

# APRIL 2022

# Media Meditation



St. Ignatius Catholic Community: The Jesuit Church of Baltimore

Recommit to antiracist work. Challenge yourself to take the time to watch these videos, read these articles, and reflect.

## USCCB PRAYER: WAKE ME UP, LORD

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism finds no home within me. Keep watch over my heart Lord, and remove from me any barriers to your grace, that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters. Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give services of justice and peace. Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory. And finally, remind us Lord that you said, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

Amen.

### APRIL 1: BIRTHDAY OF FATHER JOHN AUGUSTUS TOLTON

On April 1, 1854, John Augustus Tolton was born. He began life being treated as someone's personal property, enslaved by a White Catholic family. When he was eight years old, he and his family escaped slavery. Father John would go on to overcome insurmountable odds to become the first Black American priest in the United States. Support his cause for canonization [here](#).



[Click here to learn more  
\(4 min read\):](#)

[Biography of Father Tolton](#)

### APRIL 17: ANNIVERSARY OF THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST BLACK MAYOR IN THE U.S.

On April 17, 1868, the town of Donaldsville, Louisiana unanimously elected Pierre "Caliste" Landry as Mayor of Donaldsville, making him the first African American to be elected as mayor of a town in the United States. Born into slavery, Caliste would go on to serve the public in many roles: Justice of the Peace, State House Representative, State Senator, delegate to the State Constitutional Convention, and minister, to name a few. He was also a proud father of fourteen children, all of whom attended college.

[Click here to learn more:  
\(2.5 min read\):](#)

[Pierre Caliste Landry](#)



### APRIL 2: RAMADAN BEGINS

### APRIL 15: PASSOVER

### APRIL 17: EASTER

For the first time since 1991, Passover, Easter, and Ramadan will occur all at once. April 2 marks the first day of Islam's sacred month in which Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dusk until dawn. April 15 marks Passover, the start of the Jewish holiday honoring the freeing of enslaved Israeli people. And April 17 marks the Catholic holiday of Easter. To commemorate this overlap, reflect on the modern-day conflicts taking place in the land all three religions consider holy.



[Click here to learn more  
\(6 minute read\):](#)

[Rare Overlap of Holy Days Shows  
Jerusalem's Promise and Problems](#)

### APRIL 28-30:

### GATHERING OF NATIONS

On April 21, over 700 tribes from the United States and Canada will attend a three-day cultural heritage celebration. The Gathering of Nations is the largest powwow in the United States. The celebration involves competitions in dance, singing, drumming, and various other special competitions. A pageant for Miss Indian World is held, with a winner chosen based upon personality, knowledge of tribal traditions, and dancing ability.



[Click here to watch  
\(4 min video\):](#)

[Experience America's  
Largest Powwow](#)

## REFLECT:

- No American seminary would accept Father Tolton because he was Black; instead, he studied for the priesthood in Rome. How does it make me feel to face this blatant racism and discrimination by the American Catholic Church?
- What concrete action do I pledge to take to help the cause of canonization of Father Tolton?
- Have I avoided learning about the conflict in Jerusalem/Israel/Palestine because it feels too complex or overwhelming? Do I recognize my privilege in feeling that way? What steps do I pledge to take to educate myself now?
- How did I feel reading that the first Black Mayor in the U.S. was once sold for \$1,665 at the young age of thirteen? Is it uncomfortable for me to reflect on the dark parts of U.S. history?
- How often do I make time to center the joy and happiness of groups who identify differently than I do? Do I only focus on learning about trauma? Do I intentionally celebrate and amplify their joy?