

The Newsletter of the African American Commission

Leadership  Evangelization  Social Justice

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Barbara Breckenridge Tells Her Story: Continuation of Life

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COMMISSION MEMBER BARBARA BRECKENRIDGE

Like many African American Catholics in the Western New York area, Barbara Breckenridge has a connection to St. Nicholas Church; in fact she was a member before it became St. Benedict the Moor and eventually St. Martin de

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CONGRESS XII KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. SHANNEN DEE WILLIAMS

We are 82 days away from Congress XII. Here are four facts about the keynote speaker to hype up our excitement.

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Calendar of Events

April
May
June
July 6-9 NBCC, Orlando, FL
August

September
October Revival 2017
November Black Catholic History Month
December

The African American Commission

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Porres Church. She is also a member of the African American Commission and chair the committee for the biennial revival. Barbara's biography is a testimony that we all Catholics believe - the sacredness and value of human life. It was her significant health threat that actually transformed her life. It was surely God's plan to create her life anew following a diagnosis of kidney disease in 1992.

Embracing the belief that she had a life to continue while receiving dialysis treatments in the late 90s, she met a kidney transplant survivor, went on the kidney transplant list and was encouraged by her social worker to volunteer for the National Kidney Foundation. This turning point in her life propelled her to serve others in the community, especially those with renal challenges. Barbara joined the Board of Directors of the National Kidney Foundation serving as Minority Community Education Director as a dialysis patient and also became a Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) representative for the dialysis center that served her. Immediately following her recovery from kidney transplant surgery in 1999 Barbara began to visit dialysis centers and hospitalized patients to fulfill her goal to educate others and inspire them to embrace living productive lives. Barbara became a volunteer member of the Pastoral Care team of the transplant center that served her where she is able to take Holy Communion to the patients and their families, and offer them encouragement and support.

Fifteen years ago Barbara and another transplant patient founded a support group for patients and families faced with renal challenges and now for twenty years she has dedicated her life to the Renal Community of WNY including PAC Chair of the IPRO Organization (i.e., a national organization providing a full spectrum of healthcare assessment and improvement services that foster more efficient use of resources for enhancement of healthcare quality). She's appeared on television and radio shows carrying out an important mission to provide advocacy, education, support, peer counseling, emergency financial assistance, and even social activities such as an annual cookout and post-holiday gathering for patients and families. And, if this is not enough Barbara is the recipient of many awards such as the Kidney Foundation Award, the Chris Klug Bounce Back Award, and awards from Unyts and other community, political and church organizations- she's also an athlete!

In 2002, Barbara became a track and field athlete of the US and World Transplant Games. She's participated in eight US Transplant Games and has so far traveled to four continents to participate in the World Transplant Games - Australia, Sweden, South Africa, and Argentina. She plans to in June participate in the XXI World Transplant Games at Málaga, Spain! Barbara is very grateful to participate in her athletic pursuits that gives her encouragement to "stay fit." The Transplant Games have given her an opportunity to celebrate life with other
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Fact #1

Dr. Williams made an official statement of criticism on the U.S. Catholic theologians' (from St. Louis University, Loyola University New Orleans, the University of Dayton, and Marquette University) initial statement calling for police reform and racial justice in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement. According to Dr Williams, the original statement did not mention the loss of lives of black girls and women.

Fact #2

In the USCCB's website article *What Must Never Be Forgotten*, Dr. Williams discusses that:

few religious orders have publicly Apologized for their slaveholding pasts and/or the decades-long exclusion of African Americans from their membership ranks. Moreover, many church histories fail to document the racist abuses and humiliations long suffered by the nation's black Catholics, religious and lay people, at the hands of their fellow Catholics.

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Announcements

Like us on  ; our Facebook page will be available soon.

Sts. Columba Brigid - Ida's Kitchen for Seniors -every last Friday of the month at Noon, following a presentation - lunch is \$3.00

St. Martin de Porres Mortgage Burning Weekend - Holy Name Society Andy Mills Evening Prayer and Awards Presentation, Friday May 19th at 6pm; The 5Th Annual Basket & Silent Auction, Saturday May 20th at the Hamlin House - 432 Franklin, St 2pm, Tickets \$50.00/ youth \$25.00; The Celebratory Mass, May 21 at 10am

St. Anthony of Lackawanna Centennial Celebration, May 21st

Sts. Columba Brigid - Annual Chiavetta Dinner, June 4th

St. Anthony of Lackawanna Annual Chicken Dinner, June 11th

Fact #3

She stumbled upon a topic of the history of black sisters in her college graduate studies. This led to the forthcoming book *Subversive Habits: Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America after World War I*.

Fact #4

In the *Daily Theology* she gives an account of her own family's experience of racism in the Catholic Church. Her mother is said to be the first black woman graduate of Notre Dame, but her mother's experiences as a student were so unspeakable that she never out rightly shared them to her daughter, Dr. Williams. Yet, it was her mother's influence that led to her remaining a Catholic.

Notes:

See *Patheos*, December 2014 -

Dear U.S. Catholic Theologians: Lives of Black Women & Girls Always Matter: www.patheos.com

See the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website article- *What Must Never Be Forgotten*: www.usccb.org

See the Josephites website's article by Dan Stockman - *Forthcoming book documents history of black sisters in U.S.*: www.josephites.org

See (DT) *Daily Theology*, May 5 2015 - *The Church is Not Dead Yet: An Interview with Dr. Shannen Dee Williams*, by John Slattery: <https://dailytheology.org>

BARBARA BRECKENRIDGE - Cont'd from page 2

organ-transplant survivors and also honor the life of deceased and living organ donors and their families.

In her own words about the precious gift of life: "It's been a journey all started from [my kidney] transplant. I've been able to help people in their journey [with renal challenges]. Every day I wake up and know I'm going to make a difference in someone else's life only because I got the great gift [a kidney] from my donor's family and God."



According to the National Kidney Foundation, "African Americans constitute more than 35% of all patients in the U.S. receiving dialysis for kidney failure, but only represent 13.2% of the overall U.S. population."

Support organ donation today!

CATHOLIC REVIVAL



Our 2017 Revivalist - Fr. Tony Ricard

To be revived or restored as God's people is very important, as stated in Isaiah 40:30-31, Though young men faint and grow weary, and youths stagger and fall. They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint.

This year's revival will be held at St. Martin de Porres Church October, 9th, 10th, and 11th. Our revivalist will be Rev. R. Tony Ricard, M.Th., M.Div. of New Orleans. He is currently the pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Roman Catholic Church in New Orleans, Director of Campus Ministry and Chair of Theology at St. Augustine High School, Instructor at Xavier University Institute for Black Catholic Studies at New Orleans, and Chaplain of the New Orleans Saints. He is known for his great sense of humor and being instrumental in keeping the 9th Ward churches Our Lady Star of the Sea and St. Philip the Apostle flourishing before and after the storm Katrina.

WALKING WITH THE SAINTS

According to the National Black Catholic Congress, Inc. Pastoral Plan of Action under item *III Walking With the Saints*: "In the Catholic tradition, we learn to live faithfully through the example of holy men and women before us—the [The African and African American] saints who are both role models and intercessors."

St. Anthony the Great - Feast Day January 17

St. Anthony the Great of Egypt is known as "The Father of All Monks." One reason he got this name is because it is said that he was the first to have gone out into the wilderness around 270 A.D. to practice his faith or Christian monasticism. St. Anthony is known as a Desert Father. Simply put, Desert Fathers practiced living alone in deserts to abstain from worldly pleasures as a way of practicing their faith. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria's biography of St. Anthony helped to spread Christian monasticism throughout Western Europe; the biography included accounts of the many temptations that St. Anthony endured in the wilderness practicing his faith. St. Anthony the Great is the patron of infectious diseases, especially skin diseases.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_the_Great

Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas - Feast Day March 7

Saints Perpetua and Felicity are known to be early Christian martyrs. Perpetua was well educated and had married well; she was a mother of an infant son. Felicity (also known as Felicitas) was her servant. They were killed because of their Christian faith which they refused to denounce. They purposefully sacrificed their lives to become martyrs in the Christian faith. Other early catechumens witnessed their journey to martyrdom in 203 A.D. in Carthage. They are patron saints of mothers and expectant mothers.

Source: catholicmom.com



St. Mary of Egypt - Feast Day April 2

St. Mary of Egypt, born in the year 344 and died in the year 421; at the age of 12 she went to live in Alexandria to become an actress and courtesan. She was known to have a spiritual awakening about her sinful life from a vision of the Blessed Virgin that directed her to go to the desert east of Palestine where she lived as a hermitess for 47 years. She prayed to the Blessed Virgin to help her through her temptations in the desert and was found by a monk named Zosimus who spread her story. She is the patron saint of chasity, deliverance from demons, and skin diseases.

Source: <http://www.catholic.org/saints>

St. Isidora of Tabenna - Feast Day May 1

St. Isidora of Tabenna lived during the 4th century in Egypt and is considered to be "The Fool for Christ." "The Fool for Christ" appears to be such a harsh way to label someone who is a saint. Those who tell her story say that she was known to have avoided the simple pleasures of life as she lived in a convent and wore a rag on her head instead of a veil, drank dirty water and ate crumbs from the table of others, and carried out chores as if she were a slave. Her unusual ways resulted in her being treated rudely. It is said that God sent St. Pitirim from the desert to find Isidora who was someone holier than himself. She was known to be so humble that she ran away immediately after blessing St. Pitirim.

Source: The Nuns' Garden -

<http://thenunsgarden.org/saint-isidora.php>

St. Onuphrius the Great - Feast Day June 12

St. Onuphrius was known to have lived in the 4th or 5th Century. He was considered to be a Desert Father who lived alone in the desert for 70 years; he is from Egypt. A Desert Father was considered to be part of the early Christian hermits, ascetics, and monks who practiced Christian monasticism. Onuphrius's way of life was told by Paphnutius the Ascetic and eventually it was spread throughout the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe. He is the patron saint of weavers.

Source: Wikipedia -

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onuphrius>



