



Tolton

From Slave to Priest

Study Guide

For High School Students

A Live Drama by Saint Luke Productions

Saint Luke
PRODUCTIONS



Tolton

From Slave to Priest

Study Guide for High School Students

Table of Contents

About the Production & the Actor

Who was Father Tolton?

- A Brief Biography
- Fast Facts

Father Tolton's World

- Slave States & Free States
- The Catholic Church in the U.S.
- The National Black Catholic Congress

Important People in Father Tolton's Life

- Martha Jane Tolton, Father Tolton's Mother
- Father Peter McGirr, Father Tolton's Mentor and Advocate of His Admission into Seminary
- St. Katharine Drexel, Father Tolton's Supporter and Benefactor

The Making of a Saint

- Why Does the Church Canonize Saints?
- The Canonization Process
- Canonization Prayer for Father Tolton

Interesting Facts about the Show and about Father Tolton

Themes in *Tolton*

- Unity
- "It's not the strong who prevail..."
- True Freedom
- Self-Sacrifice & Perseverance
- Forgiveness
- Non-Violence

Pre-Show Reflection Questions

Post-Show Reflection Questions

Action Items

Find Out More: List of Resources

Other Black Catholics on the Path to Sainthood

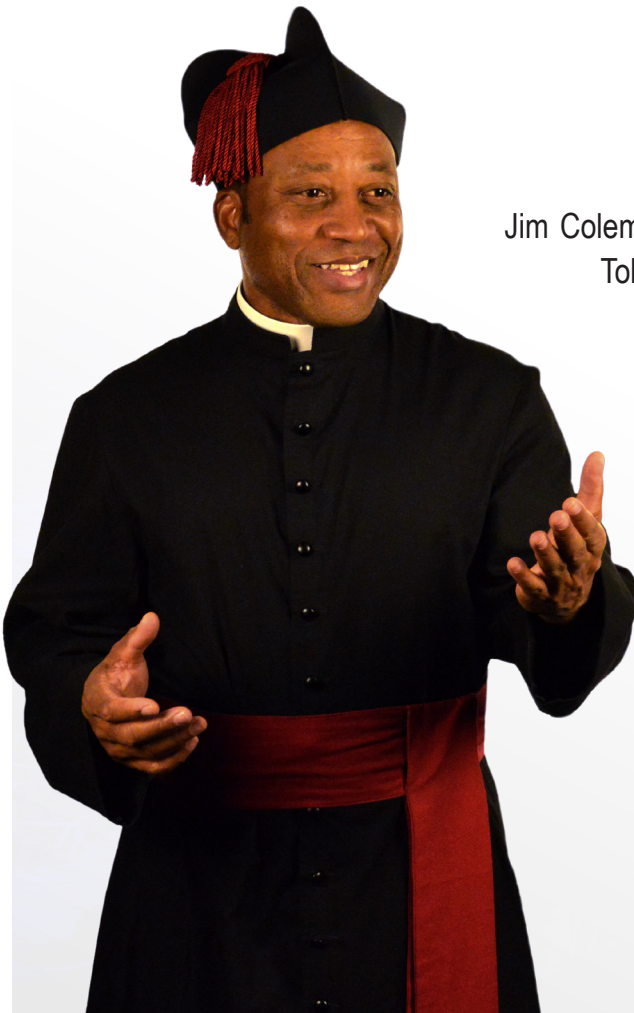
About Saint Luke Productions

Introduction

About the Production

Tolton: From Slave to Priest is a powerful one-man multi-media play on the life of Father Augustus Tolton, the first African American priest (1854-1897). Father Tolton's compelling story offers encouragement and hope to our world, so desperately in need of reconciliation and healing. It is much more than an inspirational story – Father Tolton's example offers a key to unlocking the division that plagues our society.

The play features a full cast of characters on a video screen who interact with actor Jim Coleman live on stage. This unique format is visually engaging while also retaining the personal effect of a live performance. Audiences leave the show feeling that they have “met” Father Tolton. The production is enhanced by an original soundtrack based on traditional African American spirituals, orchestrated by composer Tony Manfredonia.



About the Actor

Jim Coleman is excited and honored to be playing the role of Father Tolton. Prior to his acting career, he served in the U.S. Army as a medic. Having appeared in more than 50 national commercials, Coleman is best known for his role of Roger Parker in the hit Nickelodeon show *My Brother and Me*.

"Father Tolton's story needs to be told," says Coleman. "As a Black man, this very important part of history is something that I want the world to hear about. I truly feel blessed to be the one to share Father Augustus Tolton with all who will listen!"

Jim and his wife Robin reside in Florida; they are the proud parents of six children.



Who was Father Augustus Tolton?

A Brief Biography

"A colored child born April 1, 1854, son of Peter Tolton and Martha Chisley, property of Stephen Elliott." That is all his baptismal record says. Born a slave to Peter Paul and Martha Tolton, of Brush Creek, Missouri, seven years before the American Civil War, he grew up to become the first recognized African American Catholic priest.

Ten years later, his father went to fight for the Union Army but died during the Civil War. His heroic mother risked her life to escape slavery. With her three young children, Martha Tolton crossed the Mississippi in a dilapidated row boat. After dodging Confederate bullets, she and her children ran all the way to the town of Quincy, in the free state of Illinois. There they made a home, and Augustus Tolton grew in the Catholic Faith and in the conviction that God was calling him to be a priest.

Constantly the victim of racial prejudice, he was cast out of the local Catholic school and, eventually, he went on to study for the priesthood in Rome. He was ordained on April 24, 1886 in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, with the intention of heading for Africa as a missionary. However, God had other plans, and Father Tolton was assigned to return to the hostile environment of his own hometown of Quincy, Illinois.

His sermons and presence there were inspiring and charismatic. White and Black alike flocked to his church. This aroused the jealousy of some other Catholic priests in the area. Protestant Black ministers were also envious and felt he was stealing people away from their congregations. Many in Quincy – his own hometown – became so hostile to him that he had leave.

Father Tolton was transferred to Chicago where he set about establishing a parish. First, his tiny congregation met in the basement of "Old Saint Mary's" Church. Then he began the work of building Saint Monica Church, named for the African mother of Saint Augustine. Father Tolton's reputation for holiness grew. The phenomenon of a Black Catholic priest, who was a terrific preacher, placed a demand on him to travel the country. This he did tirelessly, evangelizing and raising money for his struggling congregation.

Returning from a priests' retreat, Father Tolton collapsed from heat exhaustion and was taken to Mercy Hospital in Chicago. He died there on July 9, 1897, at the age of 43.

Father Augustus Tolton's life here on earth was one of hidden holiness. His cause for canonization was presented by the late Cardinal Francis George to the Vatican and is moving forward quickly. Bearing the insults of racial prejudice, he suffered with Christ, reminding us of these words of the Bible's Psalm 118: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."



Fast Facts

Born: April 1, 1854, to Martha and Peter Tolton, in Brush Creek, Missouri

Escaped to freedom in Quincy, Illinois: about 1862

Civil War: 1861-1865

Confirmation & First Communion: 1870 (age 16) at St. Peter Church, Quincy, Illinois

Enrolled in St. Francis College, now Quincy University: 1878

Departure for seminary in Rome: February 15, 1880

Ordination: April 24, 1886, at St. John Lateran Basilica, Rome

First Mass: April 25, 1886 at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome

First Mass in Quincy, Illinois: July 18, 1886 at St. Boniface Church

Began Ministry in Chicago: December 19, 1889

Dedication of St. Monica Church in Chicago: January 14, 1894

Death: July 9, 1897 at Mercy Hospital in Chicago from heat stroke, age 43, interred July 13, 1897 in the cemetery in Quincy, Springfield Diocese, per his request

Cause for Sainthood: Opened February 24, 2011, under Francis Cardinal George of the Archdiocese of Chicago

Declared Servant of God: February 13, 2012

Father Tolton's World

Slave States & Free States

At the time the Toltons escaped from Missouri to Illinois around the beginning of the Civil War, the United States was divided into “slave states” where slavery was allowed, and “free states” where slavery was illegal. Even in “free states,” however, African Americans were not treated as well as White people, including in Illinois where Father Tolton grew up and later worked as a priest.

The Catholic Church in the U.S.

The first Catholics of African descent came to this country in the 1700s, with the Spanish, French, and English colonists. Some of these were free and some were slaves.

It was typical for those enslaved by plantation owners to be baptized and instructed in the religion of the plantation owner, as Father Tolton was. In fact, until the Civil War ended, Blacks were not legally allowed to attend any religious service that was not conducted by Whites. After the war, while African Americans often had their own Protestant churches and ministers, it was not until Father Tolton was ordained in 1886 that there was a Black Catholic priest in the U.S. He was ordained in Rome, as were the other African American priests after him, until about 50 years later when the first African Americans were ordained priests inside the U.S.

Catholics of any color were routinely treated poorly by the Protestant majority in the U.S. This was a problem that had existed from the 1500s in Europe. But to be Black and Catholic was especially difficult for a long time. While some Catholic leaders were very dedicated to aiding African Americans, Native Americans, and other groups often marginalized, it was common for segregation laws to be accepted by both Protestant and Catholic churches and schools. In fact, different Catholic parishes for different ethnic groups existed in much the U.S., frequently founded by the ethnic communities themselves. For instance, in one city there would be separate parishes for Italians, Germans, etc.

If you were Italian in that era and entered a “Polish parish” Mass, you would possibly have been asked to go to the Italian church. In the same way, Black Catholics were sometimes asked to leave a “White” church and go to “the Black parish.” In some parishes where both races attended, African Americans were expected to sit in the back and to receive Holy Communion after their fellow White parishioners.

Until the mid-1960s, the U.S. Catholic Church had separate religious orders for Black priests and nuns and a segregated seminary for Blacks. In the 1800s, efforts by extraordinary people of both Black and White heritage paved the path toward leadership in the Catholic Church for people of African

Father Tolton's World

descent. St. Katharine Drexel, a White nun, founded fifty schools for Black students, including Xavier University of Louisiana, the only Catholic college in the nation for African Americans. She sent Fr. Tolton letters of support and money to build his parish in Chicago. When the Civil Rights era prompted important changes, Catholic schools were desegregated and the long road to healing divisions was started.

What is the official Catholic Church teaching on enslaving people? The Catholic Church has always condemned “unjust servitude.” There are many papal documents proving this, going back centuries. Unfortunately, Catholics privately continued to enslave people for economic gain until it was abolished by governments at different times in different parts of the world.

In 1889, the first National Black Catholic Congress was called by Daniel Rudd, an African American publisher. Father Tolton spoke at this gathering. In 1909, Black Catholics established the Knights of Peter Claver as a parallel organization to the Knights of Columbus. In 1920, the first U.S. seminary for Blacks was founded: St. Augustine’s in Mississippi. In 1958, during the American Civil Rights movement, the American Catholic bishops issued a statement declaring segregation wrong and called for racial justice. At the 1965 March in Selma, Alabama, for African American voting rights, many Catholic clergy and women religious participated, invited by Martin Luther King, Jr.

The National Black Catholic Congress

The first National Black Catholic Congress convened in January of 1889, when approximately 200 delegates met with President Grover Cleveland. Father Tolton celebrated High Mass for the Congress, and delivered an address. A portion of his speech reads:

“[T]he priests of the Church taught me to pray and to forgive my persecutors... it was through the direction of a [religious] sister... that I learned to interpret the Ten Commandments; and then I also beheld for the first time the glimmering light of truth and the majesty of the Church. In this Church we do not have to fight for our rights because we are Black. She had colored saints – Augustine, Benedict the Moor, Monica. The Church is broad and liberal. She is the Church for our people.”

The Congress assembled five times in the 1800s and then renewed its gatherings in 1987, meeting every five years. It met most recently in 2017 in Orlando, Florida.



Important People in Father Tolton's Life

Martha Jane Tolton

Martha Jane Tolton was Father Tolton's mother. One thing is clear from the little we know about her: she was a woman of extraordinary courage and faith. These days, we have the internet, GPS, and cell phones to make arrangements when we travel. Martha Tolton had none of these things. She rowed across the Mississippi River with her three young children to escape slavery and to give them a chance to have a better life, without knowing whom they would meet or what they would find on the other side of the river.

Father Tolton continued to support his mother after he became a priest, and she cared for him as well. In Chicago, she served as housekeeper, sacristan, and choir member at St. Monica's. There, Father Tolton's parishioners affectionately called her "Mother Tolton."

Father Peter McGirr

Friend, mentor, and tireless advocate, Father McGirr did his very best to be sure Augustus Tolton became a priest. Through Father McGirr's example and mentorship, Augustus Tolton first experienced the truly universal nature of the Catholic Church.

Father Tolton later said: "I was a poor slave boy but the priests of the Church did not disdain me. It was through the influence of one of them that I became what I am. I must now give praise to that son of the Emerald Isle, Father Peter McGirr, pastor of St. Peter's Church in Quincy, who promised me that I would be educated and who kept his word. It was the priests of the Church who taught me to pray and to forgive my persecutors."

St. Katharine Drexel

Mother Katharine Drexel (now Saint Katharine Drexel) was the daughter of a famous Philadelphia banker, and the heiress to a large fortune. After meeting with the pope to discuss how she should use her wealth, Katharine founded a religious order of sisters and dedicated not just her money, but also her life, to serving Blacks and Native Americans in the U.S.

Father Tolton heard about Mother Drexel at the National Black Catholic Congress and wrote to her several times asking for her help for his parish. She sent him at least \$36,000 (worth nearly \$1 million in today's dollars) and continued to support St. Monica's in Chicago after his death. She even later sent some of her nuns to teach at the parish school. St. Monica's School eventually merged with nearby St. Elizabeth School, and Mother Drexel's sisters taught there until 2015.

The Making of a Saint

Father Tolton's canonization cause is moving forward. This means the process is underway for him to be declared a saint. Cardinal George of Chicago said before he died in 2015 that opening Father Tolton's canonization cause was the most important achievement of his life. But why is sainthood so important, and how does a person become a canonized saint?

Why Does the Church Canonize Saints?

The canonization of a saint is one of the greatest blessings God bestows upon His Church. Through canonization, God confirms the holiness of the lives of men and women who were His very faithful servants on earth. To be canonized, someone must live a life of heroic virtue – at a level above and beyond the ordinary practice of Christian virtue. This would include constancy at prayer, perseverance through great trials, patience in intense sufferings, a notable practice of the works of mercy, especially toward the poor and the suffering, and outstanding zeal in the spreading of God's love and mercy in word and deed for the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

We need our saints very much. First, they are shining examples of living the Christian life today. St. Pope John Paul II, who canonized so many saints, said that in their lives we clearly see the working of the Holy Spirit. Like St. Paul, they say to us, *"Be imitators of me as I am of Christ."* (1 Corinthians 4:16) Secondly, their prayers and intercession assist us on our journey to become saints. Many people have favorite saints and patron saints to whom they pray each day. The saints constantly make known our needs to Jesus as Our Lady did at the wedding at Cana when she said to Him, *"They have no wine."* (John 2:3) Finally, we have their protection in dangers, their consolation in adversity, and their joy in our friendship with them.

(Source: ToltonCanonization.org, extract from a paper prepared by Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR)

The Canonization Process

- 1) Several years after the death of a Catholic whom people regard as holy, the local bishop investigates the candidate's life and writings for heroic virtue (or in some cases, martyrdom) and orthodoxy of doctrine. In other words, did the candidate's life and words reflect the teachings of the Church? On February 24, 2011, the Cause for the Beatification and Canonization of Father Augustus Tolton was opened in Chicago by Francis Cardinal George and Bishop Joseph Perry, and these investigations began.
- 2) The cause for canonization moves forward with extensive research. In Father Tolton's case, this meant uncovering historical records from newspaper archives, slave record sources, Vatican archives, and religious communities that touched his life. On February 13, 2012, the Sacred Congregation for Causes of Saints at the Vatican granted the title "Servant of God" to Father Tolton. It is the first of four possible titles in the canonization process. (The next ones are: Venerable, Blessed, and then Saint.)
- 3) At the conclusion of the diocesan investigation, the documents supporting the cause for the candidate's sainthood are sent to the Vatican. The dossier on Father Tolton was sealed and sent to the Vatican on September 29, 2014.
- 4) At the Vatican, the documents are studied and an assessment is made of the candidate's life and virtues. Father Tolton's cause was approved by the Vatican on April 17, 2015. On this same day, Francis Cardinal George, who first began the process for Father Tolton's canonization, died.
- 5) Next, the Sacred Congregation for Causes of Saints at the Vatican must evaluate and approve the candidate, who is then declared "Venerable."
- 6) The next step is beatification, which requires evidence of one miracle through the candidate's intercession. Since miracles are considered proof that the person is in heaven and can intercede for us, the miracle must take place after the candidate's death and as a result of a specific petition to the candidate. Many people are currently praying for Father Tolton's intercession. After a miracle is approved, the pope declares the person "Blessed."
- 7) Finally, after one more miracle, the pope will canonize the saint. The title of "saint" tells us that the person lived a holy life, is in heaven, and is to be honored by the universal Church.

(Sources: Catholic.org/saints/faq, ToltonCanonization.org)

Canonization Prayer

For 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 (*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.

© 2010 Bishop Joseph N. Perry

Imprimatur
Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archdiocese of Chicago

Interesting Facts About Father Tolton & The Live Drama

About Father Tolton

Because he worked many seasons while he was of school age, Father Tolton didn't learn to read until he was 14. His mother never learned to read.

Nineteen of Father Tolton's supporters in Quincy moved 311 miles to Chicago to remain in his care.

There is a street in Chicago named after Father Tolton. "Honorary Father Augustus Tolton Street" is located on 41st Street between State Street and Michigan Avenue.

Two miracles attributed to Father Tolton's intercession have been recorded so far, and have been sent to Rome where they will be studied for authenticity.

Father Tolton's body was carefully exhumed and then re-buried as part of the canonization process. His casket has a glass top, a feature of caskets for people of importance in his day.

When Father Tolton becomes a saint, he will be the first African American priest to be honored this way.

About The Live Drama

All of the characters you see on the video screen during the show were filmed in front of a green screen in Saint Luke Productions' studio. The backgrounds are special effects that were added later.

The video components for *Tolton* were filmed in just four days. Some Saint Luke Productions office staff even jumped in to play some of the background characters.

The soundtrack was written by Tony Manfredonia, a young composer in Michigan. He used a sophisticated computer program to emulate the sounds of a full orchestra.

The songs that Mama Tolton sings in the show are traditional African American "spirituals." People have been singing them for over 100 years. Frederick Douglass, a former slave, said of them, "Like tears, they were a relief to aching hearts." If you listen carefully to the music, you will notice that these songs are the musical themes that make up the soundtrack.

Leonardo Defilippis, who wrote and produced the show, is also an actor. He plays several different characters in *Tolton*: a slave owner, a confederate soldier, a cardinal, and the devil.

Themes in Tolton

Unity

“That they may be one.” (Gospel of John 17:22)

Tolton opens with this quote from the Gospel, where Jesus prays that his followers may be one. This unity that Jesus prayed for is a defining characteristic of the Catholic Church. The following passage from the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains:

Unity is of the essence of the Church....From the beginning, this one Church has been marked by a great diversity which comes from both the variety of God's gifts and the diversity of those who receive them. Within the unity of the People of God, a multiplicity of people and cultures is gathered together. Among the Church's members, there are different gifts, offices, conditions, and ways of life....The great richness of such diversity is not opposed to the Church's unity. Yet sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Sections 813-814

Unity does not mean being all the same. Rather, the Church is united by charity above all else. (CCC 815) Even though Father Tolton experienced rejection from many people within the Church, he always kept his eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. When he treated everyone with charity, regardless of how they treated him, he extended an invitation to everyone to be united in the love of God. The courageous way that Father Tolton lived this central element of Catholicism is one of the reasons he is now being considered for canonization as a saint.

Strength in Weakness

“It's not the strong who prevail, but the weak who give everything to the Lord.” (Line from *Tolton* drama based on St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 12)

One of the most striking lines in the live drama is this one because it is so counter-cultural in our times. And yet it is written by one of the greatest heroes of Christianity, St. Paul, who was taught to share this message by Christ Himself. Does St. Paul mean that “the strong...prevail” in an interior way or in a physical way? And what does “prevail” mean, as he wrote it? Does it mean “winning” or something else?

True Freedom

In *Tolton*, it is easy to focus on the civil concept of freedom: freedom to move, to speak, to associate with people we choose, to go to school and church where we wish, and more. Father Tolton,



Themes in Tolton

though, expands our understanding of freedom. By his life and preaching, he taught Jesus' true freedom, which is to live for others out of love of God and to see every person as His child.

Self-Sacrifice & Perseverance

Father Tolton shows us again and again, obstacle after obstacle, what it is to put others before himself and persevere. Patiently he endured mocking by fellow students and fatigue after long work hours in order to get an education. He waited ten years from the time his vocation to the priesthood was clear until he was accepted at a seminary. For the sake of his poor parishioners in Chicago, he traveled extensively to preach to raise money for them and their church building. His strength came from his faith, support of friends and family and Fr. McGirr and the nuns, plus his commitment to his personal mission as a priest to serve.

Forgiveness

Without a heart for forgiveness, Father Tolton would not have been the man so many knew to be so Christ-like that in his own lifetime people regarded him as a saint. His mother showed him the way. Surely he had many reasons to be bitter. His father was gone early in life; his mother was so poor he had to work from a young age at jobs that were unpleasant and tiring; he was made fun of; another priest even told him to quit ministering to Whites. Forgiving his enemies and praying for them, as Jesus did, Father Tolton lived a life of the Cross.

Non-Violence

The term "non-violence" was not known in Father Tolton's day. We do not really know if Father Tolton would have participated in civil resistance events in the 20th or 21st centuries but certainly we know by his life story that he would have supported the fair treatment of all people because Christ did so. Today we can ask for his help during times when we encounter disrespect and bias. Even now he is waiting to intercede for us in Heaven.

Pre-Show Reflection Questions

Live Production

- 1) In *Tolton*, elements of both movies and live theatre are combined. Have you ever seen a live play? How did that experience compare to seeing a movie?
- 2) You may have a chance to meet Jim Coleman, the actor who plays Father Tolton, after the show. What would you most want to ask him?

Father Tolton's Life

- 1) Father Tolton once said that "the Catholic Church is a Church for our people." What do you think he meant by that?
- 2) Even when every seminary in the United States rejected him, Augustus Tolton refused to give up his desire to become a priest. Why do you think the priesthood was so important to him?

The Canonization Process

- 1) There have been over 10,000 canonized saints in the history of the Catholic Church. St. Pope John Paul II canonized more saints than any other pope. Why do you think we need saints?
- 2) Saints are like our friends. They inspire us on our journey toward holiness and heaven. Do you have any special saints who you like to ask for help? If you've been confirmed, who was your confirmation saint and why did you choose him or her?



Post-Show Reflection Questions

- 1) In the play, Father Tolton talks about “double slavery” of both mind and body. What does he mean by this? How does sin “enslave” us?
- 2) As a young student, Augustus Tolton experienced taunting from both Whites and Blacks -- by Blacks because he was too dark-skinned, and by Whites because he was considered inferior. Unfortunately, as many know well, this kind of bullying continues today, over a century later. Why do you think young students like to make fun of people who are different? What do you think Father Tolton would tell such students today? Would that change their hearts and actions?
- 3) The word “catholic” means “universal.” Look up the definition of “universal” in the dictionary. How does this relate to Jesus’ prayer in the Bible “that they may be one?”
- 4) Many people would consider Father Tolton a failure: as a priest, he was forced out of his own hometown, and his church in Chicago was never finished. Nevertheless, his heroic faithfulness and dedication to the people he served have set him on the path to sainthood. Think about St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s statement: “God has not called me to be successful; He has called me to be faithful.” What does it mean to be faithful?
- 5) Most of the seminaries to which Augustus Tolton applied rejected him without even meeting him, simply because he was Black. Have you ever drawn conclusions – whether positive or negative – about people just based on the way they look? How can this be a problem?
- 6) What kinds of things can you do, now, to promote Father Tolton’s ways of forgiveness, perseverance, and peace in the face of bias or discouragement? (See “Action Items” for some ideas.)



Action Items

- 1) Pray the Canonization Prayer to Father Tolton, or simply ask for Father Tolton's help with a struggle or difficulty in your life.
- 2) Go to www.ToltonCanonization.org and click on "Biography." Pick one section of Father Tolton's biography to read, and write a journal entry as if you are Father Tolton. Ask yourself: what would he be thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing?
- 3) Imagine you are Augustus Tolton and you have just arrived in Rome to begin your seminary studies. Write a letter to your mother describing what it is like. Remember, you have never been outside of Illinois and Missouri before.
- 4) Think about ways you can welcome someone who might feel left out. Write down three things you could say or do.
- 5) Augustus Tolton was aided by some in the Catholic Church, such as the religious sisters who taught him, and mentors like Fr. McGirr, but also insulted and rejected by some Catholic people or groups. The insults and rejections were harder to endure because they came from people who represented a group that he believed in and that was supposed to demonstrate Jesus' all-encompassing love. Describe an example of disappointment or betrayal from your own life or a friend's and how the example of Christ influenced how you acted and thought about it.

Find Out More

List of Resources

Printed and Audio Resources

Father Augustus Tolton: The First Recognized Black Catholic Priest in America – full color graphic novel, available at <http://www.ltp.org/search/index?searchQuery=tolton&matchType=3>

Father Augustus Tolton: A Brief Biography of a Faithful Priest and Former Slave – two-color 16 page pamphlet, available at <http://www.ltp.org/search/index?searchQuery=tolton&matchType=3>

From Slave to Priest: A Biography of the Reverend Augustus Tolton (1854-1897) The First Black Priest by Caroline Hemesath, S.S.F. – available at Amazon in various formats, including Kindle; available at Ignatius Press.com, the publisher; and as an audiobook at <https://formed.org/listen/59d654771d7ff8180d920071> (359 minutes)

From Slave to Priest: The Inspiring Story of Father Augustine Tolton by Deacon Ken Ramsey -- audio CD, <https://market.formed.org/au-fromslavetopriest-en.html> (1 hour 16 minutes)

The History of Black Catholics in the United States by Fr. Cyprian Davis – available at Amazon

Online Resources

Timeline of U.S. Black Catholic History
<https://www.nbccongress.org/history-of-black-catholics.html>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' African American Resources:

"Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism" <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/index.cfm> (1979)

"What We have Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States" (1984) <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/what-we-have-seen-and-heard.cfm>

"Plenty Good Room: The Spirit and Truth of African American Catholic Worship" <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/upload/plenty-good-room.pdf> (1991)

Bishops' statements and letters on African Americans in the Catholic Church, racism in the U.S., and other special matters: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/index.cfm>

National Black Catholic Congress 2017 Pastoral Plan of Action
<https://nebula.wsimg.com>

Other Black Catholics

On the Path to Sainthood

In order of their births, ranging from 1776 to 1883:

- **Venerable Pierre Toussaint** <https://obmny.org/venerable-pierre-toussaint>
- **Servant of God Mother Mary Lange** <http://www.oblatesisters.com/MotherLange.html>
- **Venerable Henriette Delille** <http://www.sistersoftheholymfamily.com/CanonizationProcess.html>
- **Servant of God Julia Greeley** <http://juliagreeley.org/>

About all five holy men and women: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/on-the-road-to-sainthood-leaders-of-african-descent.cfm>

Note: Sister Thea Bowman - in February 2018, the Diocese of Jackson in Mississippi announced that it will begin researching her life, writing and works, the preliminary step to opening her cause for canonization. <https://www.fspa.org/content/about/sister-thea-bowman>.



About

Saint Luke Productions

Saint Luke Productions is dedicated to evangelizing and renewing the culture through theater and the media. Its mission is accomplished through live professional dramas and feature films, based on historical, scriptural, and modern-day stories that inspire audiences to a deeper desire for the Truth of Jesus Christ. Saint Luke Productions is committed to the education and encouragement of artists and young people who share its vision, through internships, workshops and employment. These opportunities include: acting, theatrical lighting and sound, touring, cinematography, and film and sound editing. In accord with the teachings of St. John Paul II and the Second Vatican Council, Saint Luke Productions believes that a renewal of the culture depends upon a renewal of Catholic family life. Saint Luke Productions was established within the context of family and works to encourage a respect for the family, in its productions and work environment.

Phone: (360) 687-8029

Website: www.StLukeProductions.com

Saint Luke Productions
P.O. Box 886
Battle Ground, WA 98604

Leonardo Defilippis, the president and founder of Saint Luke Productions, especially enjoys bringing shows to young people, and welcomes their questions and comments.

Connect with Saint Luke Productions through social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest.

This study guide was created by Saint Luke Productions and is intended for the hosts, sponsors, teachers, and students who are preparing to attend or have already attended the live production of *Tolton: From Slave to Priest*.