Our Parish Xavier Racial History

Over the past five years, St. Francis Xavier College Church has begun a process of racial reckoning.

Small groups of parishioners have embarked on a journey of learning together, and our Parish Racial History Committee has prepared this document, we are asking you – as a part of our parish racial history - to join us at this process of discovery and discovery.

Like every history, our story is a mix of choice made and opportunities seized or spurned. As in a江东 community, these choices, benefit (or not) actions that marked our understanding and growth of the experience of enslaved people. We have at times made critical decisions despite evidence of racial disparities around us. At other times, we have chosen, through calculated voice and action, to advocate for racial equity, moving as the man and women on the other side of our tradition talk and be free.

The past is not a prologue, but it must be understood and acknowledged. We will not only dwell in the past but will reflect on the moments of our history that reshape us and complicate what we mean for us as a whole parish at this moment in time. We look forward to walking this difficult journey together, open for the future of the Church and we will continue together.

Parish Racial Equity Review Team

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it important for us to examine our Parish Racial History?  
2. What aspects of the St. Francis Xavier story are most striking for you? What adventures or challenges do you want to help build?

We will examine our parish history in the context of events happening in the archdiocese and in broader civic society:

1800s

1818 • SFX Parish founded as St. Francis Xavier College Church

1824 • First Mass celebrated in St. Francis Xavier College Church

1828 • The Jesuits assume control of St. Louis Academy

1830 • The Jesuits establish the Slavery, American Openings of Social Justice Committee

1841 • Matilda Tyler, enslaved to SLU, purchased her freedom, paying installments  

1845 • The Missouri Jesuits established the Missouri Jesuit Secondary School

1847 • The Missouri Jesuits purchased Our Lady of the Rosary Church and moved to the current location of the Saint Louis University Church

1847-1855 • The Missouri Jesuits begin to educate African American students in SFX upper gallery, labeled the First Jesuit Negro Chapel

1850s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1860 • Henrietta Mills, a slave of St. Louis University, is first institution of Catholic hospitals

1860s • The Missouri Jesuits and the SLU community establish the SFX Parish Antiracism Team

1861-1865 • The Missouri Jesuits establish the Missouri Jesuit Secondary School

1863 • Fr. Augustus Tolton, born in SFX upper gallery, ordained as first known Black Catholic priest; born in SFX upper gallery, ordained as first known Black Catholic priest

1864-1865 • The Missouri Jesuits establish the Missouri Jesuit Secondary School

1870s • The Missouri Jesuits establish the Missouri Jesuit Secondary School

1880s • The Missouri Jesuits establish the Missouri Jesuit Secondary School

1890s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1900s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1910s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1920s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1930s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1940s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1950s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1960s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1970s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1980s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

1990s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

2000s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

2010s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

2020s • The Missouri Jesuits publish The Interracial Apostolate

Credits

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