Black Catholic History Month



On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate the long history and proud heritage of Black Catholics. It also marks a time to share in remembrance the saints and souls of Africa and the African Diaspora.

Since 2020, a group of parishioners have been researching and publishing articles on the role of slavery, segregation, and race in Holy Trinity's history. The group has expanded to include parishioners from Epiphany Catholic Church and St. Augustine Catholic Church. This special bulletin issue highlights excerpts of this important work. The full history series may be found at *trinity.org/holy-trinity-history/*

On the Road to Sainthood: Leaders of African Descent



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Enslavement and Emancipation at Holy Trinity

BY PETER J. ALBERT

And it shall come to pass . . . that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve (Isaiah 14:3)

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation ending slavery in the District of Columbia. The Emancipation Act freed slaves in the District, compensated slaveowners loyal to the Union, and encouraged the newly freed to emigrate. Within months, the act's oversight board approved compensation for some 2,989 African Americans who had been enslaved here. The enslaved, however, received no compensation.

How were Holy Trinity parishioners engaged with slavery? What was the impact of the Emancipation Act? What became of those freed?

Holy Trinity's pew rent records, rediscovered this summer through the research of the Holy Trinity History Committee, help us answer these questions. In the absence of parish membership lists, pew rent records give us proxy rosters of parishioners, both White and African American, for much of the nineteenth century. Comparing names in the pew rent records with those in the District of Columbia's emancipation records helps us identify slaveholders in the parish as well as many of those they enslaved.

What, then, are some of our initial findings? Of the 54 White parishioners who rented pews at Holy Trinity between 1832 and 1833, whose names can be found in the 1840 census, 31 (57%) were enslavers. They enslaved 77 African Americans. Of the 53 White parishioners renting pews between 1842 and 1851 who can be found in the 1850 census, 32 (60%) were enslavers. They enslaved 77 African Americans. Of the 76 White parishioners renting pews in 1862 who can be found in the 1860 census or the District's emancipation records, 32 (42%) were slave owners. Those in the emancipation records alone - 23 parishioners enslaved 111 African Americans, for whom they were paid \$30,178.20 by the emancipation commissioners -\$884,941.35 in 2022 dollars. Nine parishioners, identified in the 1860 census but not found in the emancipation records, enslaved 35 additional African Americans.

Who were these slaves? What became of them? In this brief article we can present only bare outlines of some of their stories. Unless otherwise noted, enslavers named in this article were parishioners who appear in our pew rent records. Slaves named here were enslaved by these parishioners and appear in the District of Columbia's emancipation records under their enslavers' names. They can then sometimes be found in our parish records.

Five of the freed rented pews at Holy Trinity, either during or after their enslavement:

Caroline Butler Gray rented a pew between 1854 and 1865. She was the slave of Joseph Fearson of Georgetown, who bought her and her children Jane Agnes and Lucy in Montgomery County, Md. Caroline's daughter Jane had 5 children while enslaved by Fearson – Frank, Benjamin,

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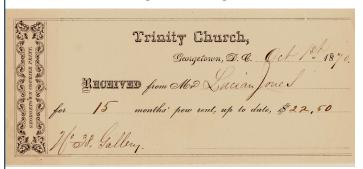
Diagram of White seating in the main Church at Holy Trinity, c. 1870. Holy Trinity Church Archives, Booth Center, Georgetown University.

Phebe, Nebraska Bill, and Abraham Dixie. Caroline's husband, Hiram (or Hyman) Gray, was enslaved by a Mr. Summers, who does not appear in the emancipation records nor in our pew rent records. Two of Caroline's daughters were baptized at Holy Trinity – Harriett Ann in 1837 and Jane Agnes in 1844. After emancipation, the family lived in Georgetown.

Ellen Worthy rented a seat in a pew from 1857 to 1859 while she was the slave of Sarah Simpson of Georgetown, whose husband bought Worthy in Washington. After emancipation Worthy left Georgetown and in the 1880s was working as a domestic elsewhere in the District.

Enslaved by Mary Bibb of Georgetown, Harriet Williams had been brought here from Kentucky. After emancipation she continued to live in Georgetown together with her husband Logan Williams, a barber, also from Kentucky, and their children Charles and Mary. She rented a pew at Holy Trinity in 1862. Employed as a domestic, she died in 1903 and was buried at Holy Rood Cemetery.

Lucian Jones was the slave of Alfred Boucher, who purchased him in Georgetown. Lucian rented a pew between 1867 and 1871. Initially paying his pew rent in cash, he later pumped the bellows for the church organ in lieu of making cash payments. According to city directories, he worked as a teamster or cart driver after his emancipation, and later, after moving out of Georgetown, was a laborer.



Lucian Jones pew payment, 1870

Ann Carter was enslaved by Mary Helen Keith Forrest. After she was freed, Carter lived in Georgetown – in 1870 with her daughter Sallie and son John who were emancipated with her; by 1880 she was a widow and lived with Sallie, John, and two grandchildren, Charles and William. She rented a pew at Holy Trinity from 1874 to 1876.

Few of the formerly enslaved appear in our parish records as pew renters, however.

Two sisters, **Hannah** and **Rachel Ogle**, were acquired when children by Lewis Brooks of Georgetown from an estate in Anne Arundel County, Md. After emancipation, Rachel married Daniel Carroll, a laborer, and Hannah lived with them in Georgetown. The Carrolls had 5 children (Mary, William, Forrest, Daniel, and Marcellus); Daniel was a carter and Hannah a domestic. Mary Rebecca was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1867, William Henry in 1869, Daniel Isaac in 1876, Forrest Thomas and Marcellus in 1880; Hannah Ogle was the godmother of Mary, William,

and Forrest. Records suggest Mary was buried at Holy Rood Cemetery in 1886. By 1900, Rachel and Daniel had both died, and Hannah, 73, was no longer living in Georgetown. Working as a laundress, she was head of the family and had eight nieces and nephews living with her.

While enslaved, **Ignatius** (Nace) Foster, a carpenter, worked in a household that included 16 slaves – 7 hired out for wages, 3 who worked at home, and 6 children. They were enslaved by Mary Ann Clarke, who claimed "the wages derived from her servants have for many years been her only means of support," without which "she would be entirely destitute." Foster worked as a laborer after his emancipation and lived in Georgetown with his wife **Mary Ann Norris** Foster, who had been enslaved by Pierce Shoemaker. Their children included Tobias, Evaline, Benjamin, Annie, Cornelius, Catherine, Fannie, Charles, and Mary, several of whom had been enslaved by Shoemaker along with their mother. Annie (Mary Ann Eliza) was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1854, Cornelius in 1856, Catherine Louisa in 1858, and Charles James in 1869.

Rachel Jackson, Nace Foster's mother, and the mother or grandmother of all but one of those enslaved with him, lived in the same household as he did. In 1870, at the age of 73, she was living in Washington, working as a washerwoman. She does not appear in the 1880 census.

Ann Yates Shorter was the slave of Mary Fenwick of Georgetown. After her emancipation, Shorter and her husband Abraham, a laborer, continued for a time to live in Georgetown, but by 1880 they and their children – Lucy, Mary, Sarah, William, and Samuel – were living elsewhere in the city. Lucy was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1860, Samuel in 1874. By 1900 Ann was a widow and was working as a charwoman.

Mary Dorsey was enslaved by Ann Green. By 1870 Dorsey and her 5 children – Susan, Francis, Gustavus, Solomon, and Elizabeth – had moved out of Georgetown. She, Susan, Francis, and Gustavus had been enslaved together; the four were all working as domestics in 1870.

Agnes Bennett and her daughter Anne were the slaves of Louisa Kearney of Georgetown. By the time of the 1870 census, Agnes was a lodger with a Georgetown family and worked as a domestic, but Anne, now 12, was not living with her mother. Instead, she was still in the household of their former enslaver, who described her as "a smart child to whom the family is much attached." In 1880 Agnes and Anne were living under one roof in Georgetown, and Agnes was working as a cook.

James Summerville was a gardener while the slave of John Kidwell. After his emancipation, he moved out of Georgetown and found work as a laborer, living with his wife Jane and their children, Ezekiel, Julia, Isaac, Robert, Clara, and Gertrude. **Sarah Brooks**, also enslaved by Kidwell, boarded near Georgetown after her emancipation.

Mary Coquire, enslaved by Sarah King, worked as a domestic in a Georgetown household after her emancipation.

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Frank Mockabee was the slave of Eliza Mosher of Georgetown. After emancipation he worked in Washington as a laborer. Also emancipated by Mosher was **Martha Snowden**, the wife of William Snowden who had been enslaved in a different household in Washington; the Snowdens had one son, Samuel. After emancipation, William Snowden worked in Washington as a cartman, then as a coachman. He died in the mid-1880s when he was in his mid-50s.

Benjamin Lyles was enslaved along with Mary Ann Norris Foster in the household of Pierce Shoemaker and continued to work there as a farmhand after his emancipation. By 1880 he was a widower. Joseph Simms also worked in this household, and after emancipation he lived near Georgetown with his wife Milly and their children Anna, James, Henry, John, and Ernest. Simms worked as a porter and then as a janitor.

In addition to these, many others were also freed by parishioners under the District of Columbia Emancipation Act whose stories we are not yet able to tell at this early stage of our research. Still, we are able now to at least say their names. We are able to remember them.

THE APPOINTMENT OF WILLIAM H. SMITH AS HOUSE LIBRARIAN

DECEMBER 09, 1881

J. Frank Snyder
Ferris Finch
Walter H. French
Geo. B. McKenney
Geo. B. Parsons
Richard Theopolis
D. E. Sackett
W. S. Kenworthy
W. G. Daniels
W. G. Daniels
W. W. Screws
Index clerk, Dec. 1 to 16
Newspaper clerk, Dec. 18 to 16
Newspaper clerk, Dec. 1

Annual Report of James Kerr, Clerk of the House of Representatives, Receipts and Disbursements of the House of Representatives From December 8, 1891, to June 30, 1892, 52nd Congress, 2nd sess., Misc. Doc. 7.In this late 1891 Clerk Report, William H. Smith is listed as "Librarian.

On this date, William Henry Smith—a prominent African-American Washingtonian—was appointed Librarian of the House. Smith was a District of Columbia native, born in August 1833, and he lived in the city his entire life. House records show him on Clerk of the House Edward McPherson's payroll as a library messenger as early as 1864, at the time that Whitelaw Reid (future editor of the New York Tribune and U.S. vice presidential candidate) served as House Librarian. According to an article published decades later in the Chicago Tribune, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts helped Smith to secure the messenger's job.

He remained in that post until McPherson (who had left and returned as Clerk) elevated him to House Librarian in the 47th Congress (1881–1883). The appointment proved controversial for McPherson and the Republican majority because Smith became one of the highest-ranking African Americans in the federal government at a time when the hard-won rights of many freedmen in the South were being rolled back. Despite some opposition from southern Representatives, the New York Times reported, "the generally expressed opinion that Smith was the ablest man possible to place in charge of the library, and his popularity as a capable and attentive official, carried the day and he kept the place." Members of both parties regarded him as a reference "authority" with a "memory of speeches, and points made by different public men in debate, [that] was remarkable." In the following Congress, when Democrats regained control of the chamber, Smith was demoted to Assistant Librarian serving under William Butler (brother of Senator Matthew C. Butler of South Carolina, a former Confederate general). When Republicans were returned to the majority in the 1888 elections and McPherson was reinstalled as Clerk, Smith was again elevated to Librarian. He retired from the House at the conclusion of the 51st Congress (1889–1891). Smith and his wife, Annie, raised five children and led active civic lives. Smith served for years on the District's school board, joining with Frederick Douglass to oppose the establishment of segregated schools. Smith also was a founding member of St. Augustine's, the city's oldest Black Catholic Church. In 1892, he was named custodian of the library and art gallery of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Source: History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, "The Appointment of William H. Smith as House Librarian"

history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1851-1900/Theappointment-of-William-H--Smith-as-House-Librarian/

GEORGETOWN: LAYERS OF TIME, LAYERS OF STORIES

BY HARRIET HENTGES

One of the unique and treasured features of Georgetown is its stock of historic homes -- homes that have been preserved and celebrated for decades despite some earlier periods of neglect and deterioration. Initially many of these homes were cared for by slaves. After Emancipation, many were cared for by low-wage workers, black and white. These homes today are potent, visible reminders of the layers of time that make up the history of Georgetown.

Less visible is the critical role these household workers played in the preservation of these homes. While historic preservation and gentrification since the early decades of the 20th century led to a more outwardly attractive Georgetown, they had unintended negative consequences for low-wage workers. Preservation was dependent on gentrification and higher income owners so was at odds with housing equity and affordability. Many Black families who had lived and worked in Georgetown for generations were displaced. It changed the lives of many Black residents

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in the village - and it dramatically altered the racial and economic makeup of Georgetown.

L'Enfant's DC plan primarily focused on public buildings and spaces, but residential lots became integral to the plan in the early years. This meant large, deep lots backed by alleys designed to provide rear access and space for kitchens, stables, carriages, equipment, some animals, and often housing for slaves.

The Civil War and Reconstruction and the resulting increase in jobs led to a dramatic increase in the DC population. Many Blacks fled the South during Reconstruction because of the poverty and oppression there. The withdrawal of Federal troops from the South at the end of Reconstruction

made DC a magnet for Blacks. From 1860 to 1900, the Black population in DC went from approximately 14,000 to 87,000 (6.2 times); the total population went from 75,000 to 279,000, (3.7 times).

This spike in population put pressure on the housing stock in Georgetown. As deep lots became less necessary they were subdivided, and tenement housing developed in Georgetown and elsewhere in DC.

There was little or no regulation governing such buildings, which often resulted in cheap construction and overcrowding, and little maintenance was done by absentee landlords. The rent levels (ranged from \$10 to \$15.50 a month by the early 1900s) were not much of an incentive

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REMEMBERING GERTRUDE TURNER WATERS

In the spring of 1923, three hundred fifty seven Black Roman Catholics who were members of the segregated Holy Trinity Church expressed a desire to build their own church in Georgetown.

In the fall of 1924, the Reverend Lawrence H. Schaefer, S.S.J., was assigned to Georgetown. His presence marked the beginning of the "Epiphany Mission." The members made it possible to rent the property at 1409 28th Street. Hard work and commitment enabled the members to purchase two vacant lots on Dumbarton Avenue (Street), which is the present church site.

In 1925, the cornerstone was laid and the following year the Most Reverend Michael Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. blessed the Epiphany Roman Catholic church.

Father Chester C. Ball, S.S.J. served as pastor of the church from 1952-1958. Under his leadership, the parish flourished. Epiphany is very proud of having the first Black Pastor of a Roman Catholic church in Washington, D.C.

From the History of Epiphany Catholic Church, www.georgetownepiphany.org

Mr. Waters' grandmother was Gertrude Turner Waters, a founder of Epiphany Catholic Church. Her husband, Neville Waters Sr., was a member of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. The couple were married in 1919 at St. Augustine's Catholic Church.

Mrs. Waters served as treasurer of the Altar Guild at Epiphany, prefect of the Epiphany Sodality, superintendent of the Sunday School, and member of the parish council and the Ladies of Charity. She was a member of the board of directors and an officer of the Georgetown Children's House, and an officer of the Rock Creek Citizens Association. She taught for nearly 40 years in the elementary schools of Washington. Her husband worked with the Government Printing Office and the Veterans Administration. Mrs. Waters was the author of "Holy Trinity History, Pt. II, 'A 1960 Account



An unidentified photograph from the family album of Neville Waters III, courtesy of Mr. Waters.

by Gertrude Turner Waters of the Founding of Epiphany Roman Catholic Church."

This portrait of an unidentified member of the Waters family was taken by the Scurlock Studio in Washington, D.C. The studio was founded in 1911 by Addison Scurlock, who has been referred to as "black Washington's photographic Boswell - the keeper of the visual memory of the community." Addison Scurlock's sons Robert and George joined him in the work (Robert photographed Marian Anderson's 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial). When the studio closed in the 1990s, it held an archive of some 250,000 negatives and 10,000 prints, which was donated to the Smithsonian Institution.

for landlords to do the necessary maintenance and tenants often could not afford to do it.

Alley dwellings provided housing for workers needing to be close to their jobs. Employers rarely provided housing and there was little public transportation, or when there was, it was too expensive. Street cars didn't come in until the late 1880s. By 1880, there were approximately 231 alleys in DC housing 10,614 people, 87% of whom were Black; ¼ of DC's Black population lived in alleys.

The alley dwellings became increasingly unsafe and disease-ridden. Despite several attempts to outlaw them, they continued to the 40s and 50s. When Eleanor Roosevelt first came to Washington, she was appalled at the condition of the "tenements" and viewed them as not appropriately reflective of a capital city of the world's wealthiest nation. Her views and the genuine concern of social reformers led to the Alley Elimination Act of 1935, banning the building of houses on alleys and the razing of some existing buildings in DC. But the heavy demand for housing during World War II postponed addressing alley tenements.

With the increased popularity of Georgetown during and after WW II, the priority was historic preservation. The 1954 Congressional Preservation Act overturned the 1935 Alley Elimination Act

Eventually the bulk of alley dwellings were addressed as follows: 1) restore them, which required investment by owners and speculators who saw financial advantage in this in the 1940s and '50s; or 2) raze the dwellings and sell larger tracts of land to investors, developers or potential owners. The true burden of these moves was felt by Black renters.

Scott Place in NW Georgetown, an 1880s alley, provides an example of the living conditions on the alleys and the effects of razing and partial renovation of 19th century alley dwellings.

In the 1880s investors/speculators built small homes on Scott to rent to Georgetown workers, some of whom worked for the larger houses in the neighborhood, possibly including the 19th Century estate, Tudor Place at the end of Scott Place.

There were six houses built on the south side (five 2 storey brick houses and one clapboard) built on steeply sloping hills to the east and south. Each was 13' X 28' and together they housed approximately 46 residents at one point. There was no indoor plumbing or electricity as late as the 1950s. The 6 houses were razed and gave way to two houses in the mid-1950s, in which there have never been more than 6 residents. The 2 houses on the north side of Scott Place were of similar dimensions and were renovated and/or expanded.

The Preservation Act allowed construction on a site in an alley previously occupied if some element(s) of existing buildings were preserved. In this case, brick walls from the 3 of the 1880s brick houses were incorporated into the design of one the houses designed by the prominent architect Gertrude Sawyer and remain in place today.

The impact of razing this admittedly inadequate housing on this group of workers had to be significant. Most likely they did not find housing in Georgetown or even within walking distance to their jobs, which meant finding other jobs. Few could do as John Luckett, the gardener at Tudor Place did. He lived with his family at 222 F Street SW and walked to Tudor Place every day for 40 years – a distance of approximately 3.7 miles.

The Black population of Georgetown fell from nearly 30% of the general population in 1930 to less than 9% in the census of 1960.**

This displacement also led to a decline in the membership of the churches established by and for the Blacks of Georgetown. These churches were established largely due to the inequitable treatment of parishioners in the predominantly white, established churches, Catholic and Protestant. Some of the descendants continue to worship in the existing three Black Churches, traveling from various parts of DC and suburbs for Sunday services. Epiphany Catholic Church was established by Blacks in 1923 but its congregation today is largely white, as is Georgetown. Some descendants of founding families remain parishioners.

Where the displaced residents of Scott Place moved or what happened to their jobs is unknown. As renters, they did not benefit from sale or development. What we do know is that the preservation movement and gentrification over the decades and the transformation of the alley dwellings dramatically altered the demographic composition of Georgetown.

*Tudor Place Times, Fall 2022, p.2.

**Kathleen Lesko, general editor, Black Georgetown Remembered. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC. 2016

Fr. Augustus Tolton Pray for Us

O God, we give you thanks for your servant and priest, Father Augustus Tolton, who labored among us in times of contradiction, times that were both beautiful and paradoxical. His ministry helped lay the foundation for a truly Catholic gathering in faith in our time. We stand in the shadow of his ministry. May his life continue to inspire us and imbue us with that confidence and hope that will forge a new evangelization for the Church we

Father in Heaven, Father Tolton's suffering service sheds light upon our sorrows; we see them through the prism of your Son's passion and death. If it be your Will, O God, glorify your servant, Father Tolton, by granting the favor I now request through his intercession (mention your request) so that all may know the goodness of this priest whose memory looms large in the Church he loved.

Complete what you have begun in us that we might work for the fulfillment of your kingdom. Not to us the glory, but glory to you O God, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are our God, living and reigning forever and ever.

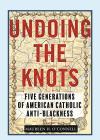
Amen

Prayer provided by Tolton Ambassadors DC

LEARN MORE

"Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle" In Subversive Habits, Shannen Dee Williams provides the first full history of Black Catholic nuns in the United States, hailing them as the forgotten prophets of Catholicism and democracy. Drawing on oral histories and previously sealed Church records, Williams demonstrates how master narratives of women's religious life and Catholic commitments to racial and gender justice fundamentally change when the lives and experiences of African American nuns are taken seriously.





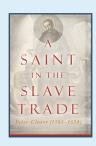
"Undoing the Knots: Five Generations of American Catholic Anti-Blackness"

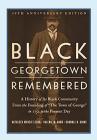
Excepting her Catholic family's entanglements with race and racism from the tir

Excavating her Catholic family's entanglements with race and racism from the time they immigrated to America to the present, Maureen O'Connell traces, by implication, how the larger Catholic population became white and why, despite the tenets of their faith, so many white Catholics have lukewarm commitments to racial justice.

"A Saint in the Slave Trade"

Arnold Lunn's 208-page biography was originally published in 1935 and republished this year by Sophia Institute Press. It is a well-researched and compelling look into the life of St. Peter Claver, a Jesuit priest born in Spain who, due to his life and work, became the church's patron saint of slaves





Black Georgetown Remembered: A History of Its Black Community from the Founding of "The Town of George" in 1751 to the Present Day

This book chronicles the rich but little-known history of the Georgetown black community from the colonial period to the present. Black Georgetown Remembered records the hopes and dreams, the disappointments and successes, of a vibrant neighborhood as it persevered through slavery and segregation, war and peace, prosperity and depression. Drawing on interviews with descendants of prominent community members and on the archives of major Georgetown churches, local historical societies, libraries, and genealogical studies, it contains more than two hundred illustrations, including portraits, sketches, maps, and nineteenth-century and contemporary photographs.

"The Fire is Upon Us – James Baldwin, William F. Buckley Jr., and the Debate over Race in America" by Nicholas Buccola

On February 18, 1965, an overflowing crowd packed the Cambridge Union in Cambridge England, to witness a historic televised debate between James Baldwin, the leading literary voice of the civil rights movement, and William F. Buckley Jr., a fierce critic of the movement and America's most influential conservative intellectual. The topic was "the American dream is at the expense of the American Negro," and no one who has seen the debate can soon forget it. The Fire is Upon Us is the first book to tell the full story of the event, the radically different paths that led Baldwin and Buckley to it, the controversies that followed, and how the debate and the decades-long clash between the men continues to illuminate America's racial divide today. [from the book jacket].





Sunday, November 13, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. ET St. Augustine Catholic Church

1419 V Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

Featuring a special commemoration of the **75th Anniversary of Catholic Ministry at How<u>ard University</u>**

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

Praise and Worship: 12:00 p.m.

- · St. Augustine Gospel Choir
- · St. Augustine Liturgical Dancers and Howard University Beacon Liturgical Dancers

Mass Celebration: 12:30 p.m.

Wilton Cardinal Gregory, Archbishop of Washington Principal Celebrant and Homilist

Rev. Pat A. Smith, PastorSt. Augustine Catholic Church
Concelebrant

For ASL interpretation, contact deafcatholic@adw.org two weeks in advance

