



# TOLTON



The Father Tolton Guild Newsletter

SPRING 2022

## New Tolton Image for Missouri School's 10th Anniversary

**By Jay Nies, *The Catholic Missourian***

A boy in shabby work clothes looks up at the priest he dares to hope to become.

The cleric, lofty of stature and vested for Mass, holds up the Word of God and a tattered remnant of his childhood.

They are the same person, separated by time: Venerable Father Augustus Tolton.

"They're in two different worlds," said Lonnie Carlos Tapia, an art teacher at Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia, Missouri, who painted the image to help commemorate the school's 10th anniversary.

Father Paul Clark, a chaplain at Tolton Catholic, blessed and dedicated the large painting at a ceremony with students, administrators and friends on May 14, 2021.

"It has really been a privilege for me to be a part of doing this for 'Fr. Gus,' who has become my mentor, my guide, my moral compass," Tapia told the assembly. "And I hope that in the future, he becomes more of that for you."

Tapia titled the image, "The Light that Guides the Faithful."

That light is depicted as sunlight through the distinctive circular window of the school's chapel, which is adorned with a large crucifix.



"The Light that Guides the Faithful" by Lonnie Carlos Tapia, commissioned in honor of the 10th anniversary of Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia. (Photo by Jay Nies)

It points to a phrase from a prayer by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago, co-postulator of Tolton's sainthood cause: "Father Tolton's suffering service sheds light upon our sorrows; we see them through the prism of Your Son's passion and death."

Shades of blue and gold, the school's colors, accent the painting.

The boy dressed as a slave of men stands on a hay-strewn floor of a barn like the one he and his family likely hid in while making their escape.

The priest, dressed as a slave of Christ, is wearing a fiddle-back vestment over a faded, somewhat oversized cassock.

Even his Bible is simple and common—a black-bound book with no embellishment.

"Nothing about him was going to be ornate," the artist insisted. "He took pride in not having the opulence."

Tapia set out to highlight the eternal beauty of Tolton's priestly vocation and the worldly imperfection that made carrying it out a constant challenge for him.

"I wanted him to be beautiful," the artist stated at the dedication ceremony. "My whole goal was for people to think of Fr. Tolton, the man, whenever they hear his name.

"Hopefully when you speak of Fr. Tolton, with that warm tone with which you speak of our school, you will think of this image of that man who represents us," he said.

"Think about him and the day he was born," Mr. Tapia continued. "Think about his life, his trials and tribulations. And I do hope that he will become that moral compass for all of us."

Tapia is eager for the painting to be widely reproduced and distributed across numerous platforms throughout the world.

"And our school, our chapel and our colors are part of it," he said. "You, us, our school, all of you, will be a part of this. Hopefully you'll take pride in that and love him as much as I love Fr. Tolton, the man, Fr. Gus."

He pointed out how the floor on which the priest is standing approximates the planks of the old St. Peter Church in Brush Creek, where Tolton was baptized and began to learn about God.

The boy on the barn side is holding the cloth sack in which he would carry apples and biscuits out to work in the fields each day.

The priest is holding a piece of that same sack in his same hand as the Bible. Tolton never forgot where he came from.

A blue dove represents the Holy Spirit inspiring Tolton, giving him power to minister in the name of Christ and in His place at the altar.

"The power of Christ, the grace of Christ, the light of Christ, they are all represented here," said Tapia.

Even the frame, which the artist also created, is symbolic.

"The walnut comes from Northern Missouri, very close to Brush Creek, where Fr. Tolton had his childhood," said Mr. Tapia. "I capped it with zebra wood, which comes from East Africa. It represents black and white and the converging of it."

True to the rest of the image, the frame lacks ornamentation.

Tolton Catholic's graduating Class of 2021 donated the money for the bronze plaque that hangs beside the painting in the Commons, a large and heavily traveled section of the school, next to the chapel.

"You'll get to see this every day," said Daniel Everett, president of Tolton Catholic.

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# Tolton Featured in New Mural at School in Chicago

By Michelle Martin, *Chicago Catholic*



Father Tolton is featured in a mural at Our Lady of Charity School in Chicago along with St. Kateri Tekawitha and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. (Karen Callaway/Chicago Catholic)

When students at Our Lady of Charity School in Cicero go up or down the stairs, they are met with the images of six youthful holy people: Blessed Carlo Acutis, St. Maria Goretti, St. José Sánchez del Río, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Kateri Tekakwitha and the Venerable Father Augustus Tolton.

The saints, or people on the path to sainthood, depicted were chosen as role models for the students and painted as part of a mural done in cooperation with the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen.

“Our school mission is to create saints and scholars. That’s been our mission for several years,” said Our Lady of Charity Principal Frank Zárate Jr.

This year, as part of Our Lady of Charity’s school improvement plan for Catholic identity, students will be learning about saints, starting with those on the wall.

They were selected by Our Lady of Charity pastor Father Sergio Mena, religion teachers at the school and Zárate.

“We selected young saints because we thought the students could identify more easily with them,” Zárate said. “And we wanted cultural diversity as well.”

Those who died as adults, like Tolton, are depicted when they were young.

Student artists Sofia Meza, an eighth grader, and Emily Miranda, a sixth grader, said they are looking forward to learning more about the saints they helped to paint.

“They’re supposed to be role models for us,” Sofia said.

The young artists were volunteers who were already participating in a summer program at Our Lady of Charity, the girls said, and they had fun doing it because it gave them time to be with their friends.

“It was easier than I thought,” Emily said. “They had everything ready for us.”

Zárate said the school used COVID-19 relief funding to help pay for the mural, which he wanted to lift the moods both of the students who helped paint it and those who pass by it each day.

“The Mexican American community, the Latin American community was heavily affected by COVID,” Zárate said, noting that most of his students are Latino. “Some had family members who were sick, some had family members who passed away. Art can be therapeutic for children.”

He approached the National Museum of Mexican Art, which had worked on projects with the school before.

Officials at the museum suggested drawing on the Mexican tradition of murals, and connected the school with artists M. Zayuri and Jan Pacheco, who are sisters.

The Pachecos designed the mural and worked with six students to complete it over four weeks in July and August.

M. Zayuri Pacheco said being part of a bigger art project can be good for children who might not have as much opportunity as they would like to learn or practice art.

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“If you don’t have many art resources, and it’s something you’re into, something like this is a highlight,” she said. “It makes you feel good to be able to share your work, knowing you contributed to something, especially when you’re young. I feel like it is important for kids to get involved, especially when it comes to the community. They can actually contribute something.”

That’s something Sofia and Emily enjoy: knowing that for years to come, students who pass through the halls will see their names on the mural.

Pacheco said the mural, both the saints depicted and the student artists, demonstrates that young people’s contributions should be valued.

“It’s not all about the grown-ups,” she said. “We want them seeing people closer to their age. They should feel seen.”

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# Novena to Venerable Augustus Tolton for the Spiritual Welfare of the African American Community

Nine days of prayer, known as novenas, have been part of Catholic piety for centuries. Novenas have been attached to mysteries of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the intercessory power of Mary, the Mother of God and a myriad of saints.

Novenas have proved powerful prayer programs in happy times and in desperate times. Novenas are often used for nine days of fasting or approaching particular feast days of the Lord and the saints.

The following prayers invoke the intercession of the Venerable Father Augustus Tolton who is on the path to declared sainthood. These prayers can be used in prayer groups in parishes, led by the clergy or laity or used as a private devotion. These prayers can be prayed all at once or separated by nine consecutive days or one day each for nine weeks.

Before each prayer, pray first the official prayer for the canonization of Father Tolton:



*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 light  
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 (pause)  
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.*

2010 Bishop Joseph N Perry  
Imprimatur Francis Cardinal George, OMI  
Archdiocese of Chicago

### FIRST PRAYER

For the spiritual anchoring of the African-American community. O Father Augustus Tolton, whose faith was grounded in Christ Jesus at an early age. Pray the same for all of the African American community, so that together we might be unified in one faith, one Lord, one baptism. Pray Father Tolton for the black community to find and love that same fullness of faith that you found through the Catholic Church, and that church would find a richer fullness in itself in that community. Pray Father Tolton for the Holy Eucharist to become the source and summit of Christian life in the black community and for the unique presence of Christ Jesus to work to conform all peoples into His image before God the Father. Amen.

### SECOND PRAYER

For the moral formation of the African-American community. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton, teacher of truth, for the moral formation of the young in the black community in America. Pray for their grounding in the teachings of Christ our Lord, so that they might be living witnesses of the beatitudes. Pray Father Tolton for a strengthening and fortification of the Holy Spirit in the black community, so that it might be guided and protected in all truth, and thereby be able to withstand all assaults by the Evil One. Amen.

### THIRD PRAYER

For the stability and strength of marriages and family in the African American community. Strong families and marriages are the woven threads that have proved most beneficial for all healthy societies. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton that husbands will love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Pray that wives will embrace their role as a type of Church in the household and embrace their husbands and children as such. Pray Father Tolton for the sanctity and dignity of marriage in the black community in America. Pray for the restoration of true Christlike masculinity for black men and for women to look upon our Blessed Mother Mary as a beacon of faithfulness and womanhood. Amen.

### FOURTH PRAYER

For peace in the black community. O Father Augustus Tolton, servant of peace, pray for an end to all forms of violence and for an everlasting peace in the black community in America. Violence betrays our progress and robs us of our future. Pray then Father Tolton that we might know Christ Jesus enough that we will see Him in each other. Pray Father Tolton that in the pursuit of peace we might go from seeing Jesus in each other to loving each other through Jesus and doing all that grace empowers us to do to bring the in-dwelling of Christ more fully out of each other. Pray Father Tolton for the reign of peace throughout our city and our world. Amen.

### FIFTH PRAYER

For good educational opportunities in the African American community. The doors of opportunity are open to all and are open even more fully to those who have been educated. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton, teacher of children, for the Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to pour out abundantly over the black community in America, and that schools and colleges and universities that service the community will be blessed with resources, staff and faculty needed to achieve their goals. Pray for Catholic schools and universities' fidelity to the teachings of the Church and that they might open their doors to all, especially the poor and disadvantaged. Amen.



### **SIXTH PRAYER**

For gainful economic opportunities in the African American community. O Father Augustus Tolton, who in your ministry came to the aid of the poor and downtrodden, as we seek your intercession for the spiritual needs of the black community in America we also come to you asking your prayer for our material needs. Pray Father Tolton for those in our community to have good economic opportunities, to land gainful employment or to start a business, so that all might have the resources needed to provide for themselves, their family and their Church. Pray Father Tolton that God might fill in all of us the spirit of a cheerful giver so that we might remember that giving from all that has been given to us will in return be given back to us by the providence of God. Amen.

### **SEVENTH PRAYER**

For the end of abortion in the African-American community. Far too much treasure in America has been lost through the tragedy of abortion. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton for a quickening of the Holy Spirit in the black Community so that its conscience will be awakened to know that each child conceived belongs to God and that God has given each child a plan and purpose for its life. Pray for an end of sexual objectification, adultery and premarital sex that pave the way to compound personal misery. Pray that medical professionals will affirm the beauty of all prenatal children even those that may be born in any way different or disadvantaged. Pray Father Tolton for all women and men who have in some way participated in abortion, for their forgiveness and healing. Pray for all pregnant women to have the help and support they need to bring their child safely into the world, so that their children might have the opportunity to know, love and serve God in this life and in the next. Amen.

### **EIGHTH PRAYER**

For Catholic evangelization of the African American community. O Father Augustus Tolton, who always sought new opportunities to reach out to those on the margins of faith and practice. Pray Father Tolton for the Lord to send more evangelists of the Gospel to the black communities of America. Pray Father Tolton that the Lord might send us catechists like you to point God's children to the light and love of Christ Jesus through the sacraments and rich traditions of the Catholic Church. And pray, Father Tolton, that wherever the evangelists of today might go that they will have the courage to speak what God has given them to say and that their words will fall upon fertile soil. Amen.

### **NINTH PRAYER**

For vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life from the black Community. O Father Augustus Tolton who, as a young man, accepted generously God's gentle voice speaking to your heart, intercede for us and pray that as the Eternal Father sent you that He will send more men and women from the black community to serve God's people as priests and deacons and consecrated religious. Pray Father Tolton for the Church's cup to overflow with blessing from vocations of men and women responding to their baptismal call to serve God's people in love. Amen.

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**Help support the canonization of Venerable Augustus Tolton by donating to the cause.**

To donate online, please visit [tolton.archchicago.org](http://tolton.archchicago.org).

Mail checks to:

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A number of Father Augustus Tolton items, including prayer cards, books and brochures, are available for purchase at [tolton.archchicago.org](http://tolton.archchicago.org). All proceeds benefit the cause.

Signed and numbered prints of the Father Augustus Tolton Icon are available for purchase **on the website**. All purchases help fund the cause for canonization.