

This is the first weekend of Black History Month. This month we plan to share information on several Black Non-Catholic theologians who have influenced religious thought over the last 100 years.

Howard Washington Thurman (November 18, 1899 – April 10, 1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, mystic, educator, and civil-rights leader. As a prominent religious figure, he played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. Thurman's theology of radical nonviolence influenced and shaped a generation of civil rights activists. He was a key mentor to leaders within the civil rights movement including Martin Luther King, Jr.

Over the years, Thurman served on the faculty of several leading academic institutions, including Howard University and Boston University. He was an influential religious and community leader in San Francisco and Boston. Thurman traveled broadly, heading Christian missions and meeting with world figures. In 1935-36 he led a six-month delegation of African Americans invited to India for meetings. At Bartoli, they spoke with Mahatma Gandhi, who asked "persistent, pragmatic questions" about the Black American community and its struggles. When Thurman asked Gandhi what message he should take back to the United States, Gandhi said he regretted not having made nonviolence more visible as a practice worldwide and remarked "It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."

Thurman was a prolific author, writing twenty books on theology, religion, and philosophy. The most famous of his works, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1949), profoundly influenced Martin Luther King, Jr and other black and white leaders of the modern Civil Rights Movement. (Our small Lenten group read this book for Lenten reflection – an excellent resource.)

His awards and achievements are too numerous to mention here, and we encourage you to read more about his holy and fruitful life at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Thurman