

# *Reflections*

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**Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness**

**Your Prayers for Others Are Powerful**

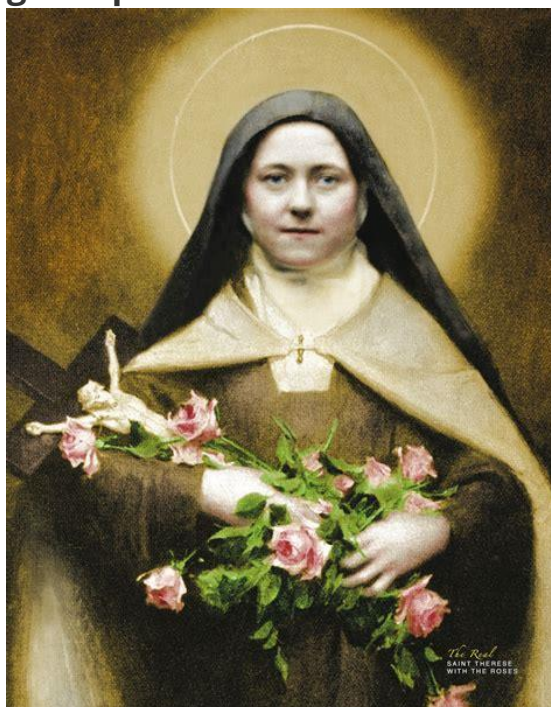
**Litany of the Most Precious Blood**

**Rebuilding Your Life After Addiction**

**Black Saints Who Were “First”**

**\*\*\*THOUGHT FOR TODAY\*\*\***

Perfect love means putting up with other peoples shortcomings, feeling no surprise at their weaknesses, finding encouragement even in the slightest evidence of good qualities in them.. St. Therese of Lisieux



**Pray for your family each day. Forgive them.**

**By: Richard Pickard**  
**Blessings to All:**

Many who read this Newsletter share in praying for their family and loved ones each day. These prayers are never wasted and God uses them to help those who are struggling from the anxieties of the world, in chronic health issues, in habits that steal the grace from souls and so much more.

Do not quit your prayers for family and loved ones. You are helping in providing graces to overcome the evil working in those who are in the shadow of Satan's plan to steal their souls to eternal damnation.

God uses your prayers in mysterious ways to aid the soul(s) you are praying for each day. God gives you a glimpse sometimes that your prayers are working. You perceive a slight change in that person. Perhaps a more gentle nature or an unexpected hug from them. These are signs that the grace you are calling upon this person is being accepted by God.

Your prayers for others are more powerful than criticizing and wagging your finger at them about their sins which you have discovered. Let gentleness, love and prayers be your weapons against the Evil One who is vying for the soul of a family member or loved one.

No one escapes the infernal efforts to destroy souls by the Evil One and his henchmen. They hate God and all humanity. They use small irritations in families to start huge fires of anger. Many have experienced this at family gatherings or perhaps around the dinner table. Your weapon against the Evil One is simple...ask Jesus for **HELP**. *Don't get all theological with arguments and reasons to those who are causing the problems, ...But go to the Master and ask for His help. He is more powerful than Evil. He is Good, Merciful and Loves you and all Humanity. He wants to intercede and provide a way out for those who have been captured by grievous sins and habits. Jesus will help cut off the tentacles of Satan that are around the one(s) you are praying for.*

For those in a Religious Order reading this Newsletter, please continue your prayers for the salvation of sinners. You have dedicated your lives to serving a greater good. The Gospel message that Jesus taught has moved your heart to help Him in His ministry of finding the lost sheep. *Your prayers are working. Millions and millions of souls have been saved by your prayers and sacrifices.*

For parents who have children that have lost the Faith and have succumb to the worlds allure of the flesh and money. Don't give up, God loves to hear from you and He will use your prayers and the love in your hearts for your children, to send them messages of love and compassion from time to time. They know in

their hearts that you are praying for them out of love. And love is like a light in the darkness of their souls. They will come to the Light.

For wives/husbands, whose spouse has swayed toward the evil of the world in their thinking and actions, and who don't go to Mass with the family, there is a remedy. Do not give up. ***Your prayers and pleas to Jesus will be answered.*** Continue being the foundation of the family. You will be glad you persevered.

To you children of parents who have been divorced and don't talk to each other. Pray for peace in your family. Don't give up. Prayers are never wasted. Your tears of sorry are like prayers to Jesus. For He knows the tears that were shed for Him by His Mother on the Cross. His blood that was shed was accepted by the Father, for the forgiveness of the world. Offer your tears and pains of the heart to Jesus. He will use them to provide graces for your parents. Your prayers may not seem to have any effect on them, **but they do.**

Those that read this Newsletter are in my daily prayers. And I ask that you pray for others who read this Newsletter. Prayers will overcome Evil.

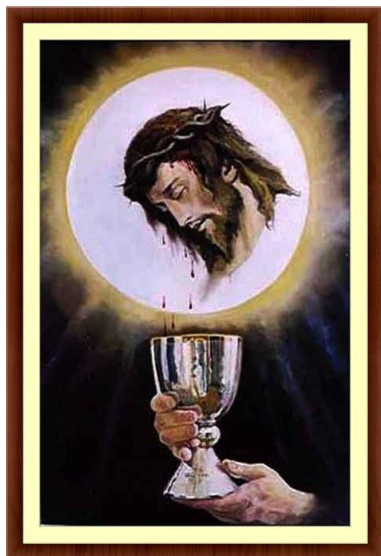
**Jesus has conquered Evil. Trust in Him. Ask for His help.**



**A prayer that invokes the mercy and salvation of Jesus Christ through his blood. It consists of a series of invocations and responses, followed by**

a concluding prayer and an Amen.

## Litany of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus



Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy... Lord, have mercy.  
 Christ, *hear us...* Christ, *graciously hear us.*  
 God, the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*  
 God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*  
 God, the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*  
 Holy Trinity, One God, *have mercy on us.*  
 Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, Without Which there is no forgiveness, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, victor over demons, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, bringing forth Virgins, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, *save us.*  
 Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor, *save us.*

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord!*  
 Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord!*  
 Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us, O Lord!*  
 Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy Blood.  
 And made us, for our God, a Kingdom.

**Almighty and eternal God, Thou hast appointed Thine only begotten Son the Redeemer of the world and willed to be appeased by His Blood. Grant, we beg of Thee, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation, and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life, so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in Heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.**



# Rebuilding Your Life After Addiction: 11 Tips for a New Start

by [Kyle Schwartz](#)

Suddenly entering a drug and alcohol recovery program and becoming sober is difficult enough, but rebuilding your life after addiction can only complicate things more. Initially, you'll have to conquer withdrawal symptoms and cravings to use again. Returning to the real world and continuing a sober lifestyle after spending years of substance abuse can be like coming out of a cave.

The transitional process will require several changes, steps, and resolutions that must be strictly followed to be successful. This is crucial if you're working on your recovery or recently become sober and want to continue that path after rehab.

After spending an amount of time in treatment, the transition process of rebuilding your life after addiction can be challenging and will require several steps.

## Step 1: Slow and Steady Wins The Race

Often, those who are recently rebuilding their life after addiction believe they're suddenly ready to jump back right into the world. But they'll usually realize quickly they're very far from being 100% ready. You'll feel reinvigorated and recharged and living life to its fullest, but you should moderate. Life's pace will likely feel quite differently now, and it might take time to reacclimate. But remember, regarding substance addiction recovery, slow and steady wins the race!

## Step 2: Make Things Right

Chances are, in the substance-abusing days, you did bad things or failed during that previous lifestyle. Even though these things happened during the addiction era, these actions had still caused people to become upset or have animosity. However, most loved ones will be happy to have you back healthy and sober and begin to realize the influence of old wounds can heal as time goes on. It is crucial to quickly and efficiently find ways to repair any damage you previously caused and make sure you make things right.



## Step 3: Do What's Expected of You

Another step to take when mending relationships with friends and family and to find out what they expect and need from you and their expectations of your behavior when dealing with them. For example, if you began using drugs and alcohol as a teen, and now you're in your late 20's, the early '30s, life has changed. You may only remember things back when you were sober and a functioning family member, but those roles and expectations in those relationships have also changed.

This discussion isn't only for your sake, but for the sake of your loved ones too. They've gotten used to viewing you as a substance abuser and will continue to think of you that way unless you can show them differently. They may even expect too much now that you are back to being sober. Follow the rules and do what's expected of you to help make loved ones view the present and form more practical standards moving forward.



## Step 4- Follow Through

Life after rehab will be tough enough adjusting to life and finding time to discuss in detail what is expected of you. But now that friends and family have given you the ground rules, moving forward, now you'll have to follow through on it. You beat substance abuse and addiction, and now the time has come to change other habits correlating to how you relate to others, things you do for them, handling obligations, and more.

## Step 5: Leave Old Addiction Friends Behind

After leaving rehab, *it is crucial to cut ties with all previous substance abusing and addicted friends from the past.* Regardless of the support, they claim they'll give you

during your path to sobriety, the fact is their presence will only stall your progress. Even in situations where it's a good friend or even a family member, they will bring you down and possibly trigger you to use it again.

Even if that's not the case and you still fully support each other, hanging with others getting drunk or high will only tempt you. Being around them can at any moment trigger a relapse, so stay away or keep it at busy, formal meeting places. No amount of sentiment is worth your health, happiness, and especially your sobriety! Leave old friends behind.

## Step 6: Finding New Hobbies

Back in the substance-abusing days, everyday life probably revolved around seeking and consuming drugs or alcohol. And the moments you weren't occupied with using substance were perhaps overshadowed by thoughts of when and how you were going to schedule using it again. So, now that you're clean, what will you do with your free time now?

Substance addiction has left a giant hole in your life, and now is the time for you to fill that hole with something productive, engaging, and fun. Finding new hobbies is easy; try by volunteering, pursuing further education, or other positive and fulfilling hobbies to keep new life on the right path.

## Step 7: Start Exercising

Think back to the days of drinking and abusing substances. How often did you work out during that period? Although now you're clean and sober, are you in good health? Those who start exercising can feel a world of difference regarding improving overall brain health, boosting energy levels, feeling of self-confidence, and sense of well-being.

Whether it's hiking, swimming, yoga, cycling, joining a gym, or a team sport, exercise can take things to a whole other level. Another reason to start exercising is to meet others dedicated to living a healthy lifestyle, which will help support your newly found healthy habits.

## Step 8: Start Dieting-Start Eating Right

Like most people who've spent years abusing substances, you likely didn't have the best diet throughout that period. Your body's condition is influenced by what you eat, and it may now be showing signs of malnutrition caused by long term neglect. It is crucial to minimize fats, cut junk food out from your diet, cut out sugar and unhealthy food and eat fresh fruit, veggies, fish, and lean meats daily. Also, drink lots of water and cut back on coffee or energy drinks.

A comprehensive health change won't happen overnight, but over time, your tastes will change, and you'll start craving healthy food. Next, you'll begin to see

extraordinary changes in appearance, immunity, energy level, and overall health. But it only happens when you start dieting.



## Step 9: Get Plenty of Rest

Whatever your sleep schedule was in the substance-abusing era, it probably wasn't very conducive to providing good mental and physical health. Staying up all night and sleeping all day, along with broken sleep throughout the night, did not help your health or mood. Going multiple days without sleep and then crashing are only a few basic models of sleep schedules that qualify as rest for a substance abuser.

Chances are, you'd be surprised to see the difference sleeping for eight hours every night can make. It can help convert into a far better mood, higher energy levels, sharper mental alertness, better health, and more. But it all starts with getting plenty of rest.

## Step 10: Set and Accomplish Goals

The most crucial step to take, following substance addiction rehab is to figure out ***your life goals and set about following them***. This will help put other positive things in motion. Now that you're headed along a solid path towards your dreams like exercising, getting plenty of rest, and being good to loved ones will eventually fall into line. This is an especially significant step to practice since you've probably not set any meaningful goals due to your substance abuse. **Now, your new future is a blank slate, and you can decide who and what you want to be, accomplish in life, but you must make that decision and carry it out.**



## Step 11: Get a Prayer Life Going

Do start praying again. Asking Jesus to be part of your life. A new beginning awaits you and Jesus wants to be there to help you.

# PRAYER AGAINST ADDICTION

## PRAYER FOR STRENGTH AND FORGIVENESS

Precious Lord,

I come to you in prayer today for salvation. Lord, I'm an addict, but I don't want to be defined by that anymore. I pray for your forgiveness. Please forgive me for this act and cleanse me of all unrighteousness. Take my hand Lord, and deliver me from this habit. Give me the strength to let go and not look back. Help me to avoid friends that will tempt or influence me to give in to this addiction again. Fill me with your grace so that I don't relapse into addiction.

Thank you for the life you have given to me in Christ Jesus. Thank you for setting me free through your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ,

*Amen*

# Black saints who were “firsts”



*The contribution of Black saints goes back to the very beginning of the universal Church.*

During February, Americans celebrate Black History Month by turning attention to the countless contributions that Africans and people of African descent have made to our world. There aren't yet any African American saints (though six causes are currently open), but Black saints and saints-to-be have been instrumental in the Church from its very birth on Calvary.

## **First African saint: St. Simon of Cyrene**

St. Simon of Cyrene is known to almost all Christians from his encounter with Jesus on the road to Calvary, when he was made to carry Jesus' cross alongside him. What fewer people know is that Simon's hometown of Cyrene was in Libya. Like the Egyptians and Libyans baptized on the day of Pentecost, and like St. Lucius of Cyrene (one of the earliest bishops in the Church, listed in Acts 13:1 as a leader in the Church at Antioch), we can't be certain as to St. Simon of Cyrene's race; North Africa has long been a region of great ethnic diversity, particularly at the time of the Roman occupation. But however dark their skin, these earliest Christians were Africans and stand as a reminder that the Church was thriving in Africa while England and Ireland were still untouched by the Gospel.

## \First royal saint: St. Ephigenia of Ethiopia

St. Ephigenia of Ethiopia (1st century) was the daughter of the king of Ethiopia and is said to have been converted by St. Matthew the Evangelist. When Matthew evangelized Ethiopia (converting the king and many of his people), Ephigenia became a consecrated virgin. After the death of Ephigenia's father, his successor Hirtacus sought her hand. Matthew explained to Hirtacus that Ephigenia was unavailable and was slain at the altar for protecting her. Hirtacus was then stricken with leprosy and took his own life, leaving Princess Ephigenia untouched.

## First African pope: St. Victor I



Pope St. Victor I (d. 199) was a North African man who established Latin (the language used in Roman Africa) rather than Greek (used in Rome) as the language of the Roman Catholic Church. He called the first Roman synod, worked

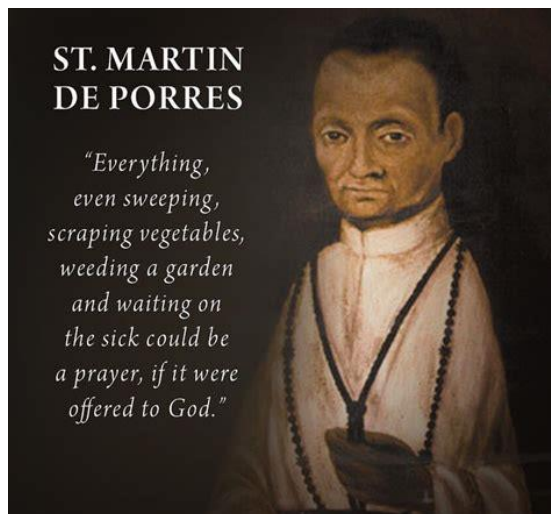
to universalize the date of Easter, and developed the authority of the papacy over the entire Church.

## First Black person officially canonized: St. Benedict the Moor



St. Benedict the Moor (1526-1589) was born to enslaved African parents but freed at birth. He joined some Franciscan-inspired hermits, whom he led for 10 years, then entered the Franciscan order, where he eventually served as superior and as novice master despite being illiterate. Though there were many Black saints before St. Benedict the Moor, the canonization process didn't begin until the 11th century, making him the first Black person canonized.

## First Black saint from the Americas: St. Martin de Porres



St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639) was born out of wedlock to a white father and Black mother. He trained as a barber (which included learning medicine) and tried to enter the Dominican order but was denied because it was illegal for a Black man to make vows. He entered as a volunteer instead and was so holy (in spite of the racist treatment he endured at the hands of the other brothers) that his superior decided to defy the law and allow Martin to become a lay brother. He worked in the kitchen and the infirmary for the rest of his life, a healer and a miracle-worker who bilocated all over the world.

## First African woman to write in a European language: Venerable Teresa Chikaba



Ven. Teresa Chikaba (1676-1748) was, like St. Josephine Bakhita, kidnapped and sold into slavery as a child (**though Chikaba was from Ghana**). Though relatively well-treated in the home of her noble Spanish mistress, Chikaba remained an enslaved person. She endured the dehumanizing nature of slavery as well as the racist taunts and beatings at the hands of other servants in the household. Freed after the death of her mistress, Chikaba was turned away by



one convent after another, despite her enormous dowry and the patronage of her former master the marquis. When she was finally allowed to enter a Dominican convent, she was made to live as a servant rather than a full-fledged nun, even after she became a mystic and a miracle-worker. A poet, Chikaba is the first Black woman known to have written literature in a European language.

### **First person to found a successful religious order for African American women: Servant of God Mary Lange**



Mother Mary Lange (d. 1882) was born to a wealthy Haitian family and raised in Cuba. She came to Baltimore as a young adult, where she experienced racism in a way she never had before, including at the hands of Catholics who repeatedly tried to disband the Black religious order she founded. Mother Lange persisted and her order continues to serve today.

### **First openly Black American priest: Venerable Augustus Tolton**



Ven. Augustus Tolton (1854-1897) was born into slavery in Missouri but escaped with his family. When he later tried to enter seminary, he was rejected because of his race. A bishop who recognized his virtues sent him to Rome to study since no American seminary would take him. Though the white-passing Healy brothers had been ordained when Tolton was a

child, Tolton became the first openly Black American priest. After ordination, he was sent back to Illinois, where he served amidst great persecution for the 10 years of his priesthood until he died of heatstroke at 43.



**The International Catholic Family Newsletter  
Is Published Monthly**

**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**



**The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio**

**St. Paul Ministry**

**<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>**