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The Father Tolton Guild

OFFICIAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROMOTION
OF THE CAUSE OF CANONIZATION OF
FATHER AUGUSTUS TOLTON (1854-1897)

Bishop Joseph N. Perry, J.C.L., D.D.
Diocesan Postulator

Dr. Andrea Ambrosi
Roman Postulator

The Servant of God, Father Augustus Tolton

Cardinal Francis George returned from his ad limina visit to Rome in February (every five years bishops must report to the Holy See on the condition of their local churches and visit and pray at the tombs of St Peter and St. Paul), with a decree dated February 14, 2012 issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints bestowing upon Father Tolton the title, "Servant of God." This first stage of ascension to sainthood is given once the Holy See has carried out its own consultations to determine if anything exists out there that would indicate that the Church should not proceed with the investigation into the life of the proposed person or persons for sainthood. In the Instance of Father Tolton, the Holy See gives its blessing to moving forward with the prescribed processes for beatification and canonization. The decree is signed by the prefect of the Congregation, his Eminence, Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB .

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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www.toltoncanonization.org

Tolton Events Around Town:

February 21st Bishop Joseph Perry gave an evening talk to the students at Annenburg Hall of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, on the life of Father Tolton. A choral group of African American young women students prefaced the program with several outstanding choral pieces. The program was hosted by the Shiel Catholic Center of the University.



at the Cardinal Meyer Center @ 35th & Lake Park Avenue – around the corner from where the 35th Street train station once was where Father Tolton disembarked returning from a priests' retreat in Bourbonnais, Illinois on July 9th, 1897 only to collapse a few blocks distant at 36th & Ellis Avenue. Father Tolton died at 8.30pm that same evening at



April 14th Bishop Joseph Perry, in collaboration with the office for Black Catholics and the Augustus Tolton Ministry Program at Chicago Theological Union (CTU), sponsored a Chicago tour of city sights incident to Father Tolton's ministry here in Chicago. 45 people came along this inaugural tour to retrace the steps of Father Tolton starting out



Mercy Hospital. Some of the landmarks visited were: the historical site of St. Mary's Church at 9th & Wabash Streets where the very first group of Chicago black Catholics met for worship; the location of Fr. Tolton's one-room apartment during his first months in Chicago at 22nd & Indiana; the gravesite of Father Tolton's mother, Martha Jane Chisley-Tolton including his sister Anne, the 36th & Dearborn Street corner where St. Monica Church once existed, and Mercy Hospital where we concluded the tour with evening prayer.

April 17th we attended DePaul University's World Catholicism Week 2012 at their Lincoln Park campus student center for an Augustus Tolton Essay Contest. The University's religious studies department asked their students to submit essays treating the historical context that shaped Tolton's frustration, perseverance and leadership in terms of what we learn about the complicated intersections among religion, racial prejudice, civil rights and benevolence. Two undergraduate women were selected for their insightful reflections: LaNita Burton and Yewande Gilbert. Following their individual reading of their essays they received a certificate plus a copy of Benedictine Father Cyprian Davis' book, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, plus a check for \$500. We are grateful to Karen Kraft and Dr. Chernoh Sesay and Director, Peter Casarella, with whom we collaborated on this program of spreading the good news about Father Tolton among young adults.

COMING UP!

September 20-24, a National Pilgrimage will descend upon Quincy and Chicago from New Orleans, Washington DC and other cities, visiting sites associated with the life and ministry of Father Tolton including Brush Creek, Missouri, where the farm is where the Toltons were slaves. The Pilgrimage is directed by Fr. W. Carroll Paysse, Executive Director of the Catholic Negro & American Indian Mission Board. Bishop Dominic Carmon, SVD will be a participant on the tour. The group plans to have a Mass at the Cardinal Meyer Center of the Archdiocese of Chicago with Cardinal Francis George and Bishop Joseph Perry. For individuals who missed out on the April 14th Chicago Tolton Tour you may wish to join us. Call the Office for Black Catholics for more information. 312-534-8376

GALA Benefit Fundraiser

Mark your calendar for the **2nd Annual Tolton Gala Benefit Fundraiser**, set for Friday, October 19, 2012 6.30pm Hyatt Regency/McCormick Place, Chicago: cash bar & Silent Auction, Dinner Program, and The Martha Jane Tolton Award. Invitations will be sent out the beginning of September. \$100 RSVP required.

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Prayer

*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 love.*

*Father in Heaven, * Father Tolton's suffering service sheds slight 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*