



2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 85

November 7, 2023 - Introduced by Senator TAYLOR, cosponsored by Representatives MYERS, ARMSTRONG, CONLEY, DRAKE, ORTIZ-VELEZ, STUBBS, ANDRACA and SINICKI. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming November 2023 as Black Catholic History Month.

2 Whereas, in 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United
3 States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to recognize and
4 foster respect for the lives and contributions of Catholics of African descent; and

5 Whereas, All Saints' Day, observed on November 1, invites people to remember
6 venerable saints of African descent such as St. Martin de Porres, St. Benedict the
7 Moor, and St. Augustine; and

8 Whereas, All Souls' Day, observed on November 2, invites people to remember
9 the estimated two million enslaved Africans who lost their lives due to inhumane
10 treatment during the Middle Passage crossing of the Atlantic Ocean; and

11 Whereas, Catholics of African descent have lived in the Americas for as long as
12 Catholics have lived in the Americas, with Congolese Catholics being among the first
13 enslaved peoples brought to the British colonies; and

14 Whereas, there are now an estimated three million Black Catholics living in the
15 United States; and

1 Whereas, after centuries of struggling for recognition within their own church,
2 Black American Catholics formed several new Black Catholic organizations,
3 including the Knights of Peter Claver, the National Black Sisters' Conference, the
4 National Black Catholic Seminarians Association, and the National Association of
5 Black Catholic Deacons. In 1968, the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus was created to
6 protest white supremacy; and

7 Whereas, through the Black Catholic Movement, as this collective action
8 became known, Black American Catholics were not only able to establish their own
9 leadership and cultural identity within the faith, but also to push religious
10 communities to begin reckoning with its history of racism; and

11 Whereas, that work continues, with the United States Conference of Catholic
12 Bishops recently issuing a pastoral letter calling for church members to acknowledge
13 “the scourge of racism” and work to stop the racial inequality established by slavery
14 and perpetuated for generations against African Americans by wage theft, Jim Crow
15 laws, and the systemic denial of access to wealth-building opportunities, such as
16 securing home loans; and

17 Whereas, although there are currently no Black American saints, there are six
18 widely revered Black American Catholics who are advancing toward sainthood as a
19 result of their remarkable kindness, generosity, and devoted faith: Venerable Pierre
20 Toussaint, Venerable Mary Elizabeth Lange, Venerable Henriette Delille, Venerable
21 Augustus Tolton, Julia Greeley, and Sr. Thea Bowman; and

22 Whereas, Milwaukee resident Dr. Shawnee Daniels-Sykes, who passed away
23 on October 31, 2022, promoted ethics, social justice, and human rights through
24 intellectual, theological, and moral discussions and research rooted in her expertise
25 as the only Black Catholic female theological bioethicist in the nation; and

1 Whereas, the role of Black Catholics in the United States continues to evolve
2 and their positive contributions to the church and the culture at large are
3 undeniable; now, therefore, be it

4 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
5 Legislature recognizes November 2023 as Black Catholic History Month.

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(END)