

## Black Saints: Maurice

| Nov. 7, 2013 NCR Today

Black Saints

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### Introduction

Blacks in Catholic Christianity have a long and vibrant history.

Much of that history is generally unknown to Black Catholics as well as to the rest of the faithful. On July 24, 1990, the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus of the United States designated November as Black Catholic History Month to celebrate this long history and proud heritage of Black Catholics. During this month we celebrate the presence of our ancestors who kept the faith and are models of living the Gospel life.

### Nov. 7 Saint Maurice

Did you know that the patron saint of southern Germany and parts of France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland, is a man of African origin?

He is Saint Maurice of Agaunum, born less than 250 years after Jesus Christ. He became a general in the Roman army, stationed in what is now France. Saint Maurice and his six thousand African soldiers were ordered to put down a rebellion against the empire. When Saint Maurice discovered they all were Christians, he and his men refused to fight their fellow Christians. They also refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. For this, the emperor had Saint Maurice and nearly all of his Theban Legion executed. A basilica in Agaunum, Switzerland enshrines their relic remains today.

November is Black Catholic History Month, [read more about it \[1\]](#).

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### More about the image

Saint Maurice (wearing mail-suit and coat-of-plates (a kind of brigandine amour)) in the Cathedral of Magdeburg, Magdeburg, Germany, next to the grave of Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor. The cathedral is actually named "cathedral of Saints Catherine and Maurice" after Saint Maurice and Saint Catherine of Alexandria. The sculpture was created around 1250, and is considered to be the first realistic depiction of an ethnic African in Europe. Unfortunately, the figure is no longer complete and misses the lower legs and an item in the right hand, presumably a lance.

This Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons image is from the user Chris 73 and is freely available at [//commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint\\_Maurice\\_Magdeburg.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Maurice_Magdeburg.jpg) under the creative commons cc-by-sa 3.0 license.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://site.adw.org/Black-Catholic-History-Month>