



MISSION MATTERS

monthly



No. 6 Vol. 6

February, 2026

Student Edition

Blessed Mary Angela Says (Foundress of the Felician Sisters)

“May Jesus bless all your works undertaken for his glory. In all your endeavors have a good intention; do everything for God without being influenced by human respect.”

CATHOLIC Q&A

Where is God today?

click [here](#) to learn more

INTERFAITH CALENDAR

Click [here](#) for more information

- 02/01: Mahayana New Year - *Buddhism*
- 02/02: Presentation of the Lord - *Christian*
- 02/03: Feast of St. Blaise - *Christian*
- 02/03: Setsebun - *Shinto*
- 02/14: Feast of St. Valentine - *Christian*
- 02/15: Nirvana Day - *Buddhism*
- 02/15: Maha Shivaratri - *Hindu*
- 02/17: Ramadan begins - *Islam*
- 02/18: Ash Wednesday - *Christian*
- 02/25: Ayyam-i-Ha - *Baha'i*



Black History Month Theme 2026

2026 marks a century of national commemorations of Black history. Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, George Cleveland Hall, William B. Hartgrove, Jesse E. Moorland, Alexander L. Jackson, and James E. Stamps institutionalized the teaching, study, dissemination, and commemoration of Black history when they founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) on September 9, 1915.

In 1925, when Dr. Carter G. Woodson planned the inaugural week-long observance of Black history, he could hardly have anticipated the imprint he would leave on the world. For our 100th theme, the founders of Black History Month urge us to explore the impact and meaning of Black history and life commemorations in transforming the status of Black peoples in the modern world.

As part of the global African diaspora, people of African descent in the United States have viewed their role in history as critical to their own development and that of the world. Along with writing Black histories, antebellum Black scholars north of slavery started observing the milestones in the struggle of people of African descent to gain their freedom and equality. Revealing their connection to the diaspora, they commemorated the Haitian Revolution, the end of the slave trade, and the end of slavery in Jamaica. They observed American emancipation with Watch Night, Jubilee Day, and Juneteenth celebrations. The scholar Arthur A. Schomburg captured the motivation of Black people to dig up their own history and present it to the world: “The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future.” Click [here](#) for full article.



Season of Lent Overview

by Fr. Jason Damon, OFM

In two weeks starts the Christian liturgical season of Lent. Lent is a time of fasting, prayer, and charitable giving in preparation for the Paschal Triduum, the holiest days in the Christian calendar: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting marked by the distinctive distribution of ashes on people’s foreheads, and the Easter Triduum. It is a 40-day period based on Jesus’ own time of temptation in the desert and encourages a deeper, more intentional renewal of relationship with God, one another, our planet and ourselves. It’s a preparatory time when Christians try to turn away from distractions and rededicate themselves to following Christ, even in the intensity of His life and death, through to the promise of the Resurrection.

Lent is traditionally a more solemn time in the Church calendar, and it’s encouraged to try and live more simply and intentionally, refraining from luxuries and making prayer and service a more central part of one’s life. The Fridays during Lent are days of abstaining from eating meat, and it both starts and ends with days of fasting, when followers eat only one meal and up to two smaller snacks: on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday, which commemorates the death of Jesus.

While a more solemn time of the year for Christians, Lent is nevertheless a time of hope and renewal. The very name “Lent” comes from an old English name for spring, “lencen” which refers to the days growing longer. The traditional practices of Lent are not meant to be punitive or punishing, but to encourage self-control and a more giving, generous spirit, and to help us to realize our own dependence on God and on other people.

**ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18
11:15 AM IN COLLEGE CHAPEL**

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect for
Human Dignity

Compassion

**JUSTICE
AND PEACE**

Transformation

Solidarity with
People in Need

2025-2026 Focus

Putting Justice and Peace Into Action

Take Action Against the Death Penalty

Texas's aggressive execution schedule marks it as an outlier in its use of the death penalty, while the majority of other states are on a downward trend of executions. In the last few years, Texas has been one of only a handful of states that have carried out death sentences, and it continues to do so, targeting the poor, the mentally ill, and people of color.

Please click [here](#) to urge Governor Abbott and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to stop the execution of Charles Thompson, who has been given an execution date for January 28, 2026.

What does Catholic Social Teaching say about immigration reform?

Catholic Social Teaching affirms the inherent dignity of every person while recognizing the legitimate right of nations to regulate borders. It calls for immigration laws that uphold the rule of law, protect families, and serve the common good by offering just and humane paths to participation.

Catholic Social Teaching on immigration emphasizes three core principles: human dignity (every person has inherent worth regardless of legal status), solidarity (we share bonds with those who become part of our communities), and the common good (laws should enable human flourishing, not create permanent marginalization).

Catholic Social Teaching refuses false choices. It recognizes that nations have the right to regulate their borders and that unlimited immigration isn't required. And it insists on both compassion and responsibility, for both the dignity of immigrants and the legitimate concerns of the political community.



Ramadan 2026 Begins February 17st



February 17th marks the first full day of Ramadan. Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. In Ramadan, Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an, and fast from food and drink during the sunlit hours as a means of drawing closer to God and cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate. Ramadan is a month of intense spiritual rejuvenation with a heightened focus on devotion, during which Muslims spend extra time reading the Qur'an and performing special prayers. Those unable to fast, such as pregnant or nursing women, the sick, or elderly people & children, are exempt from fasting.

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate one of their major holidays called Eid ul-Fitr or the "Festival of the Breaking of the Fast." For the date of the holiday, see our Calendar of Important Islamic Dates. Children traditionally receive new clothes, money, or gifts from parents, relatives, and friends. A special prayer and sermon are held on the morning of Eid day, followed by a community celebration usually in a park or large hall. Food, games, and presents for children are important parts of the festivities, as friends and family spend the day socializing, eating, and reuniting with old acquaintances. The greeting Eid Mubarak means "blessed holiday!" Click [here](#) to learn more.

Sr. Helen Prejean to Visit Villa Maria College for Special Campus Event

Author, lecturer, and activist Sister Helen Prejean is set to visit Villa Maria College on March 18, 2026.

Sr. Prejean is best known for her groundbreaking book, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*, which sparked a national conversation about capital punishment and was later adapted into an Academy Award-winning film, an acclaimed opera, and, most recently, a graphic novel.

Dead Man Walking tells the story of death-row inmates Patrick Sonnier and Robert Lee Willie. Both were killed in the electric chair, and Sister Helen was present for both executions. The book examines crime, punishment, justice, mercy, and redemption, and its publication ignited a national debate on capital punishment.

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