NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Black Saints: Pierre Toussaint

| Nov. 10, 2013 NCR Today
Black Saints

Nov. 10 St. Pierre Toussaint

Did you know that a former slave who worked as a hairdresser in New York more than two centuries ago is on track to become the first African American man canonized as a saint from the United States?

Pierre (pee-YAIR) Toussaint (too-SAHNT) was born and raised as a Catholic slave in Haiti when it was still a French colony. To escape the slave rebellions that eventually drove out the French government, Toussaint?s owners fled, with him, to New York. He was assigned as an apprentice to one of the city?s leading hairdressers, and became quite successful. When his slave-owner died, Toussaint quietly supported his owner?s widow. She, in gratitude, freed Toussaint from his slave status. Toussaint later married and used his considerable wealth to support charitable causes, including work against religious and racial prejudice. Toussaint?s death in 1853, at age 87, sparked widespread mourning. Just 13 years ago, Pope John Paul II declared Pierre Toussaint, Venerable- the first step to becoming a saint.

This is copyrighted material, used with the permission of the Archdiocese of Washington, Office of Black Catholics

More about Black Catholic history

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.

November is Black Catholic History Month,**read more about it [1]**.

Sign up [2] for our daily Black Catholic Saints email during the month of November to learn more about these holy men and women.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/10/2014 - 20:27*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/black-saints-pierre-toussaint

Links:
[1] http://site.adw.org/Black-Catholic-History-Month
[2] http://ncronline.org/email-alert-signup?bl