



Rights & Responsibility - Black History Month

Soul Food's Impact on History and Cuisine

Soul food's history deserves as much recognition as its cuisine.



by Reanne Louis
Grade 8

African Americans have created many of the meals we know and love today. We cook and enjoy these foods but don't truly recognize their history. Learning about it will educate you on Black History and how their struggles and uprisings may relate to your Catholic faith.

Throughout slavery, African Americans struggled. A specific issue they faced was food insecurity. During the Transatlantic Slave Trade, enslavers didn't feed them the large dinners they made. Instead, they were provided what was deemed "disgusting" and had low nutritional value—the undesirable slabs of meat or leftover pieces of veggies. Enslaved people across Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama were given these low-quality foods in hopes of giving them something small enough that wasn't luxurious but big enough to sustain them. Regardless of this unfair treatment, they pulled through and used what they had. They didn't give up.

Soul food embodies just one of the highs and lows African Americans still face today. Christ calls us to do similar things during hard situations. In 2 Chronicles 15:17, Jesus says, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." With the hard work enslaved people had done in the past, African Americans can now eat



Autumn Griffin, Grade 8

these dishes with joy, knowing what their ancestors had to go through for that to be accomplished. Ways of seasoning and cooking these foods have been passed down since slavery and have been improved over time while keeping traditions alive. African Americans in the South have created cooking classes, cookbooks, and websites to expand their knowledge of soul food and its recipes. Afri-

can Americans weren't allowed to read or write the past for many years, but because they fought for change, they've been able to and have used this ability to share these foods with everyone.

Soul food and its influence on African Americans play a big part in Black History. The history behind it can be an example for us Catholics when we feel like we're going through something difficult. You can create something big out of something small. You can accomplish something with enough determination.

God helps guide us through these things and is glad when we follow through with them. African Americans were given small rations of corn and pork but could create foods enjoyed all over the United States, like cornbread, through God's grace.

Though African Americans struggled, they could eventually do so much because of their perseverance. This should be discussed during Black History Month and is an example of God helping you accomplish things during difficult times.



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What is Black History Month?

Black History Month is a time to recall the progress that has been made over generations and the progress that continues today.



by Payton Young, Grade 7 and Cameron Kearney, Grade 8

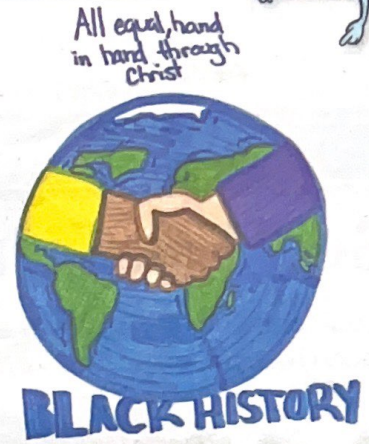
Every February, black people across the entire globe are celebrated for all they have been through and for everything they have done for the world. Nowadays, it is known as Black History Month, but its name has changed throughout history. This goes back to February 7, 1926, when Carter G. Woodson, a historian, author, and journalist, initiated the first-ever celebration of Negro History Week. Thanks to the Civil Rights Movement and awareness of black identity, Negro History Week evolved into Black History Month.

Black History Month is a time to honor the legacy and contributions of African Americans across U.S. history, from activists and civil rights pioneers such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Marcus Garvey,

Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks to leaders in industry, politics, science, culture and more. The responsibility of keeping this legacy alive is now in our generation's hands. So we celebrate this month every year to honor the achievements of African American individuals and groups.

Ever since 1976, every American president has designated February as Black History Month and given a different theme each year. The theme for 2023 is "Black Resistance." This theme explores how African Americans have resisted injustices in the past and present. One example of a recent injustice would be the death of George Floyd, who was wrongfully killed in 2020.

Today we celebrate Black History Month in honor of black culture, history, and sacrifices that were made. Many people have suffered to create a world with freedom and no segregation. Knowing about these people is important because many were punished and persecuted. Even though they were punished and persecuted, they still fought for black rights. According to John 13:34, Christ said, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." This Bible verse shows that God wants us to love each



Payton Young, Grade 7

other. He doesn't want us to hurt each other. He wants us to heal each other.

Therefore, Black History Month is celebrated so that the achievements and legacy of black people are not forgotten. It is a time to recall the progress that has been made over generations and the progress that continues to be made today. We are responsible for sharing the message of those who came before us and continuing to love one another as Jesus loves us.

Art on the Walls

Christina Gervai
Grade 7

Emily Annylusse
Grade 8

Dudley Josaphat
Grade 8

Tahier Godard
Grade 7

Samantha Valentin
Grade 6

Dario Tony Menard
Grade 7

Cristine Bermeo
Grade 8

ASK
Sister
Elizabeth



How can we stop people from judging others before they get to know them?

Samantha Valentin, Grade 6

Thank you, Samantha, for this thoughtful question. It is often easy for us to judge others without first getting to know or meeting them. This is so because our brains are wired to judge other people's behaviors automatically. Our biases and prejudices often lead to such premature judgments - from the belief that we are better or superior to such people. Patience and understanding are two great virtues that enable us to overcome the challenge of quick judgment. We must think through our actions and not allow ourselves to react based on stereotypes, hearsay, gossip, and rumors - allowing ourselves to experience the other person. Begin by not isolating the new student that joins your class, especially when they are from a different culture or background - it is an opportunity to get to know them and learn from each other.

What causes discrimination, and how can we prevent it from happening?

Noel Fisher, Grade 5

Dear Noel! The truth is that discrimination is real, and people often discriminate against others for different reasons. Discrimination could be about age, sex, religion, political belief, ethnicity, race, gender, and disability. Sometimes, those who discriminate want to be seen as superior to the other person. In some cultures, boys think they are superior and better than girls. In some countries, some people with disabilities might be disqualified from getting jobs. The truth is that we are all equal in the eyes of God, and he loves us all equally, irrespective of our differences, abilities, and disabilities. Galatians 3: 28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We should always learn to see Christ in the other person, to love one another, and treat each other as we would love to be treated.

How can God help us when someone feels out of place?

Emily Annylusse, Grade 8

Interesting question, Emily! People usually feel out of place when disconnected and do not fit in at the moment. These happen for different reasons. As a student, you may feel out of place when delivering a speech before your classmates and teacher due to anxieties. Everyone, at some point, has gone through that feeling. It can bring a sense of loss and can be very challenging. However, we must recognize our feelings and be open to talking to someone about it (either mom, dad, or teacher), who can help us regain self-confidence. As Christians, we communicate with God through prayer. We should always pray to God to calm our anxieties and ask him for the grace to remain focused, steadfast, and peaceful.

Jerry Lawson: The Unseen Wonder

The digital world was revolutionized by this one man, which shows that you should never give up on what you believe you can do!



by **Maximilien Julien**
Grade 8

An important figure like Jerry Lawson shows us that all humans are created in God's image, and we should not let discrimination hold us back from achieving greatness. We should all strive to achieve our dreams, no matter what any person tells us because that is what God would like us to do.

Gerald Anderson Lawson was

born in New York City on December 1, 1940. He would later pioneer the home video gaming industry, helping develop the first cartridge based video game system in the Fairchild Channel F, created in 1976. This was the precursor to the modern video game console, using cartridges to load different video games. He was inspired by the work of George Washington Carver as a child and strived for greatness just as he did. To earn some money in his youth, he repaired the broken televisions of people in his neighborhood. His interest in electronics led him to enroll at Queens College and later continue this interest by joining the Silicon Valley Homebrew Computer Club in the mid-1970s. At this club, he worked with Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. In an interview, he called Jobs more

business oriented and remembered not being very surprised when Jobs interviewed Steve Wozniak for a job later in his life.

After helping create the Fairchild Channel F, Jerry became one of the most important black engineers in his industry, which was a significant achievement for the time. This console paved the way for consoles like the Nintendo Entertainment System and, by extension, consoles like the Nintendo Switch. Jerry Lawson should be heralded for his work today, but sadly does not get the atten-

tion he deserves because of his race. God teaches us to treat everyone how we want to be treated and that we all have human dignity, which means that we were all created in God's image. Despite the seeming acceptance of civil rights, many people were still surprised to see African Americans in higher positions. Jerry once said to a client who said that they thought all black people sounded the same: "Well, sorry, I don't."

Celebrating Black History Month is extremely important. Looking at important black figures in history, we can further understand that, no matter our color, we can achieve anything we believe in.

TEACHER GUIDES

Instructional Resource Guides are available for each issue of the Tablet Jr. You can find the supplemental lessons on CTNBQ.ORG/TABLETJR

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Diocesan History Corner

by Joseph Coen

Basic Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948 lays out the basic human rights to be protected by all nations. Article 25 of the declaration describes "... the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

The Brooklyn Diocese and its parishes have been meeting these needs for a long time. In 1855 Brooklyn's first bishop, John Loughlin, established the first St. Vincent de Paul Society in the diocese at St. James Cathedral. This organization of laypeople offers Christlike service to the poor, suffering, and deprived by providing food, clothing, and other material help. Over the years,



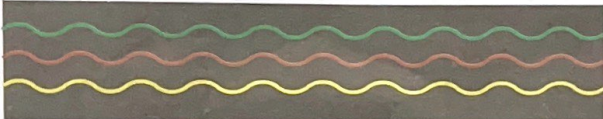
Food donations from St. John's Bread & Life.

the needs have been met by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, organizations such as St. John's Bread and Life, and parish food banks. Clothing has been provided not only by the St. Vincent de Paul Society but also through clothing collections such as the one before this Christmas by our schools in cooperation with Catholic Charities. Housing has been provided by the Nehemiah Projects built during Bishop Francis J. Mugavero's time and by more recent Catholic Charities sponsored housing projects. Catholic Charities and the Catholic Migration Office provide many necessary social services.

Joseph Coen, C.A., is the archivist of the Diocese of Brooklyn.



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FIND THE WORDS

DIVERSITY	FAIRNESS	JUSTICE	RESPECT
EQUALITY	FREEDOM	LOVE	RESPONSIBILITY

Fun Activities for You from Sadlier www.sadlier.com

Being Responsible

Black History Month is an opportunity to explore the rich backgrounds of those who shaped our understanding that diverse cultures are important in developing today's societies.

By decree of our U.S. Constitution and by the words of Jesus, every person has a right to life

and those things needed for decent living. With these rights comes responsibility.

Responsibility is being freely accountable for our actions through knowing what's right and good and striving to do our best.



With your family - Read Matthew 25: 31-46 to better understand your role as a Catholic. Share a right that you have. What responsibilities come with the right? What consequences happen if you disregard that right? Use the link below to learn how St. John Bosco used his talents to support others. What talent/s do you have that you can share? Can you teach it to a sibling or cousin and make their life a little easier?

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