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Black Saints: Benedict the Moor

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Black Saints

November 18 St. Benedict the Moor

Did you know a slave born of Christian parents at Philadelpho in Sicily in 1522 became a Franciscan monk and saint?

St. Benedict the Moor was known for his mild demeanor and his humble spirit. He became the superior of the community of hermits at Montepelligrino, near Palermo even though as the cook for the community, he claimed to be unworthy. That congregation was ordered to disband by Pope Pius IV in 1553 and St. Benedict joined the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Observance. The convent was poor and depended on charity, but there was never a shortage of food. St. Benedict seemed to miraculously multiply their food supply. His reputation for sanctity and miracles soon spread throughout Sicily. He was a very humble man who would sometimes travel at night to avoid being recognized. Throughout his life he endured most of the austerities of his hermit years, always keeping seven Lents per year. Dying at the age of 63, he was cheered on his deathbed by a vision of Saint Ursula. He was canonized in 1589, and chosen patron saint of Palermo.

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.

Sign up [1] for our daily Black Catholic Saints email during the month of November to learn more about these holy men and women.

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