



Photo by Steve Bowers

THE VIEW FROM THE BLUFF

FEBRUARY 2017

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

**I FOUND IT
IN THE ARCHIVES**

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

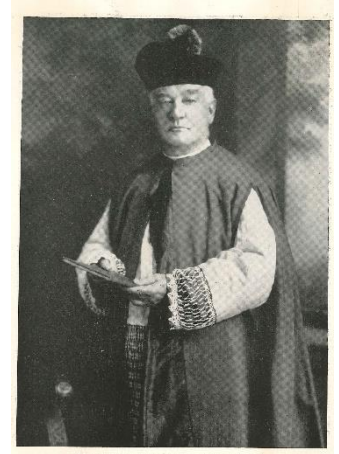
February is African American History month. This year the focus is on education. Interestingly, among his objectives for the OLMs Bishop England included "to have a school for free colored girls, and the religious instruction of female slaves." This objective was achieved in part in the summer of 1835 when he established a school for free colored children in Charleston. Two students from the Diocesan Seminary were placed in charge of the boys and two OLMs, Sister Vincent Mahoney and Sister Mary Martha O'Gorman, were assigned to teach the girls. In a few weeks they had over eighty children in the school. However, during these same weeks Abolitionist Societies mailed anti-slavery tracts to southern states. The arrival of these publications in Charleston aroused the fears and prejudices of the white population. A self-styled Committee of Twenty-one requested the Bishop to close his school. Aware that non-compliance might result in the passage of legislation to prevent any such teaching in the future, the Bishop complied with the request. It is also probable that Bishop England did not wish to excite animosity toward the Catholic Church and its infant institutions. The school was discontinued; but the idea was not abandoned. In 1841, when popular passions had cooled, Bishop England reopened the school for free colored children. He appointed Sister Teresa Barry Superioress of the mission with Sister Francis Rugan and Sister Xavier Dunn as assistants. The school was initially located on Queen Street opposite the Medical College and placed under the patronage of Saint Joseph. Later it was moved to the grounds of the OLM Motherhouse on Queen Street.

In November 1844, at the request of Bishop Ignatius Reynolds, the OLMs moved the school from Queen Street to rented rooms on King Street where it remained until discontinued in 1848. Regrettably, there are no student



St. Peter's Church, 1940

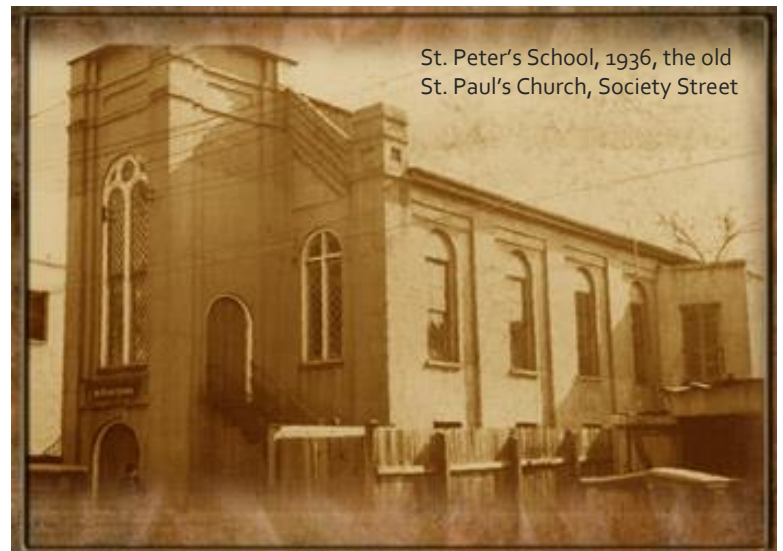
records nor reasons given for the closing of the school. However, the Catholic Almanacs from 1849 through 1853 state that the Sisters gave instruction to colored persons four evenings during the week. Following the Civil War, in a letter dated April 18, 1867, Mother Teresa Barry indicated a willingness to reopen a school for colored children. She wrote to Bishop Lynch, "General Scott and General Howard seem desirous to give the appropriation for two Free Schools – one for the colored and one for the white – which if successful will be a great doing and the means of affording us to do more good." Unfortunately, the appropriation was not granted.



RIGHT REVEREND JOHN T. McELROY, V. G.

As Mother Teresa's letter indicates, Post Civil War Charleston was a segregated society. In January 1868 Bishop Lynch dedicated St. Peter's Church, 38 Wentworth Street, to serve the Catholic African American population in Charleston. The first pastor, Father Aloysius Louis Folchi, S.J., opened a small school just behind the church. The school was staffed by Catholic African American lay women until 1901 when the Reverend John McElroy, then Pastor, requested the OLM Community to conduct the school. Mother Loretto Quinlan assigned Sister Stanislaus Hanley and

Sister Petronilla Cannon to St. Peter's on February 2, 1902. With funds obtained from Mother Catherine Drexel, Foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Negroes, Father McElroy converted the former school building, 51 Society Street, into a convent for the Sisters. The school was transferred to old St. Paul's Church, also on Society Street between Meeting and Anson Streets. The convent, named St. Catherine's in honor of Mother Drexel, opened on September 24, 1902, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy. One hundred twenty-five pupils enrolled for the school year 1902-1903. Mother Drexel visited Charleston in 1904 and



St. Peter's School, 1936, the old St. Paul's Church, Society Street



St. Catherine's Convent, 1936

stayed with our Sisters at St. Catherine's Convent. She was so pleased with the work being done at St. Peter's that she encouraged Father McElroy to establish Immaculate Conception School in the northern part of the City. Located on the southwest corner of Coming and Shepard Streets, the school opened in September 1904 with an enrollment of fifty students.



OLMs and students outside Immaculate Conception School circa 1904-1917

Sister M. Dominic Gough and Sister M. Anna Earl, the first OLMs to teach in Immaculate Conception School, lived in St. Catherine's Convent, Society Street. The OLMs staffed St. Peter's and Immaculate Conception Schools until 1917.

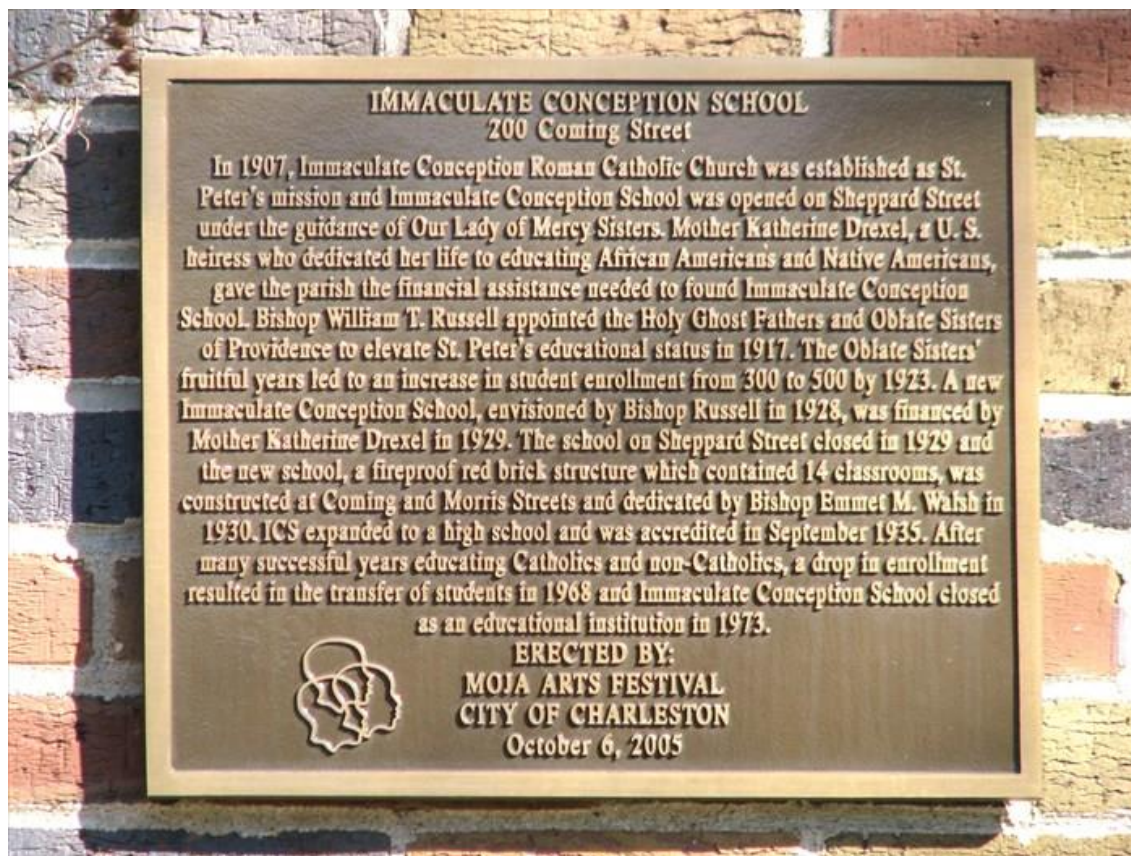


Saint Peter's Catholic Church, Wentworth Street



Immaculate Conception Church, Coming and Shepherd Streets

The Most Reverend William T. Russell, consecrated Bishop of Charleston on March 16, 1917, arrived in Holy City on March 22nd. One of his first acts as Bishop was to invite the Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore to take over St. Peter's and Immaculate Conception Schools. The Bishop, a native of Baltimore, knew the Oblate Community and was familiar with their ministries. Furthermore, he realized that the OLM Community could not continue to supply teachers for Charleston's parochial schools, Bishop England High School and maintain St.



Francis Xavier Hospital and the City Orphanage. Hence, on September 9, 1917 the Oblate Sisters moved into St. Catherine's Convent and began their ministry in the Diocese of Charleston. The school on Sheppard Street closed in 1929 and a new Immaculate Conception School at Coming and Morris Streets was dedicated by Bishop Emmet Walsh in 1930. Opened as an elementary school, Immaculate Conception expanded to include a high school and was accredited in September 1935. The

Catholic Schools in Charleston were integrated in the early 1970s. However, Immaculate Conception School closed in 1973. The OLMs and the Oblate Sisters remained on the faculties of Bishop England High School and the parochial schools in Charleston into the 1990s. Due to decreased numbers in the Order, the Oblate Sisters who had served in the Diocese for eighty-two years, left South Carolina in 1999. Currently, the OLMs provide educational programs for the predominantly African American and Hispanic populations on Johns Island through Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach as well as through the Neighborhood House on America Street in Charleston.



the Art of Quilting

The Our Lady of Mercy Outreach Quilting Lives group had their second annual gathering at May Forest Motherhouse. Below are pictures of some of their beautiful quilts.



Louetta Davis and her Mother Emanuel Nine Quilt



Mary Robinson



Lorraine McDermott



Earthalee
McPherson

Staff of the Motherhouse and Sisters enjoying the quilt show.

- Guide my hands to work as Your hands work, to know the power of Your love in every stitch I make, in every thread I knot. May my hands be guided by the same love and care with every quilt I make, knowing that this love and care was and is and will continue to be a gift of blessing to the one it is intended for.
- May the works of my hands be pleasing in Your sight, O God.
- As I choose materials and patterns, may I be reminded of the uniqueness You blessed us all with.

February 8 Designated Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking

February 8 has been designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General as an annual day of awareness raising and prayer against human trafficking. February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. She learned from Canossian nuns that she was created in the image of God and possessed human dignity. Once she asserted herself and refused to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian sister and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering.



St. Josephine Bakhita

Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita

St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured untold hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith. Help all survivors find healing from their wounds. We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

Amen.

Oración a Santa Josefina Bakhita

Santa Josefina Bakhita, cuando niña, fuiste vendida como esclava y tuviste que pasar indecibles dificultades y sufrimiento.

Una vez liberada de tu esclavitud física, hallaste la verdadera redención en tu encuentro con Cristo y su Iglesia.

Oh, Santa Bakhita, ayuda a todos aquellos que están atrapados en la esclavitud; en nombre de ellos, intercede ante Dios para que sean liberados de las cadenas de su cautiverio.

Que Dios libere a todo aquel que ha sido esclavizado por el hombre.

Bríndales alivio a los que sobreviven la esclavitud y permite que ellos te vean como modelo de fe y esperanza.

Ayuda a todos los sobrevivientes para que encuentren la sanación de sus heridas. Te suplicamos orar e interceder por los que se encuentran esclavizados entre nosotros.

Amén.

Our lives
begin to end
the day we
become silent
about things
that matter.

martin luther king jr.

St. Josephine Bakhita

From Slave to Saint

She was known for her smile, gentleness and holiness. This African flower, who knew the anguish of kidnapping and slavery, bloomed marvelously in Italy, in response to God's grace, with the Daughters of Charity, where everyone still calls her "Mother Moretta" (our Black Mother).

Date of birth: 1869
Birthplace: Darfur, Sudan
Died: 8 February 1947
Age: 79



1869

Josephine Bakhita was born in a small village in the Darfur region of Sudan.

1875

Kidnapped at the age of seven, sold into slavery and given the name Bakhita which means "fortunate". She was re-sold several times.

1883

Sold to the Italian Consul, Callisto Legnani.

1885

Traveled to Italy. Given to Augusto Michieli.

1888

Became babysitter to Mimmina Michieli, whom she accompanied to Venice's Institute of the Catechumens, run by the Canossian Sisters.

1890

Felt drawn to the Catholic Church, she was Baptized and Confirmed taking the name Josephine.

When the Michielis returned from Africa and wanted to take Mimmina and Josephine back with them, she refused to go.

During the ensuing court case, the Canossian sisters and the patriarch of Venice intervened on Josephine's behalf.

The judge concluded that since slavery was illegal in Italy, she had actually been free since 1885.



"If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today."

1893

Entered the Canossian Novitiate in Venice.

1896

She took her vows.

1902

Assigned to the Canossian convent at Schio.

1947

8 February: Holy Death - Schio.

2000

Josephine was canonized on October 1st by Pope John Paul II. She is the first person to be canonized from Sudan and is the patron saint of the country.

Feast Day February 8

Source: www.catholic.org
 Graphics by catholicsaintsonline.wordpress.com



A Sponsored Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy



New Executive Director Named

Ericka Plater is the new Executive Director of OLM Outreach effective January 23, 2017. Ericka grew up in Washington, DC and has over fifteen years of experience with various non-profit organizations in the DC area. Ericka holds a bachelor's degree from Howard University and master's degrees in business administration and healthcare administration from the University of Maryland. She has recently relocated to the Charleston area. Welcome Ericka!

Charity Federation members came to Charleston!

(Old news is good news!)



L-R Sr. Sung Hae Kim, SCSH, Sr. Bridget Sullivan, OLM, Sr. Eileen Hurley, SCL, Sr. Anne Francis Campbell, OLM, Sr. Maureen Hall, SCL, Sr. Mary Joseph Ritter, OLM, Sr. Jane Ann Cherubin, SCSH together with the OLMs at May Forest for Thanksgiving Dinner.



Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth left the beach to come over for a sing along with the OLMs at May Forest!



Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in a love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the mornings, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

- Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by seeing an imperfect person perfectly.

- Sam Keen

Where there is love there is life.

- Gandhi

Nobody has ever measured, not even poets, how much the heart can hold.

- Zelda Fitzgerald

Love doesn't make the world go round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile.

- Franklin P. Jones

There isn't any formula or method. You learn to love by loving.

- Aldous Huxley

Love is the poetry of the senses.

- Honore de Balzac

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

- Martin Luther King, 1963

One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter.

- James Earl Jones

The love that flows through your heart purifies not only your own spirit, but the love you share with others.

- Caroline Myss

You are precious in my eyes. I honor you and love you.

- Isaiah 43:4

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.

- Lao Tzu

In family life, love is the oil that eases friction, the cement that binds closer together, and the music that brings harmony.

- Eva Burrows

Charity, a word that comprises love and justice, may well be the most sublime of all Christian virtues.

- Diana Butler Bass

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

- Galatians 5:22-23a

In the garden of the soul, the virtues of faith, hope, and love form the centerpiece. Traditionally called theological virtues, they come as free gifts from God and draw us to God. We cannot earn these virtues; God has already freely planted them in our soul.

- Bishop Robert F. Morneau (*Humility: 31 Reflections on Christian Virtue* (1997)).