2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 105

November 12, 2019 - Introduced by Representatives L. MYERS, CROWLEY, BOWEN, HAYWOOD, STUBBS, FIELDS, SINICKI, ZAMARRIPA, HORLACHER, Vining, Hebl, TUSLER, HESSELBEIN, STEFFEN and VRUWINK, cosponsored by Senators L. TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WIRCH, LARSON and CARPENTER. Referred to Committee on Rules.

Relating to: proclaiming November 2019 as Black Catholic History Month.

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

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

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

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

Whereas, there are now an estimated three million black Catholics living in the United States; and
Whereas, after centuries of struggling for recognition within their own church, black American Catholics formed several new black Catholic organizations, including the Knights of Peter Claver, the National Black Sisters’ Conference, the National Black Catholic Seminarians Association, and the National Association of Black Catholic Deacons. In 1968, the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus was created to protest white supremacy; and

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

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

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

Whereas, the role of black Catholics in the United States continues to evolve and their positive contributions to the church and the culture at large are undeniable; now, therefore, be it
Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the Wisconsin Legislature recognizes November 2019 as Black Catholic History Month.

(END)