



MISSION MATTERS

monthly



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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is more bewildering than outright rejection"

Martin Luther King Jr.

CATHOLIC Q&A

A Catholic Franciscan view on racism.

click [here](#) for the answer

INTERFAITH CALENDAR

click [here](#) for more information

- 02/02: Presentation of Christ in the Temple - *Christian*
- 02/02: Imbolc/Candlemas - *Neo-Pagan*
- 02/03: Feast of Saint Blaze - *Christian*
- 02/03: Setebun- *Shinto*
- 02/05: Vasant Panchami - *Hindu*
- 02/14: Feast of Saint Valentine - *Christian*
- 02/15: Nirvana Day - *Buddhist*
- 02/24: Feast of Saint Matthew - *Christian*
- 02/27: Meatfare - *Orthodox Christian*
- 02/27: Transfiguration Sunday - *Christian*



CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Throughout the month of February, in recognition of Black History Month, people of all races and faiths across the U.S. celebrate black Americans and their stories. The story of black Catholics in the United States is about communities tenaciously clinging to faith amidst great hardship. Much of their history is centered in the South, which to this day has the largest concentrations of black people in the United States. Even among many black people that live in the urban areas of the North, though, there are many whose families have roots in the South.

The history of black Catholics in the United States is deeply enmeshed in the country's ugly history of racism. To address this history, in November 2018 the U.S. bishops released their first pastoral letter on racism, "Open Wide Our Hearts," in nearly 40 years. In addition to naming the personal sins of those who discriminate or act with prejudice towards others on the basis of race, the document highlights the structures in society which perpetuate injustices. The bishops lament that there has been no formal acknowledgment of the harm of racism in U.S. society, and that "many of our institutions still harbor, and too many of our laws still sanction, practices that deny justice and equal access to certain groups of people (p.10)." School segregation and even segregation within churches are historical examples of the social sins that have perpetuated racism. Click [here](#) to learn more.



SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: ACCOMMODATED OR EMBRACED?

By Frederick Schmidt

I've spent the last few months working with a team that was planning a partnership between a school of theology and a school of business. The subject? Spirituality and the workplace.

What became apparent is that we (meaning all of us, you, me, everyone still working) have yet to integrate spiritual concerns with the work that we do. Oddly—or perhaps not so oddly—secular and religious institutions have very different struggles with the issue of spirituality.

Secular leaders find it difficult to introduce spiritual concerns and prefer to talk about values. Broadly speaking, for them, the spiritual dimension of life is a highly volatile and controversial dimension of life. It is a personal matter, hedged in by laws that (rightly) protect against proselytizing.

Religious leaders, on the other hand, have every reason to talk about the spiritual dimension of the workplace, but they often rush to demonstrate that they possess good business sense and run roughshod over the spiritual dimensions of the workplace.

The net result is that those who work in both kinds of organizations struggle to integrate their spiritual lives and the work that they do. In the one venue, the spiritual is sublimated, unwelcome, or taboo. In the other it is difficult to trust that the language of spirituality has much real value beyond the bottom line.

Until we move beyond framing the question of spirituality in the workplace as an effort to accommodate something alien and irrelevant, we are unlikely to get useful solutions. We need to begin by recognizing that the work worlds in which we spend so much time are spiritual. Click [here](#) for the full article.

OUR CORE VALUES

Justice and Peace



Transformation



RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY



Compassion



Solidarity with People in Need

2021-2022 Focus

A "Respect for Human Dignity" Reflection:

Learn more about *Franciscans International*

Franciscans International (FI) is an international non-governmental human rights organization, established in 1989, in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its staff consists of professionals of diverse backgrounds working to translate grassroots voices in human rights advocacy action at the United Nations level. FI seeks to promote and protect human rights and environmental justice.

OUR VISION

A global community in which the dignity of every person is respected, resources are shared equitably, the environment is sustained, and nations and peoples live in peace.

OUR MISSION

Using a rights-based approach, FI advocates at the UN for the protection of human dignity and environmental justice.

WHAT WE DO

To fulfill this mission, FI builds on more than 30 years of experience in human rights advocacy to address the root causes of injustices. We do so by bringing cases of discrimination and violence committed against individuals and groups living at the margins to the attention of the UN, and by influencing UN decision making and standard setting processes accordingly.

According to their spirituality and values founded on simplicity, fraternity, peace, and care for creation, Franciscans very often live and work with disadvantaged groups and individuals, have their trust and are among the closest to their concerns. In doing so, many Franciscans are human rights defenders, and FI serves as their voice at the UN.

FI's added value lies in the combination of two distinctive features:

- Its strong ties with Franciscans and their civil society allies who work at the grassroots with some of the groups that are most discriminated against, and
- Its expertise in bringing these testimonies to the UN and effectively translating them into strategic interventions to hold States and other actors accountable, compelling them to address policies and practices that are harming human rights. Click [here](#) to learn more.



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

Who Was The Real Saint Valentine?

Saint Valentine, officially known as Saint Valentine of Rome, is a third-century Roman saint widely celebrated on February 14 and commonly associated with "courtly love."

Although not much of St. Valentine's life is reliably known, and whether or not the stories involve two different saints by the same name is also not officially decided, it is highly agreed that St. Valentine was martyred and then buried on the Via Flaminia to the north of Rome.

In 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed St. Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, because so little is known about him. However, the church still recognizes him as a saint, listing him in the February 14 spot of Roman Martyrology.



St. Valentine was arrested for continuing to try to convert people to Christianity. He was sent to Rome under the emperor Claudius Gothicus (Claudius II). According to the popular hagiographical identity, and what is believed to be the first representation of St. Valentine, the Nuremberg Chronicle, St. Valentine was a Roman priest martyred during Claudius' reign. The story tells that St. Valentine was imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Both acts were considered serious crimes. A relationship between the saint and the emperor began to grow, until

Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity. Claudius became raged and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs and beheaded. St. Valentine refused to renounce his faith and Christianity and was executed outside the Flaminian Gate on February 14, 269.

Although the exact origin of the holiday is not widely agreed upon, it is widely recognized as a day for love, devotion, and romance.

St. Valentine is the Patron Saint of beekeepers, engaged couples, epilepsys, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travelers, and young people. He is represented in pictures with birds and roses and his feast day is celebrated on February 14. Click [here](#) to learn more.

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