary with Fr. Gillespie

Zoom

Wednesday, March 23

WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9 | Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday, March 24

THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Jeremiah 7:23-28 | Luke 11:14-23

6:05pm

Christian Meditation

Chapel

7:00pm

Young Adult Faith Sharing

Chapel

7:15pm

Book Discussion Group

Zoom

Friday, March 25

SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10 | Luke 1:26-38

9:00am

Morning Prayer

Zoom

Saturday, March 26

SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Hosea 6:1-6 | Luke 18:9-14

7:30am

Lenten Food Drive Hosted by 7th Grade

Church

9:00am

Zen Meditation

Church

10:00am

SOME Snack Bag Drive

Holy Trinity

10:30am

Grief Support Group

Parish Center Library

4:00pm

Praying in Sacred Space

Zoom

Sunday, March 27

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12 | 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 | Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

10:15am

Lenten Food Drive Hosted by 7th Grade

Church

7:00pm

An Afternoon of Lenten Word & Song

Parish Center Library

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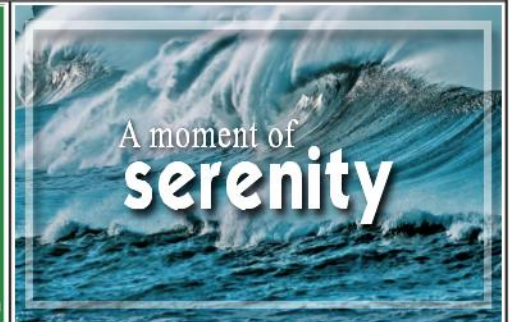
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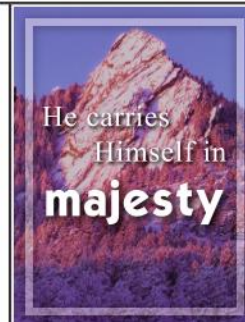
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