

# THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 6 | FEBRUARY 2021



## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

It is only fitting that after a tumultuous January we start our second month of the year with some celebration and positive vibes. February, the month of love, is actually jam packed – from the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday is on 02/17 this year) to President's Day, our schools must not lose focus the importance of Black History Month (BHM).

Although I do not believe in stand alone initiatives (only teaching Black history during February, for example) it is imperative that teachers acknowledge BHM and celebrate it properly. In our Seattle Archdiocese, we serve 11 very distinct communities –

certainly the ethnic make up of the student body at Bishop Blanchet High School will look starkly different than the student body at Seton High School in Vancouver. It is exactly the diversity of our communities that gives need for more Black celebration in our schools.

In this issue of the High School Newsletter, I hope to provide you with some ideas of how to celebrate Black History Month, discuss my own experience with Black iconic art, and acknowledge the reopening of our area high schools and how to cope with change.

Happy February! – JPK

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ways to celebrate at your school and in your classroom.

## THE BLACK MADONNA

My transformational journey to Czestochowa, Poland where the Black Madonna is revered

## REOPENING HIGH SCHOOLS

Resources and support for high school teachers returning to the classroom as well as some lessons learned.

## **Celebrating February Black History Month**

All schools should be celebrating diverse cultural backgrounds throughout the year, but February brings with it special significance to the Black community. February is National Black History Month – that means that at a minimum, all schools should be looking at their programming and incorporating ways to ensure that Black History is being celebrated in special ways.

According to the NAACP, “Since the 1970s, the month of February has been an exceptional period for the Black community as we devote 28 days – 29 if we’re lucky – to commemorate all things Black. Black History Month is celebrated across the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany and Netherlands, and from school systems to television networks, many organizations recognize the month by building Black history into their programming during the month of February.”

As Catholic Schools, it is imperative that we continue to strive for equity and justice in all of our programs and initiatives – not just during the month of February, but throughout the year. February is simply a vehicle to begin this work if your school has not done so yet – incorporate a few of the ideas that are listed here this month!

### **Beyond Book Studies – What Local Resources Can You Bring to Your School?**

A local ethno-museumologist, Delbert Richardson, brings a African-American History museum to your school. He sets up in a gym or cafeteria, and presents to students the history of Africans in America using real artifacts and hands-on resources. Check out more information at:

[The Unspoken Truths | Seattle, WA](#)

**According to a 2014 U.S. Religious Landscape study, African Americans and Asian Americans make up less than 8% of the U.S. Catholic population. Hispanics comprise 34% of the U.S. Catholic population, while white/European Americans make up 59% of American Catholics.**

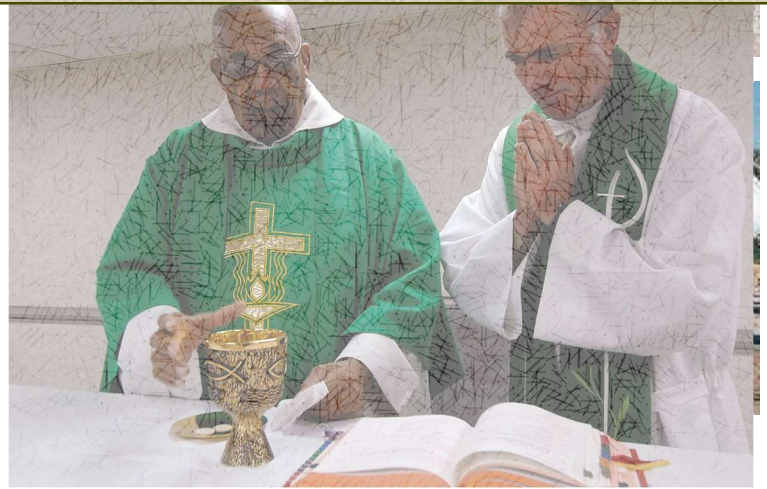
[Catholics - Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics | Pew Research Center](#)  
[\(pewforum.org\)](#)



## HOW TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH – 20 IDEAS

- Support a Black business – here is one list of [black owned businesses](#) in Seattle
- Visit the [Northwest African American Museum \(naamnw.org\)](#) either in person or virtually
- [Donate](#) to a Black organization – encourage your students to do so as well.
- Have your students trace their family history and discuss with your classes the roots of many African-Americans and their ancestry
- Spend time with a Black elder in your community; invite a guest speaker to talk with your classes
- Read a book by a [Black author](#)
- Cook a soul food meal – have students do this at home and learn the background of where the food comes from, its significance to the Black community
- Donate to an [HBCU](#)
- Learn about an unsung hero of Black history or have your students research less-researched Black leaders and change agents
- Support a Black creative artist, poet, local musician, etc.
- Study the [African Diaspora](#)
- Explore Black Music
- Call out racism and prejudice in your community – and come up with a goal of how to help eradicate it
- Sign up to receive news from a Black organization
- Learn the lyrics to **Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing**
- Read texts beyond just Dr. King's *I Have a Dream* Speech; analyze it; think about it; delve into lesser known King's writings
- Decorate your home and classrooms with Black Art
- Read a biography of an influential Black figure
- Read a Black children's book to your classes
- Celebrate Black saints and Catholic figures of color – have students do some research on the influence of Black communities on Catholicism

Many of our Archdiocesan High Schools (and our Independent and Level II schools) have dedicated Diversity and Equity leaders on their staff – Eastside Catholic High School, Seattle Preparatory High School and Forest Ridge of the Sacred Heart, to name a few, have resources that they can share – check out their websites for more information and how you can be get in touch with their on-staff professionals if your school would like more ideas for incorporating diverse perspectives in teaching and learning.







## The Black Madonna

When I was in high school, my father took my older sister and I on a pilgrimage from Warsaw to Czestochowa, Poland to go see the "Black Madonna." It was a transformative trip, especially during a tumultuous teenage period of time, where I preferred to spend my Sunday mornings singing (screaming?) along to the tunes of Korn and Limp Bizkit\*, instead of praying in a pew and listening to the droning on of my pastor. At Czestochowa, I experienced a kind of "out of body experience" where the Black Madonna spoke to my sense of understanding, that even in one of the most devout, Catholic and white places in the world, the community could have such incredible reverence for an icon that looked nothing like the people there.

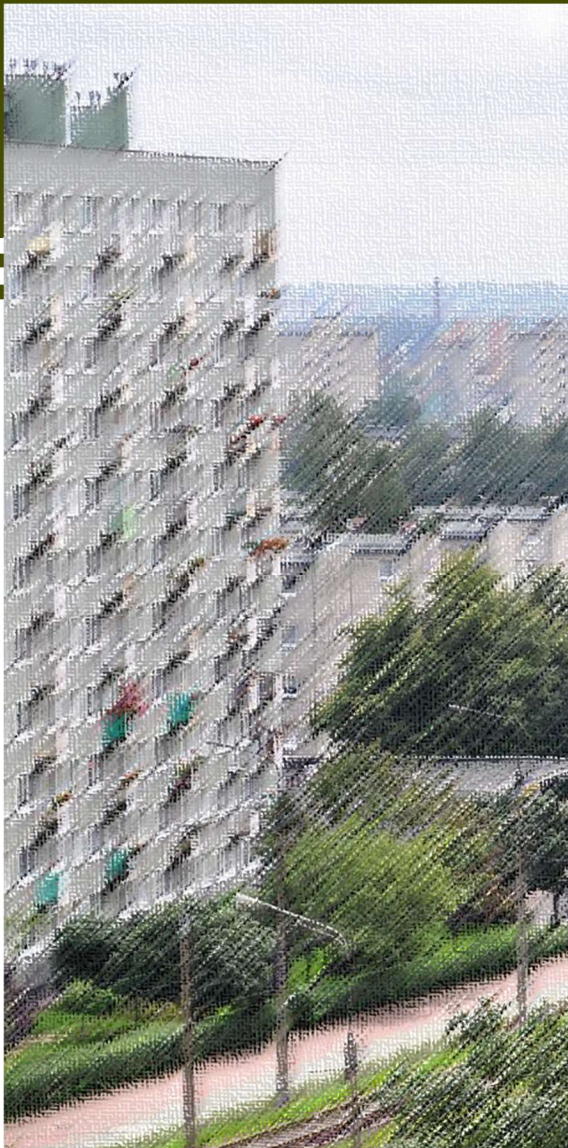
As a Polish immigrant, I was very familiar with the image as we had many Catholic relics throughout our home growing up in America, and I had assumed that most American Catholic counterparts were also familiar with the Black Madonna depiction. But it seems that few Catholics amongst us in the Seattle Archdiocese actually have heard of or know about the history of the Black Madonna. Religious scholars have various theories about the origins of the Black Madonna, but there is no consensus about exactly how this painting found itself a staple and national treasure of a very (white) Catholic Poland.

According to the Catholic Collector, [the image may have been] "brought back to Europe by soldiers returning from the Crusades in the Holy Land. They were crafted for and by the darker skinned people of that areas of the world. [The image] was probably reinforced by the scriptural passage from the Song of Solomon, Chapter 1, Verse 5, 'I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem...' Which would make sense to me.

There are many different stories about Black iconography, saints, and the important role of the Black communities in America that helped bolster, evangelize and support the Catholic faith – I'm just delving into learning more about the Black Madonna and her significance in the Black Catholic community, but also, in my own homeland. I invite you to delve into more Black Catholic history as well! – JPK

\*I am mortified that I disclosed this fact to you – but also, I was 16 years old and had terrible taste in music.

Citation: [The Catholic Collector: What is a Black Madonna?](#)



# Reopening Schools this Spring 2021

## TAKE AWAYS FROM THE TEACHER ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

On January 20<sup>th</sup> I held a teacher roundtable discussion that focused on re-opening schools. Six teachers representing K-12 Catholic schools in our Seattle Archdiocese spoke to the realities of coming back into the classroom, the surprises, the fears, the anxieties and how they were able to teach in a dual modality – online and in person at the same time. (Hint: it's not easy – but you already know that).

The biggest takeaways that teachers should consider from this discussion when preparing for onsite teaching again:

**The COVID brain** – many teens will need to be reintegrated into the school again. This means that they have lost some semblance of how to function as an in-person student – processes such as how to start class, how to keep deadlines, and how to be independent learners might have to be retaught. Teachers were very flexible with online learning. After returning to the classroom, these teachers reported upto 6 weeks of reestablishing routines in their classrooms before getting all systems back to “normal.”

**The anxiety factor** – some teachers reported that although they wanted to be back in person, the anxiety around the unknown, the constantly changing information about COVID, the rapidly increasing cases reported (in the Fall/Winter) all foddered a general anxiety that manifested itself in crying on the way home from work, or depression about the possibility of impending shut down at any moment. Some teachers needed more time than others to shake the feeling – while others were seemingly “back at it” immediately. All feelings were valid, but be aware that your co-workers will be processing their feelings at different capacities with different considerations. Be kind and understanding. Give help where you can. Ask for help if you need it.

**The gratitude** – many teachers reported that the parents of students back in person (and those who were given the option of streaming in from home) have been extremely grateful for teachers. Even in schools where the parent base has been celebrating the faculty continuously, this year by far has yielded far less negative involvement of parents, and far more gratitude for what our teachers do every day for our students. (Maybe it's because parents of small children like myself struggled in the Spring to manage 4 little ones each day ... and needed the lock down as a reminder of how grateful we are to teachers who manage 150 little ones each day.)

**Hybrid teaching is not A+ teaching** – there are some teachers who have mastered the art of managing taking care of their online students while simultaneously taking care of their in person students. These teachers are called “wizards.” (They don't actually exist). There is a spectrum of comfort amongst teachers, for sure – some are naturally very engaging online and have supports to manage both online and in person (some schools even have “online teachers” to help with virtual students who need additional office hours and tutoring) but most teachers are on their own to make it work. The panel discussed several techniques that these experienced hybrid teachers have integrated, such as watching themselves in recording a lesson so that they get a sense of what their at-home students can see what they can or cannot hear – it made a difference for some in terms of where they position cameras, how they ask for participation from at-home students, etc. One suggestion from a panelist was to ensure at least some engagement from home-students every hour – also, pairing online students with in-person students if kids have laptops at school to engage them with the classroom.

If you are interested in watching the Teacher Roundtable Panel discussion, see the panel to the right – or you can simply email me and I will send it to you! It is worth the 60 minute listen – and you can do it from the comfort of your home or in your car on your way to your classroom!

## TEACHING HYBRID STUDENTS EFFECTIVELY – SOME RESOURCES

Strategies for teaching online and in person simultaneously:  
[Strategies for teaching online and in person simultaneously \(opinion\) \(insidehighered.com\)](#)

Classroom Ideas: Teaching In-Person and Online from  
[Weareteachers.com](#)

[Teaching Online and In Person: Your Questions Answered \(weareteachers.com\)](#)

How Hybrid is Working (and Not Working) in During COVID –  
[EdWeek.Org](#)

[How Hybrid Learning Is \(and Is Not\) Working During COVID-19: 6 Case Studies \(edweek.org\)](#)

Archdiocesan Teacher Roundtable Panel discussion from 1/20:

ZOOM Meeting Recording:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/O8Dh9Ghd4WcTwJbkEG\\_AOaDiTnehFis-\\_190nZipyv9QleL\\_HRbuHlQMqQ\\_SklhO.1fTa56k1QkOTJFHC](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/O8Dh9Ghd4WcTwJbkEG_AOaDiTnehFis-_190nZipyv9QleL_HRbuHlQMqQ_SklhO.1fTa56k1QkOTJFHC)



## Announcements, Opportunities and Other Information for High School Teachers

### Leadership Openings:

Administration Openings in the Archdiocese of Seattle can be found on the OCS Website here: <https://mycatholicschool.org/careers-employment/>

### Educational Leadership Partners:

Fulcrum and OCS Educational Leadership Partner Programs (including Educational Leadership Grant) can be found here: <https://mycatholicschool.org/for-catholic-schools/professional-development/leadership-academy/>

### University of Notre Dame FACE to FACE webinar series:

A free and interactive Zoom series with weekly conversations focused on critical issues impacting Catholic schools and educators

#### Upcoming February Session:

- **Wednesday, February 3rd - 7:00-8:00 PM Eastern**  
**Our 'YES' to Catholic Education**

In celebration of Catholic Schools Week, we are excited to bring our FACE to FACE series to a culmination by hosting a panel discussion highlighting voices of those who have said "yes" to Catholic education.

**Fr. Nate Wills, CSC**, a faculty member in the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program and chaplain of the Fighting Irish football team, will facilitate a conversation among Catholic school principal **Kristy Martinez**, as well as **Catholic school parents and students** throughout the U.S.

Whether you're looking to renew your own "yes" to Catholic schools, or are trying to find the language to invite others into Catholic education's unique mission, culture, and experience, we hope you'll choose to join us for this final FACE to FACE that will remind us what we're all about.

Register here : [FACE to FACE sessions](#)

### March 12th Curriculum Day- An opportunity to lead

On March 12th across the Archdiocese and on Zoom, teachers and administrators will have an opportunity to connect for a professional development day. Plans are underway for planning this day to meet the needs of our teachers and administrators. Topics include: early childhood, social and emotional learning, equity training, and more. If you are interested in taking a leadership role, contact Justyna King at [Justyna.King@seattlearch.org](mailto:Justyna.King@seattlearch.org). We hope to finalize the sessions soon.

**Accreditation-***One of the greatest professional development experiences is being a part of an Accreditation Visiting Team.* The Office for Catholic Schools is now registering people for the 2021-22 Accreditation visits for the fall and spring.

Click here to learn more: [Join an Accreditation Team in 2021-22](#)

### Changing Our World, Inc-Advancing Our Church Podcast:

<https://advancingourchurch.com>

See Vivian Shannon, Executive Director of the Fulcrum Foundation and Kristin Moore, Director of Marketing and Enrollment, podcast sessions.

### Celebration of Light Program:

Watch the Fulcrum Foundation's 32-minute program highlight to see the Good News of Catholic education: <https://youtu.be/aHmqR2dv9kc>

## And in the end ...

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHERE TO START WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S OWN EQUITY JOURNEY... START WITH THE USCCB'S **OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS** PROGRAM.

THIS RESOURCE FRAMES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S STANCE AGAINST RACISM AND DISCUSSES OUR HISTORICAL ROLE IN IT, WHILE CALLING FOR HEALING, LOVE AND UNITY AGAINST RACISM GOING FORWARD.

[Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism | USCCB](#)

open wide our hearts  
the enduring call to love  
*a pastoral letter against racism*



ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021

**#ignitinghope**

### Prayer for Teachers

Lord God,  
your spirit of wisdom fills the earth  
and teaches us your ways.

Look upon these teachers.  
Let them strive to share their knowledge with gentle  
patience  
and endeavor always to bring the truth to eager minds.

Grant that they may follow Jesus Christ,  
the way, the truth, and the life,  
forever and ever.

R/. Amen.