



Black Catholic Syllabus

An Introduction to Racial Justice

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

By Michelle Alexander (New Press, (2020)

Alexander examines both the history of Jim Crow and how these policies continue to contribute to the mass incarceration of Black people today.

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism

By Robin DiAngelo (Beacon Press, 2018)

DiAngelo explores white people's reactions to talking about race and how these reactions often work to maintain systems of racial inequality.

Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White American

By Michael Eric Dyson (St. Martin's Press, 2017)

According to Dyson, if we are to make real racial progress, white Americans must face some difficult truths.

How to be an Antiracist

By Ibram X. Kendi (One World, 2019)

A look at how ethics, history, law, and science contribute to racial inequality and how racism goes beyond simply the color of one's skin.

When They Call you a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir

By Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele (St. Martin's Griffin, 2020)

A powerful memoir by the women behind the Black Lives Matter Movement and what it means to be a Black Woman in America today.



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So You Want to Talk About Race

By Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press, 2019)

Oluo offers a concrete discussion of topics ranging from intersectionality to microaggressions in order to foster honest conversations about race and racism among people of all races and ethnicities.

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

By Bryan Stevenson (One World, 2015)

The story of a young lawyer hired to defend a young black man for a crime he insists he didn't commit. Also consider watching the film by the same name starring Michael B. Jordan.

Racial Justice and Our Faith

Dancing With God: The Trinity from a Womanist Perspective

By Karen Baker-Fletcher (Chalice Press, 2007)

A meditation on the healing presence of God in the lives of those who have suffered violence.

The New Orleans Sisters of the Holy Family: African American Missionaries to the Garifuna of Belize

By Edward T. Brett

The Sisters of the Holy Family, founded in New Orleans in 1842, were the first African American Catholics to serve as missionaries.

The Cross and the Lynching Tree

By James Cone (Orbis, 2013)

Cone explores the theological parallels between Christ's crucifixion and the lynching of Black Americans.

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A Black Theology of Liberation

By James Cone (Orbis, 2010)

Originally published in 1970, this book offers a radical rethinking of Christianity through the lens of Black oppression in America.

Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration

By Matthew Cressler (New York University Press, 2017)

In this book, Cressler traces the development of the Black Catholic church in Chicago and shows how Black Catholic activists in the mid-20th century made Black Catholicism what it is today.

The History of Black Catholics in the United States

By Cyprian Davis (Herder & Herder, 1995)

The first book to explore the Black Catholic experience.

Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and Justice of God

By Kelly Brown Douglas (Orbis, 2015)

Written after the murder of Trayvon Martin, in this book Douglas wrestles with Black Christians' questions of justice and faith in light of continuing violence against Black Americans.

Fugitive Saints: Catholicism and the Politics of Slavery

By Katie Grimes (Fortress Press, 2017)

In this book, Grimes asks: "How should the Catholic Church remember the sins of its saints?"

No Crystal Stair: Womanist Spirituality

By Diana L. Hayes (Orbis, 2016)

In this collection of essays, prayers, and meditations, Hayes shows how womanist spirituality influences the faith lives of Black women.



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Taking Down Our Harps: Black Catholics in the United States

Edited by Diana L. Hayes and Cyprian Davis (Orbis, 1998)

The articles in this book examine Black Catholics through a variety of lenses, including theology, liturgy, spirituality, faith formation, and the role of women.

Shoes That Fit Our Feet: Sources for a Constructive Black Theology

By Dwight N. Hopkins (Orbis, 1993)

Hopkins offers lived resources for Black theology, grounding his reflections in the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, Malcolm X, and others.

The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race

By Willie James Jennings (Yale University Press, 2011)

In this history of Christianity, Jennings examines why and how Christianity has created and maintained segregated societies.

Racial Justice and the Catholic Church

By Bryan N. Massingale (Orbis, 2010)

Massingale argues that both Catholicism and the lived experience of Black Americans offer crucial insights into the struggle for racial justice.

Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860

By Diane Batts Morrow

The Oblate Sisters of Providence were the first permanent African American Roman Catholic sisterhood in the United States.

Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being

By M. Shawn Copeland (Fortress Press, 2020)

Shawn Copeland interprets Catholic theology through the lens of Black women's experience and oppression.

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Knowing Christ Crucified: The Witness of African American Religious Experience

By M. Shawn Copeland (Orbis, 2018)

In this book of essays, Shawn Copeland reflect on what it means to “take up one’s cross and follow Jesus” in a world shaped by white supremacy.

Uncommon Faithfulness: The Black Catholic Experience

Edited by M. Shawn Copeland (Orbis, 2009)

This book of essays highlights the experience of Black Americans from the 16th century to today.

Jesus and the Disinherited

By Howard Thurman (Beacon Press, 1996)

In this classic theology book, Thurman rereads the gospel as a message of resistance for the poor and disenfranchised.

Six Black Candidates for Sainthood

Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood by Michael R. Heinlein

Venerable Pierre Toussaint

Pierre Toussaint: A Biography by Arthur Jones

Pierre Toussaint: Apostle of Old New York by Ellen Tarry

“Saint Pierre” of New York: From Slave to Businessman by Laetitia Zink (Children’s book)

Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Born a Slave in St. Domingo by Hanna Farnham Sawyer-Lee

Memoir of Pierre Toussaint: Slave, Hairdresser, Candidate for Saint by Hannah Sawyer-Lee and Angel Marinaccio



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Venerable Henriette Delille, SSF

An Hour with Mother Henriette Delille by Sr. Doris Goudeaux, SSF

Henriette Delille: Rebellious Saint by Elsie B. Martinex, Colette H. Stelly, et al.
(Children's book)

Henriette Delille: Servant of Slaves by William Kelley

Venerable Mother Mary Lange, OSP

A Woman Used by God by Sr. Magdala Marie Gilbert, OSP

Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton

Father Augustus Tolton: The Slave Who Became the First African-American Priest by
Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

Augustus Tolton: The Church is the True Liberator (People of God) by Joyce Duriga

From Slave to Priest: The Inspirational Story of Father Augustus Tolton (1854-1897) by
Sr. Caroline Jemesath

An Hour with Augustus Tolton by Fr. Maurice Nutt, CSsR

Father Augustus Tolton: The First Recognized Black Catholic Priest in American by
Corinna Laughlin and Marie Laughlin (Children's book)

Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA

Thea Bowman in My Own Words by Fr. Maurice Nutt, CSsR

We are Beloved: 30 Days with Thea Bowman (30 Days with a Great Spiritual Teacher)
by Thea Bowman and Karianna Frey

Sister Thea Bowman: Do You Hear Me, Church? By Peggy A. Sklar

Thea's Song: The Life of Thea Bowman by Charlene Smith and John Feister

A Retreat with Thea Bowman and Bede Abram: Leaning on the Lord by Fr. Joseph A.
Brown, SJ

This Little Light: Lessons in Living from Sr. Thea Bowman by Michael O'Neill McGrath

Thea Bowman: Faithful and Free by Maurice Nutt, CSsR

Sr. Thea Songs of my People by Sr. Thea Bowman