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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



Greetings to our Friends of the Father Tolton Cause! We have exchanged letters with a number of you over the last months. Some have sent in donations for the ongoing expenses connected with the Cause. Others have ordered prayer cards and leaflets. Thanks to each of you for your support! Much has been happening since the February 24, 2011 official ceremony "First Session" where Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, issued appointments of officials assigned to the cause –Diocesan Postulator, the Historical and Theological Commissions, and Tribunal personnel all took their oaths and signed the record of the Cause.

Correspondence has been exchanged with the archives departments of the Archdioceses of Philadelphia, Baltimore and the Propaganda Fide in Rome which oversees the Urban College where Augustus Tolton attended seminary 1880-1886, in effort to document Tolton's movements in those areas. Whereas, Father Tolton was invited to speak at different events in the two archdioceses, those local churches do not seem to have anything in their files on Tolton. The Propaganda Fide referred us to the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples which sent us a student roster where Tolton is listed among his school mates during the year he was an ordained Deacon. This roster is interesting for the actual names of the seminarians listed, their Rite, birth, country of origin, and their rank in the minor and major orders.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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Visit of Cardinal George

April 6-7 we celebrated a special pilgrimage for Cardinal Francis George to visit the farm in Brush Creek, Missouri where the Toltons labored as slaves. We celebrated Mass at nearby St. Peter's Church (the second church) over the spot where his parents, Martha and Peter were married and where Augustus was baptized. Surrounding the church are two cemeteries, one for ordinary citizens and the other unmarked graves of deceased slaves. We also visited Quincy at St. Peter's Cemetery to visit and pray at Father Tolton's grave. This visit also entailed an examination of the Tolton markers at Brush Creek and Quincy for a report made to Rome on the condition and contents of these sites.

tion and served as an altar boy. A carrara marble statue of Tolton is erected in front of the school, placed there by Father Roy Bauer, a local authority on Tolton and retired pastor of St. Peter's.

The Archives

The Diocese of Springfield shared with us an archival source found in the Brenner Library at Quincy University, the Hilchenbach Letters, a series of duplicate correspondence written in German of Father Francis Solano Hilchenbach, OFM (1859-1898) who wrote to family members and confreres sharing personal notes and city happenings of the time. Father Tolton's ministry in Quincy is referenced in three of the letters and have been now included in the record of the Cause. Father Hilchenbach knew Tolton personally and practiced his Italian with Tolton. In these letters, Father Hilchenbach demonstrates a very definite respect for and friendship with Father Tolton.

125th Anniversary Celebration

June 5, the Father Tolton Guild sponsored a Mass and luncheon in Quincy to honor the 125th anniversary of Tolton's priestly ordination (April 24, 1886) at St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome. Over two hundred people attended Mass at St. Peter's Church in Quincy – the same parish which welcomed the Tolton Family after they were expelled from a nearby parish and where Augustus attended school, made his First Communion and Confirma-

Gala Banquet Fundraiser

Friday, November 11, a Gala Banquet & Fundraiser with silent auction will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel-McCormick Place, 6pm 2323 S. Martin Luther King Drive, Chicago. Ticketed admission \$100. Tickets can be obtained from Bishop Perry's Office, 708-339-2474, Archdiocese of Chicago Vicariate VI PO Box 733 South Holland, Illinois.

City Chicago Pilgrimage

April 2012 in cooperation with the Catholic Theological Union and the Office for Black Catholics we are planning a Pilgrimage to Tolton markers around Chicago where we will take those interested on a prayerful visit of places such as the grave of Martha Jane Tolton, mother of Father Augustus Tolton at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Chicago and such places as 35th & Lake Park Avenue where the train station once existed where Tolton returning to Chicago from a priests'

retreat disembarked just before he collapsed on the street July 9, 1897 and died some four hours later at Mercy Hospital; also the corner of 36th & Dearborn Street where St. Monica Church existed till it was razed in 1945. Details on how you can register for this Tour are forthcoming.

Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago has offered to place a newly engraved marker on the grave of Martha Jane Tolton [died November 10, 1911] where also, her daughter-Father Augustus' sister (Anne Tolton) and her husband William B. Pettis and other family relatives are interred. Thank you, Father Patrick Pollard, Director of Catholic Cemeteries!

Upcoming Events –

The Tribunal for the Archdiocese of Chicago, following upon the mandate of February 24, for the last months has been putting in place the court structure and personnel for the taking of witness testimony in the Tolton Cause. It will be their task to take under oath, depositions from personages locally and around the country who can testify to the historical memory and reputation of holiness of Augustus Tolton, his impact on the Church in the United States as a whole and the African American Catholic community in particular. Cardinal Francis George's edict in this regard can be found on the web-page at www.toltoncanonization.org

September 15-17 marks our next scheduled Pilgrimage to the grave of Father Tolton and other markers at Quincy and Brush Creek. Registration Information can be obtained from the Father Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program at CTU-Catholic Theological Union 773-371-5400 or the Office for Black Catholics Archdiocese of Chicago 312-534-8377.

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Let Us Pray!

We are all too aware of the sacred task before us, placing down on record the life and ministry and reputation of holiness and intercession of our beloved priest, Father Augustus Tolton. We are confident to say that a connection appears to have been made between the Church here and heaven in that about a dozen reports have come in voluntarily thus far from persons testifying to remarkable turn-arounds in health and other favors after prayer to God in Tolton's name. Bishop Perry traveled to Rome the third week of July to bring these reports to the Roman Postulator for the Cause to sort through and determine which of them he may wish to use for an endorsement of Father Tolton as a saint.

Please continue to use the prayer card for Tolton's intercession for your own prayerful needs and those of others. Check the web-page periodically for news and updates on the progress of the Cause and events supporting the Cause www.toltoncanonization.org.