

THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY

Tom Wiggins



“Blind Tom” Wiggins was a blind piano prodigy so popular that it has been alleged that he was the highest-paid pianist of the 19th Century. Wiggins was celebrated for his ability, but his success came at the price of his dignity.

Wiggins was born May 25, 1849 to slave parents, Charity and Mingo Wiggins in Harris County, Ga. The family was sold to Columbus lawyer, Gen. James Bethune. Because of Wiggins’ blindness, he didn’t work, but by age four, people noticed that Wiggins could imitate sounds and music. He then started to pick up piano notes and songs. Bethune sensed that the child was gifted and nurtured Wiggins with lessons and access to music.

By the time he was nine years old, Wiggins reportedly made as much as \$15,000 per performance, which were billed as “exhibitions.” In essence, Bethune rendered Wiggins into a slave-musician who fattened the pockets of his owners. According to accounts, Wiggins could play his own takes on classic works from Bach, Chopin, Liszt, and Mozart along with using the piano to imitate other sounds. Because of his extraordinary memory, Wiggins became a novelty act and played games with the audience by playing their original compositions note for note.

If Wiggins could hear it, he could also play it, while adding his own flair. In 1875, Bethune gifted Wiggins to his son, John, who toured with the pianist for the next eight years. The younger Bethune eventually lost his ownership of Wiggins after he abandoned his wife, Eliza, who apparently connected with the piano player. After returning to Georgia after an extensive tour with Wiggins, the couple went through a bitter divorce and legal wrangling that also involved Wiggins’ mother.

In 1887, Bethune’s ex-wife won rights to the “Last American Slave” as Wiggins was called in newspapers. While it appeared to be freedom, Wiggins was once more a slave-musician. Author Jeffery Renard Allen wrote a novel based on Wiggins titled “Song Of The Shank,” but uncovered a little-known side in his research. It was said that Wiggins may have been an autistic savant, but such a condition was not well known at the time. Wiggins also crafted his own music but was billed as uneducated. There have been efforts to find his original musical compositions to restore and preserve them.

Wiggins may have played a meek role to appease his owners but took back his pride in other ways. As his career waned, Wiggins refused to play black church hymns and he became increasingly defiant. His health began to fail him and he officially retired from performing in 1905. Three years later, he died to complications from a stroke. Wiggins’ mother or family never benefited from the riches Blind Tom made.

Sacraments

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):

Saturdays 3:00 PM and by appointment.

BAPTISMS: To arrange and prepare for the celebration of Baptism, please call the Pastor to schedule an appointment. Baptisms are usually celebrated on Sunday afternoon.

FUNERAL: Please call the parish as soon as possible to make arrangements for the Mass of Christian Burial.

VISITING THE SICK: If you or a family member are sick or in the hospital, please call the parish so that a pastoral visit can be arranged. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick may be celebrated in the parish before hospitalization. Please call also to arrange for a Eucharistic minister to bring Communion to the sick. If you would like to request prayers for someone who is sick, please call the parish so that the name may be placed in the bulletin.

MARRIAGES: Preparation must begin at least six months prior to the wedding. Please make arrangements with the parish before scheduling the reception.

ANNULMENTS/CONVALIDATION: Please arrange a meeting with the Pastor to begin the process of celebrating your marriage in the Church.

NEW PARISHIONERS: Catholics who would like to be registered as parishioners of Immaculate Conception and receive stewardship envelopes should call the parish secretary or fill out a form in the vestibule of the church.

RCIA: Adults who desire to explore the possibility of becoming a member of the Catholic Church should contact the RCIA (Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults) team. Preparation usually begins in September and Baptism or Reception is celebrated at the next Easter Vigil.

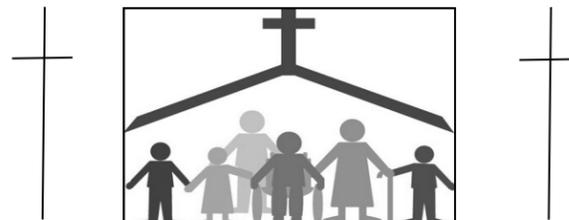
TUITION ASSISTANCE: Some financial aid for tuition assistance to Catholic schools is available to registered members of the parish. This is a one time grant of no more than \$1,000.00 to needy families to assist them during a time of financial crisis. Eligible families should write a letter to the Pastor who will evaluate the request with the Financial Advisory Committee.

To Whom Do We Go

Adult Formation: Lovenia Watson.....	778-1977
Altar Servers: Bradley DeRouen	218-8292 / 284-5970
Child Protection Coord:.....	Andrea Toles
Eucharistic Ministers: Beulah Decuir.....	229-6076
Gospel Choir/Adult: Daphne Alex.....	936-4051
Gospel Choir/Youth: Tara Winder	428-5981
Hall Rental: Juliet Betts.....	775-7067
Ministry Council/Chair: Georgia Jenkins.....	775-5824
Pantry/Food and Vouchers:	774-3661
Sacristan: Rogers Jackson, Jr.	362-0907
Traditional Choir: Theresa Carmen.....	921-7315
Usher’s Coordinator: Walter Ennis.....	775-7332

This Week’s Prayer

Lord God, may we be grateful for our lot, and compassionate toward all those who are suffering every kind of distress at this difficult time. May we hold back nothing, and hasten to be the ministers of prayer and mercy, like the disciples of Him who went about doing good in times of need. Amen.





Father Thomas F. Clark, S. J.



HONORING OUR GRADUATES ON JUNE 5



We will honor our graduates from high school, college, and graduate school on Sunday, June 5 at 10:30 AM Mass. Please let Fr. Clark or Andrea Toles know the names, school, degree, and future plans of our graduates. We will also honor graduates of the Fall 2021 semester. Congratulations to all our graduates! Awesome achievement! We are so very proud of you! **Let us celebrate YOU!!!**

VOCATION DISCERNMENT RETREAT



Father Josh Johnson and Sr. Josephine Garrett will facilitate a National Vocation to Priesthood and Religious Life Discernment Retreat on June 3-5 at Saint Joseph Abbey in Covington, LA. If you are drawn to consider a call to priesthood or religious life, please see Fr. Clark ASAP to reserve a place on this retreat. Only a few places left!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: JUNE 14-16, 2022



Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be held on June 14-16 in the Parish Activity Center. Grade levels Pre-K through 6th are welcome. Covid 19 recommended guidelines will be followed. Registration is required. Applications will be available in the church foyer. Please contact Gloria DeRouen at 225-936-8162 for more information.

AS THE EASTER SEASON COMES TO A COMPLETION...



Remember at Easter we said that Lent gives us 40 days to fast and pray and Easter gives us 50 days to celebrate! Well, we are approaching the completion of the 50 days. This weekend is the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Next Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord and on June 4-5 we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. In these final weeks of Easter, let us focus on the Lord's parting gifts to us: the gift of peace and the gift of the Spirit. The Lord's gift of peace is not like the world's peace. The world's peace is fragile and tenuous. It is merely the absence of conflict. The Lord's gift of peace is internal. It is not a thing but a relationship. Our relationship with God in Jesus and through the Spirit gives us a deep inner reality of trust, hope and confidence that gives us peace. This peace can exist amid turmoil all round us. Although the storms of life rage around us, we can have an island of peace that helps us to deal with the trouble in a calm and hopeful manner. The gift of the Spirit is the abiding presence of God in our lives. We are never alone. God is always with us through the presence of his Holy Spirit who unfolds for us the mystery of God in our life. Receive the gifts of peace and the Spirit in an intentional way in these

IMPORTANT INFO FOR LECTORS, MUSICIANS AND CHOIRS FOR NEXT WEEKEND



Sunday, May 29 is the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord. Formerly this feast was celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter which was always a Thursday. In many dioceses of the United States, it has been moved to the following Sunday. Therefore, you will find the readings and Responsorial Psalm for Sunday, May 29 on pages 86-90 of the missalette and on pages 181-184 of the Lector's Workbook.

FATHER CLARK ATTENDING TWO JESUIT MEETINGS IN JUNE



Father Clark will be attending two Jesuit meetings in June in Saint Louis. From June 6-8 he will attend a meeting of the Jesuit Anti-Racist Sodality with Jesuit scholastics (seminarians) and on June 13-16 he will attend the Province Congregation to which he was elected. Between those two meeting he will attend the Jesuit ordinations in Saint Louis. Father Chris Kellerman will be here in the parish for that time. He will celebrate all the Masses and be available for any pastoral needs.

Happy Birthday

LOUIS	JOSEPH	5/22
TYRIN	MOSEY	5/22
CHAILA	ROBERSON	5/22
KEYSHELL	DYER	5/23
JUDY	MARTIN	5/23
MARVELL	BAUDY	5/24
JERMAYNE	BRADFORD	5/24
KEITH	COLEMAN, JR.	5/24
MARIE	CORREA	5/24
BLAINE	EDWARDS	5/24
BRYCE	EDWARDS	5/24
JOHN	HENDERSON	5/24
AUDREE	VAUGHN	5/24
JOHN	EDWARDS	5/25
THOMAS	SCOTT, JR.	5/25
ANTHONY	OLIVER	5/26
SHAWN	CHAMBERS	5/26
KACI	THOMAS	5/26
MARCUS	COX	5/27
ANGENETTE	WELTON	5/28
MILTON	WILLIAMS	5/28
JOYCE	BROUSSARD	5/29
DANIEL	FRAZIER, III	5/29
ALTHEA	LACEY	5/29
VIRGINIA	LISTACH	5/29
TYRA	MCGHEE	5/29
MYRA	MITCHELL	5/29
KENDRICK	SLAN, JR.	5/29

PARISH COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES



In place of our April and July meetings, we will have a meeting of the Council of Ministries on Tuesday, June 21 at 6:30 PM in the Parish Activity Center. Father Clark would like for us to revisit the Ministry Fair that we had in February, 2020 just before Covid. Let us look into reviving the ministries we identified as being desirable for the parish. Maybe we can have another Ministry Fair in September to inaugurate the return of these ministries.



Mass Readings

May 22nd - May 29th
Sunday
 Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Psalms 67; Rev 21:10-14, 22-23
 Gospel: Jn 14:23-29
Monday
 Acts 16:11-15; Psalms 149
 Gospel: Jn 15:26--16:4a
Tuesday
 Acts 16:22-34; Psalm 138
 Gospel: Jn 16:5-11
Wednesday
 Acts 17:15, 22--18:1; Psalms 148
 Gospel: Jn 16:12-15
Thursday
 Acts 18:1-8; Psalms 98
 Gospel: Jn 16:16-20
Friday
 Acts 18:9-18; Psalms 47
 Gospel: Jn 16:20-23
Saturday
 Acts 18:23-28; Psalms 47
 Gospel: Jn 16:23b-28
Sunday
The Ascension of the Lord
 Acts 1:1-11; Psalms 47; Eph 1:17-23
 Gospel: Lk 24:46-53

Forms for new parishioners or changes are located in the vestibule of the church.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH



May is Mental Health Month. Life is full of stress. Life's challenges can be a heavy burden to carry. We do not have to (and we should not) carry these burdens alone. We need to share with trusted persons what we are going through. Sometimes we may also need to speak with a professional counselor to help us sort things out. When we seek help and support, we are not being weak; we are being smart. Just as we go to the doctor for regular check ups to insure our physical health, we also need to attend to our mental health. We also need to check in on family and friends to make sure that they are doing alright. What can you do this week to promote your mental health?

