

His Holiness Pope Francis
Saint Martha House
00120 Citta del Vaticano, Vatican City

Dear Holy Father Pope Francis,

This letter is to prayerfully ask you to expedite the Canonization Process for the six African American candidates currently considered for Sainthood. It is distressing to us in the America Roman Catholic Church, that there are no African American Saints recognized by the highest Church authorities. You, Holy Father, as Pope, have elevated to Sainthood the most individuals in Church History. This is wonderful as we can never have too many examples of holiness to emulate. We firmly believe that it is due time that these six, holy and virtuous African Americans currently on the path to Sainthood join those in the Communion of Saints.

African Americans have endured significant suffering since the first slaves arrived in 1619. The six candidates for Sainthood were all either born into slavery, were the recent ancestors of slaves, or educated and cared for slaves and the most vulnerable despite great personal risks to themselves. They lived out the Beatitudes and imitated Our Lord by living heroic lives of faith, hope, and love. They each lived lives of miraculous generosity, deep and abiding love, and faith despite significant obstacles of the times, always Trusting in God's Providence.

While African Americans have remained faithful to the Church over the centuries; they have endured the brutal legacy of slavery, racial segregation and discrimination (even within the Church), structural racism and barriers to economic stability and growth, and even mass incarceration. Your canonizing these six African Americans would send a very important message of reconciliation to the Church Universal. While the US Church has 11 white Americans who have been elevated to Sainthood, we have no African American Saints. We realize there is a process that in the past has been circumvented to expedite or immediately elevate those recognized by their own nations and the Church as living heroic, holy lives. The process, however, is not equitable and not working for the six African Americans on this road to Sainthood. The process has reaped unfair and inequitable results

We respectfully ask that you please examine the process for Sainthood and the significant costs associated with a cause, especially for those from vulnerable populations as were these commendable African Americans. We ask that you elevate Venerable Pierre Toussaint, Venerable Sr .Henriette Delille, Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, Servants of God Mother Mary Lange, Sr. Thea Bowman, and Julia Greeley to Sainthood using the Santo Subito process as quickly as possible. African American Catholics need this, the American Catholic Church needs this, and the Church Universal would benefit greatly.

Respectfully Yours in Christ Jesus with His Blessed Mother,

Signature

Date