

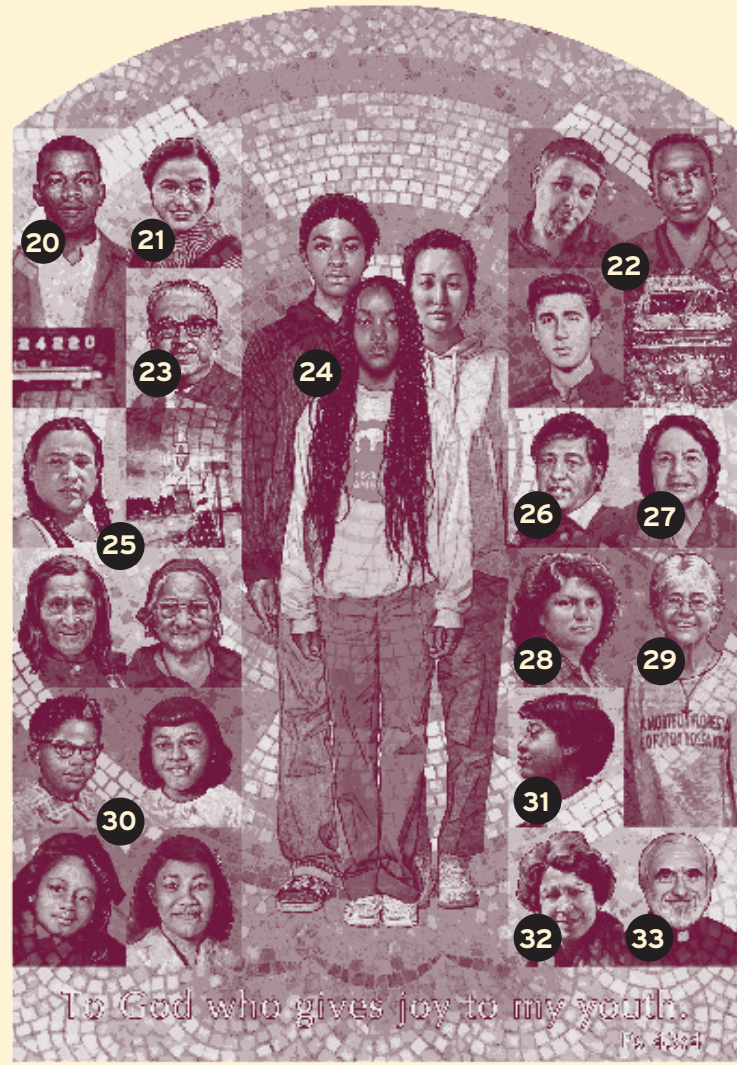


INTO LIGHT AND TRUTH: HOLY PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAS

Tapestries of the Church of St. Francis Xavier

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INTO LIGHT AND TRUTH: HOLY PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAS TAPESTRIES OF THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

In 2020, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, the Church of St. Francis Xavier joined faith communities across the country in reflecting on myriad aspects of racial justice that the Gospel calls us to address. This reflection continued the parish's modern-day commitment to racial justice and inclusion, which dates back to at least 1960, when the parish had an annual Civil Rights Mass in the name of St. Martin de Porres.

In 1962, the Mass premiered jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams's hymn "Black Christ of the Andes," which honored de Porres. Walter M. Abbott, SJ, quoted from the Vatican Council's opening statement: "*We proclaim that all men are brothers, irrespective of the race or nation to which they belong.*" Two years later, at another Mass for civil rights, Anthony Woods, SJ, preached that civil rights is "not just a problem of law. It is a problem that goes deep into the dignity of man, which was put there by God.... If we do not love someone because his skin is a different color, then we do not love Christ."

As part of the parish's 2020 reflection, a parishioner working group proposed an expansion of church iconography to include people of heroic virtue from around the world and closer to home in the Americas and New York City. Following broad consultation with the community, the first phase of the project was dedicated in June 2022. *Communion of Saints and Holy People* consists of twelve panels of international and American saints and holy people, installed between the Stations of the Cross and beneath stained glass windows. The individuals selected reflect the diversity of the parish in the twenty-first century. They are people to whom current parishioners pray, seek intercession, and take as their role models.

The design and fabrication of two tapestries for the narthex, one on each side of the steps leading into the church, constitute phase two of the project, *Into Light and Truth: Holy People of the Americas*. It is drawn from Psalm 43:4: "*I will go to the altar of God: to God who gives joy to my youth.*" The highly regarded artist John Nava, who created tapestries for Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, accepted Xavier's commission.

The iconography, which continues the theme of the communion of saints and holy people, focuses on those of heroic virtue who are from the Americas. These are people whose lives were dedicated to Gospel values and the struggle to pursue justice in its many forms. Some died a martyr's death. They reflect the diversity and the commonality of all seekers of justice. Images and bios of these holy people are on the following pages. We commend them to you for inspiration and emulation.

PASTOR'S NOTE

These tapestries that will hang in the narthex, the entrance to our church, invite people of all backgrounds to enter into God's presence and bless God's name. In Psalm 43, the psalmist offers a prayer to God that resonates with a fundamental human longing for the Creator: *"Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. And I will go to the altar of God; to God who gives joy to my youth; and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God."*

The individuals depicted in the tapestries worked for and gave their lives to advance biblical justice, human rights, and equality. John Nava's vision to honor them by these tapestries is consistent with his lifelong dedication to biblical justice. We are grateful to him for enabling the Church of St. Francis Xavier community to realize our goal of installing iconography that represents the diversity of the people of God.

Fr. Ken Boller, SJ

Pastor, Church of St. Francis Xavier





HARRY BELAFONTE | 1927-2023

Harry Belafonte was a renowned musician, actor, and activist. His activism guided his life. He is credited as a major financier of the Civil Rights Movement, personally raising more than \$50,000 to bail Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. out of the Birmingham city jail. Belafonte also financially supported the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the 1961 Freedom Ride to New Orleans, and the 1963 March on Washington. He was active in the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa. Belafonte was reared a Catholic by his devout mother, attending St. Thomas the Apostle Church and St. Charles Borromeo School in Harlem. He credited his mother as a primary inspiration for his activism, recalling her words: “Don’t ever let injustice go by unchallenged.”



DANIEL BERRIGAN, SJ | 1921-2016

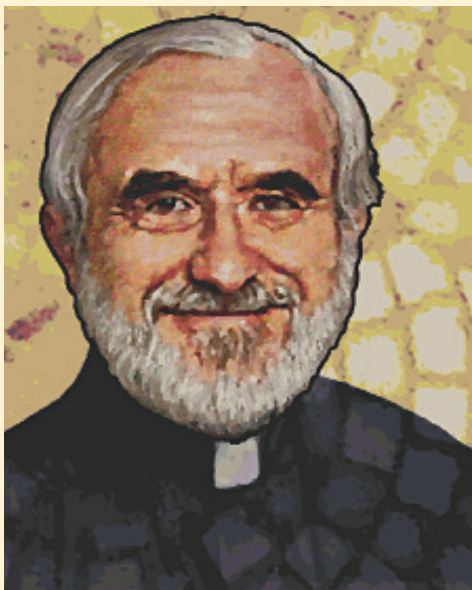
Peace activist and writer Daniel Berrigan, SJ, was born in Virginia, Minnesota, in 1921. Directly out of high school in 1939, he became a member of the Society of Jesus and was ordained in 1952. Berrigan was deeply influenced by his younger brother, Philip, who served in the Army during World War II and became a Josephite priest. Berrigan marched with Philip in the Civil Rights Movement at Selma, Alabama, in 1965. They became more active in the antiwar movements against US involvement in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Their most famous protest was in 1968. With seven other participants, Daniel and Philip burned 378 files of young men who were to be drafted for military service. This led to their arrest. Berrigan served two years in prison and was released in 1972. He wrote of the incident and the trial in his play *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*.



Beside Grace Lee Boggs is an image of her at a demonstration. On the placard she carries is a quote of hers: “We are the leaders we have been waiting for.”

GRACE LEE BOGGS | 1915-2015

Grace Lee Boggs was a Chinese American author, social activist, philosopher, and feminist. She is regarded as a key figure in the Asian American, Black Power, and Civil Rights movements. Despite her PhD in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College, she found significant barriers in the academic world in the 1940s and took a low-paying job at the University of Chicago. At this point, she set a trajectory that would guide her for the rest of her life—a focus on the struggles of the African American community. She founded Detroit Summer, a multicultural, intergenerational youth program in 1992, and was the recipient of many awards. Her home in Detroit, Michigan, served as headquarters for James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership, and to this day it continues to be a hub for community-based projects.



JOHN BUCKI, SJ | 1950-2017

John Bucki, SJ, was born on January 12, 1950, in Buffalo, New York. His early ministry with the Jesuits was in education, teaching math at Regis and Xavier high schools in New York City and at McQuaid Jesuit in Rochester. In the 1980s, he worked in Nigeria and the Philippines. When he came to the Church of St. Francis Xavier in 1988, he expanded the work of the Welcome Table and Food Pantry. These ministries, now part of Xavier Mission, continue to serve thousands of needy persons to this day. Bucki was chair of Interfaith Voices Against Hunger. During his time in college campus ministry, sharing his distinctively joyful theology at Canisius and LeMoyne, he led students in boisterous groups to encounter their local and global communities through service trips to Xavier and to Mercy Center in the Bronx, as well as to Jamaica, Ecuador, and Poland.

ST. FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI | 1850-1917

In 1889, New York seemed to be filled with chaos and poverty, and into this new world stepped Mother Cabrini and her companions from Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mother Cabrini organized catechism and education classes for immigrants and provided for the needs of orphans. She established schools and orphanages despite tremendous odds. Soon, requests came to Mother Cabrini from all over the world. She traveled to Europe, Central America, South America, and throughout the United States. She made twenty-four transatlantic crossings and established sixty-seven schools, hospitals, and orphanages in New York; Chicago; Des Plaines, Illinois; Seattle; New Orleans; Denver; Golden, Colorado; Los Angeles; and Philadelphia. In 1950, Pope Pius XII named Frances Xavier Cabrini as the patron saint of immigrants.





BERTA CÁCERES | 1971-2016

Berta Cáceres grew up during the violence that swept through Central America in the 1980s. She became a student activist. In 1993, she cofounded National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras to address the growing threats posed to indigenous Lenca communities by illegal logging. This involved fighting for the Lenca's territorial rights and to improve their livelihoods. Cáceres rallied the Lenca people and waged a grassroots campaign that successfully pressured the world's largest dam builder to pull out of the Agua Zarca Dam. The dam had been slated for construction on the sacred Gualcarque River and had been pushed through without consulting the community. Cáceres filed complaints with government authorities and brought along community representatives on trips to Tegucigalpa. She organized a local assembly where community members formally voted against the dam and led a protest where people peacefully demanded their rightful say in the project. Death threats to Cáceres continued until March 3, 2016, when she was killed by gunmen in her home in La Esperanza.

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ | 1927-1993

César Chávez brought to public attention the plight of the farmworkers in California and throughout the United States. He, along with Dolores Huerta, were the first Latin Americans to come to national prominence, fighting for better working conditions and salaries for the migrant labor force. United Farm Workers, which he and Huerta cofounded, came out of the merger of National Farm Workers Association and Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, a Filipino American union, and gave voice to these workers. The battle for workers' rights was difficult, but Chávez persevered to ensure a safe working environment and a living wage for farmworkers.





Maryknoll sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Jean Donovan, and Ursuline sister Dorothy Kazel were brutally raped and murdered in El Salvador while traveling back from the San Salvador airport. They were killed because they were committed to being in solidarity with their Salvadoran sisters and brothers. The deaths of these four churchwomen only hinted at the violence and atrocities that would destroy El Salvador. From 1980 to 1992, its brutal civil war took the lives of over seventy thousand people. Many died at the hands of soldiers, who received training at School of the Americas, now known as Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. The United States was integrally involved in El Salvador's civil war, supporting the government with approximately \$1 million of military aid per day throughout the conflict. The world lost four saints on December 2, 1980. But these holy women continue to teach us to be people of peace, hope, justice—people grounded in Christ.

CHURCHWOMEN OF EL SALVADOR

MAURA CLARKE, MM | 1931-1980

JEAN DONOVAN | 1953-1980

ITA FORD, MM | 1940-1980

DOROTHY KAZEL, OSU | 1939-1980



Next to Andrew Goodman is an image of the burnt car from the scene of their murders. Superimposed over the car is a heartbreaking letter that Goodman sent to his parents on that day.

“Dear Mom and Dad, I have arrived safely in Meridian, Mississippi. This is a wonderful town, and the weather is fine. I wish you were here. The people in this city are wonderful, and our reception was very good. All my love, Andy”

1964 FREEDOM SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

JAMES CHANEY | 1943-1964

ANDREW GOODMAN | 1943-1964

MICHAEL SCHWERNER | 1939-1964

Victims of abduction, torture, and murder during 1964 Freedom Summer, these three young men disappeared on June 21, in Philadelphia, Mississippi. James Chaney was born and raised in Meridian, Mississippi. He attended Catholic schools and was a member of St. Joseph Church. Andrew Goodman was born and raised in New York City's Upper West Side; Michael Schwerner in Pelham, New York. Both were Jewish. John Lewis recruited the three to work for Congress of Racial Equality during Freedom Summer to conduct classes and register Black voters in rural Mississippi. While investigating the burning of a church where classes had been held, they were falsely arrested and released. En route to Meridian, they were stopped and taken to a remote area, where they were shot to death. Chaney was first tortured. Goodman was likely buried alive. Their bodies were found forty-four days later in an earthen dam. Modern-day martyrs, these men represent people who gave their lives for justice.



On September 15, 1963, at 10:22 a.m., fifteen sticks of dynamite detonated beneath 16th Street Baptist Church's steps, near the basement, where children were tying one another's sashes and donning their choir robes. Four members of the Klu Klux Klan had purchased and placed the explosives earlier that morning. It blew a crater five feet wide and two feet deep, close to where the children were. Modern-day "holy innocents," Addie Mae Collins, 14, Denise McNair, 11, Carole Robertson, 14, and Cynthia Wesley, 14, represent the murder of innocent children in today's world.

16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH HOLY INNOCENTS

ADDIE MAE COLLINS | 1949-1963

DENISE MCNAIR | 1951-1963

CAROLE ROBERTSON | 1949-1963

CYNTHIA WESLEY | 1949-1963



CROW DOG FAMILY

HENRY CROW DOG | 1903-1985

GERTRUDE CROW DOG | 1900-1987

LEONARD CROW DOG | 1942-2021

Sicangu Lakota Oyate Chief Leonard Crow Dog was a wicasa wakan (holy man) and a leader of Native American Church. He dedicated his life to preserving the spiritual teachings of the Lakota and is credited reviving sun dance and other ceremonies integral to Native American life.. Chief Crow Dog was a prominent figure in the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation and American Indian Movement, which led to policies that emphasized respect for cultural traditions instead of assimilation. Henry and Gertrude Crow Dog, his parents, also were Lakota spiritual leaders. Gertrude, a lifelong practicing Catholic and one of the first female singers in Native American Church, was revered as a holy woman by Lakota leaders, who frequently sought her wisdom. JoAnn, Chief Crow Dog's widow, has given permission for him and his parents to be included in the tapestry.

Next to Leonard Crow Dog is an image from the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973.



DOROTHY DAY | 1897-1980

Dorothy Day was born in Brooklyn, New York, the third of five children. During a two-year stint at the University of Illinois, Day joined the Socialist Party as she began to recognize the inequities in the lives of the poor. While living on Staten Island, she gave birth to a daughter, Tamara, a life event that marked the beginning of Day's increasingly intense relationship with God and Mary, the mother of Jesus. In 1933, with Peter Maurin, Day cofounded *The Catholic Worker*, a newspaper that grew into a social movement with nearly two hundred houses of hospitality worldwide. Throughout her life, Day remained a pacifist and activist who supported civil rights and labor movements. Her 1952 autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, is a twentieth-century classic. Central to her spirituality was devotion to the Eucharist. "We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more." Day is a heroic American Catholic, New York Catholic, and Church of St. Francis Xavier Catholic.

ERNESTINE ECKSTEIN | 1941-1992

Ernestine Eckstein, a pseudonym for Ernestine Delois Eppenger, was a Black lesbian activist in the pre-Stonewall era. She was the only person of color to participate in the annual July 4th picket lines for gay and lesbian equality in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. "Denial of Equality of Opportunity Is Immoral" was a sign she carried in a White House picket line on October 23, 1965. As a leader of the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian political advocacy group, she risked her livelihood by publicly claiming her sexual identity in a time when there could be devastating consequences for coming out. Also active in the Black Feminist Movement, she sought to bring various civil rights movements together, "*meeting on the common ground of an unjust position in society.*"





FANNIE LOU HAMER | 1917-1977

Fannie Lou Hamer was an American voting and women's rights activist and leader in the Civil Rights Movement. She repeatedly fought to register to vote as a Black woman, and in 1964 she cofounded Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which challenged the local Democratic Party's efforts to block Black participation. Over the years, Hamer was known for referencing spiritual hymns and Scripture in advocating for Black women in Mississippi. In 1963, Hamer and six other women were arrested, following a sit-in at a "Whites Only" restaurant. She was taken to jail and beaten and never fully recovered from the attack. Hamer lost vision in one of her eyes and suffered permanent kidney damage, which contributed to her death in 1977 at age fifty-nine.

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL | 1907-1972

Abraham Joshua Heschel was a Jewish theologian who escaped the Holocaust from Poland. His mother and three sisters died at the hands of the Nazis. He is known for his interest in spirituality and the Hebrew prophets, whom he believed called for social action that would lead to racial equality and peace. Rabbi Heschel was the Jewish representative to the Second Vatican Council, where he successfully persuaded council leaders to eliminate and modify liturgical passages that demeaned Jews or advocated their conversion to Christianity. A prolific writer, he was known as the "prophet's prophet."





Next to Judy Heumann is an image of her in a wheelchair.

JUDY HEUMANN | 1947-2023

Judy Heumann was a lifelong advocate for the rights of disabled people. She contracted polio in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York, and began to use a wheelchair. She was denied the right to attend kindergarten because she was considered a “fire hazard.” Her parents played a strong role in fighting for her rights as a child. As a young adult, Heumann soon determined that, working in collaboration with other disabled people, she had to play an advocacy role to counter continuous discrimination. She traveled in her motorized wheelchair to countries on every continent and to urban and rural communities. She played a role in the development and implementation of major legislation, including Individual with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



DOLORES HUERTA | 1930-PRESENT

Born in 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico, Dolores Huerta began her career as an activist in 1955, when she cofounded the Stockton, California, chapter of Community Service Organization, which strove to increase voter registration and economic improvement for Hispanics. In 1962, Huerta cofounded National Farm Workers Association with César Chávez, which later became United Farm Workers. She successfully led negotiations in the 1965 Delano Grape Strike to gain safer conditions for five thousand workers. Her work eventually led to California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, which allowed farmworkers to form unions and bargain for better wages and conditions. Her later work involved getting Latinos and women elected to political office. Huerta received the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award (1998) and the Presidential Medal of Honor (2015). She is known for the cry, “*Si, se puede!*” (“*Yes, it can be done!*”), the United Farm Workers motto.

MYCHAL JUDGE, OFM | 1933-2001

Father Mychal Judge was an American Franciscan friar who served as a chaplain to the FDNY. While in that capacity, he was killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, becoming the first certified fatality of 9/11. He was known for ministering to the homeless, hungry, recovering alcoholics, people with AIDS, the sick, injured, grieving, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and those abandoned by society. Even before his death, many considered Judge to be a saint for his extraordinary works of charity.



In the central group, on the east wall, Mychal Judge, OFM, wears the firefighter's gear he had on when he was killed.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. | 1929-1968

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. He was a Baptist minister and activist, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. Inspired by Christian beliefs and Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. King led targeted nonviolent resistance against Jim Crow laws and other forms of discrimination. He was one of the leaders of the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his speech “*I Have A Dream*,” which still serves as a touchstone and rallying cry for peace and justice movements today. Dr. King was the first president of Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This organization, along with many others, were instrumental in achieving pivotal legislative gains, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Fair Housing Act of 1968. Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1964 for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. In his final years, Dr. King expanded his focus to include opposition to poverty, capitalism, and the Vietnam War.

KIYOSHI KUROMIYA | 1943-2000

Kiyoshi Kuromiya was born in a Japanese American internment camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, during World War II and grew up to be a committed civil rights activist. He first met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963, at Willard Hotel, after the “I Have a Dream” speech. He again met with Dr. King, Ralph Abernathy, William Kunstler, and others on March 17, 1965, when they worked together on a statement that got an apology issued from Alabama state authorities for the mounted posse attack on Black students and allies (Kuromiya among them) on March 16, during the Selma to Montgomery march. He was one of the founders of Gay Liberation Front and was involved with ACT-UP Philadelphia and We the People Living with HIV/AIDS. He fought for research that involved the community in its design, particularly people of color, drug users, and women. Kuromiya died from HIV/AIDS-related illness the day after his fifty-seventh birthday.





JOHN LEWIS | 1940-2020

US congressman, Baptist minister, and recognized leader in the Civil Rights Movement, John Lewis was one of the principal organizers of the March on Washington in 1963. In 1965, he led the first of three Selma to Montgomery marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where during an incident known as “Bloody Sunday” he and approximately six hundred others were attacked by Alabama state troopers and police. During seventeen terms as a member of the US House of Representatives, representing Atlanta, Georgia, Lewis is remembered for saying, *“Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”*

AUDRE LORDE | 1934-1992

A self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” Audre Lorde dedicated her life and creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. A native New Yorker, born of West Indian immigrant parents, Lorde was educated in the city, and wrote and taught throughout her career, even serving as poet laureate for New York State. She was central to many liberation movements and activist circles, including second-wave feminism, Civil Rights and Black cultural movements, and struggles for LGBTQ equality. Lorde’s poetry is known for the power of its call for social and racial justice, as well as its depictions of queer experience and sexuality.





THURGOOD MARSHALL | 1908-1993

Upon graduating first in his class from Howard University Law School, Thurgood Marshall began private practice in Baltimore, Maryland. Among his first legal victories was *Murray v Pearson* (1935) [also cited as *Murray v Maryland* (1936)], a suit accusing the University of Maryland of violating the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws by denying a Black applicant admission to its law school solely on the basis of race. In October 1961, Marshall was appointed to US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by President John F. Kennedy. President Lyndon B. Johnson named Marshall Solicitor General in July 1965 and nominated him to the US Supreme Court on June 13, 1967. He sat on the court until October 1, 1991.

ANGELES RUIZ MCNEELY | 1925-2004

Angeles Ruiz McNeely was a holy, beloved, and trusted member of the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City. Her care for the sacred spaces of the parish transcended the church itself and came to encompass the entire neighborhood and community. McNeely was an original volunteer in the early days of the Welcome Table, where she initiated the Bread Ministry by going around to local bakeries, collecting their leftovers each day. She could be found working behind the scenes at every parish event and, with great kindness, feeding the poor. Grounding all her work was her intense devotion to the Rosary and Eucharist. The simplicity of her spirituality and her devotion to the parish mission are cherished and emulated to this day.





THOMAS MERTON, OCSO | 1915-1968

Thomas Merton was an American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist, and scholar of comparative religions. He was a keen proponent of interfaith understanding. Merton also was known for his nonviolent stand during race riots and the Vietnam War. A prolific writer, he is widely recognized as an important twentieth-century Catholic mystic and thinker. He wrote more than fifty books on spirituality, social justice, and quiet pacifism.

PATRICE MURPHY, SC | 1933-2019

Patrice Murphy was a Sister of Charity of New York and director of St. Vincent's Hospital's Hospice Care Program, devoting her time to bereavement counseling and helping people whose spouses had died learn to live again. In the early 1980s, Sister Patrice would use her experience to help a new community in need: gay men whose partners had died from AIDS. She offered eight-week bereavement group sessions with Gay Men's Health Crisis. *"We're here to take care of people who are ill and their survivors. Sexual preference is not an issue."*





ROSA PARKS | 1913-2005

Born on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama, Rosa Parks was an American activist. The Civil Rights Movement had its birth on December 1, 1955, when she (an unknown seamstress) in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. Parks was arrested and fined for violating a city ordinance. Her act of defiance began a movement that ended legal segregation in the United States and made her an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere. Parks's bus incident gave rise to the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association, led by the young pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The association called for a boycott of the city-owned bus company, which lasted 381 days and brought Parks, Dr. King, and their cause to the attention of the world. A Supreme Court decision struck down the Montgomery ordinance under which Parks had been fined and outlawed racial segregation on public transportation.

DOROTHY STANG, SND | 1931-2005

Dorothy Stang decided early on that she would give her life to God as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. Her deepest desire was to serve the poor as a missionary. In 1966, she and four other sisters went to Brazil, where they worked to help poor farmers build independent futures for their families. Over the years, Sister Dorothy's ministry brought her into conflict with wealthy and powerful ranchers, loggers, and land speculators who sought to profit from deforestation and the eviction of poor workers. On February 12, 2005, less than a week after meeting with Brazil's human rights secretary to report death threats against local farmers, Sister Dorothy was approached by two hired gunman on a dirt road in a rural area in Para. As the gunmen drew near, she took her Bible from her bag and began to read the Beatitudes. The men fired six shots, killing her. Sister Dorothy is remembered as "the Angel of the Amazon."

Dorothy Stang, SND, wears a T-shirt with wording in Portuguese, which addresses the devastation of the rainforests.

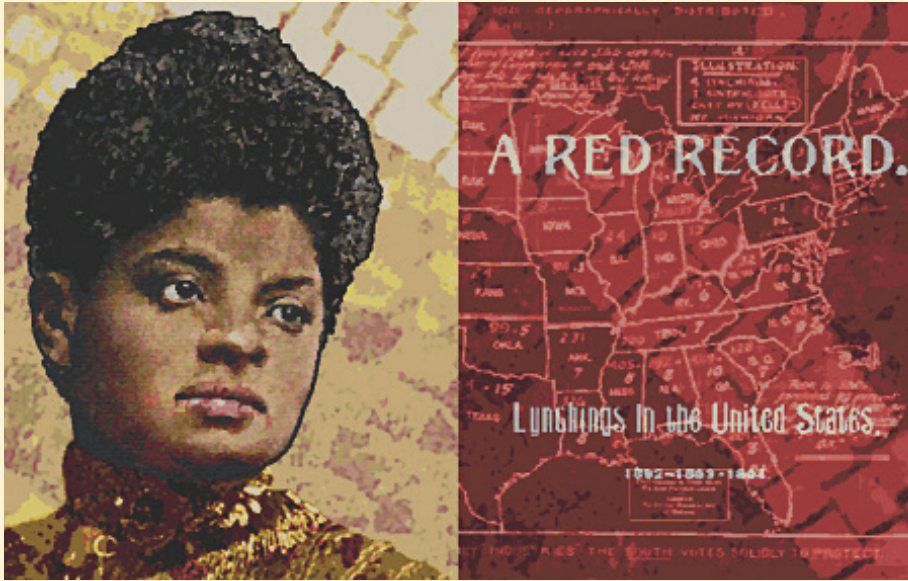




ELBA RAMOS | 1947-1989

CELINA RAMOS | 1973-1989

Elba Ramos was born in Santiago de Mariá, El Salvador. She and her husband, Obdulio, worked on coffee farms during the harvest season to support their four children. Two children died at a young age. In 1985, Elba was hired by the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas as a domestic worker. Obdulio was hired in 1989 as a watchman and gardener. Their house on the perimeter of the university grounds was near a street that had been bombed. For safety, Elba and Celina, their third child, moved into a vacant room in the Jesuits' residence. The Salvadoran elite military unit that assassinated six Jesuits on November 16, 1989, murdered mother and daughter to eliminate witnesses and to induce fear in the hearts of other innocent Salvadorans. Elba and Celina represent the thousands of victims of political violence, triggered by demands for social justice in the Americas during the 1970s through the 1990s.



Beside Ida B. Wells is the cover of her book A Red Record superimposed over a map she made illustrating lynchings in the United States.

IDA B. WELLS | 1862-1931

Ida B. Wells was a journalist who was active in early civil rights movements. Born into slavery, Wells developed a talent for writing, which she put to good use. In 1884, Wells sued a train company in Memphis, Tennessee, after being thrown out of first class, even though she had a ticket. In 1892, she published a pamphlet exposing the real story behind white mob violence and lynching. Facing death threats, Wells moved her family to Chicago, where she continued to publish articles in newspapers about lynching and the concerns of Black women and men. She was active in the women's suffrage movement and was present at the 1909 founding of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Niagara Falls. In 2020, she was awarded a Special Citation by Pulitzer Prize Board for her reporting.



MARY LOU WILLIAMS | 1910-1981

Mary Lou Williams, “the first lady of jazz,” was born in Atlanta, Georgia, the second of eleven children. A music prodigy, she began supporting her family at age six by playing the piano at parties. Over the years, Williams composed and performed with jazz greats Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, and Dizzy Gillespie. In 1954, following a period in Europe, Williams converted to Catholicism and shifted her focus to composing jazz-inspired music for Catholic liturgies. In 1962, her Mass, *Black Christ of the Andes*, dedicated to St. Martin de Porres, premiered at the Church of St. Francis Xavier. A later work, *Mary Lou’s Mass*, was performed in 1975 at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Williams also was a philanthropist. She dedicated time and money to youth choirs, opened thrift shops in Harlem, and set aside personal income to assist musicians in need. Upon her death in 1981, Williams’s funeral Mass was held at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola.

MOTHER MARY THEODORE WILLIAMS | 1868-1931

In 1887, Elizabeth Barbara Williams entered the Sisters of Saint Francis Convent in Louisiana. In 1912, the archbishop disbanded the order, which was the second oldest African American religious order in the United States. Williams briefly joined the Oblate Sisters of Providence and then left religious life. Three years later, while she was working as a domestic for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a priest asked if she would form a teaching order because the Georgia legislature had proposed a bill barring white teachers from teaching Black children. Williams formed Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. The sisters taught in Savannah until they were exiled in 1921. By 1923, the order relocated to New York City, where they ran the first Black Catholic nursery in Harlem, St. Benedict the Moor Day Nursery. In 1929, the order affiliated with the Franciscans and established the first Black Catholic primary school founded by Black sisters, St. Mary’s Primary School.





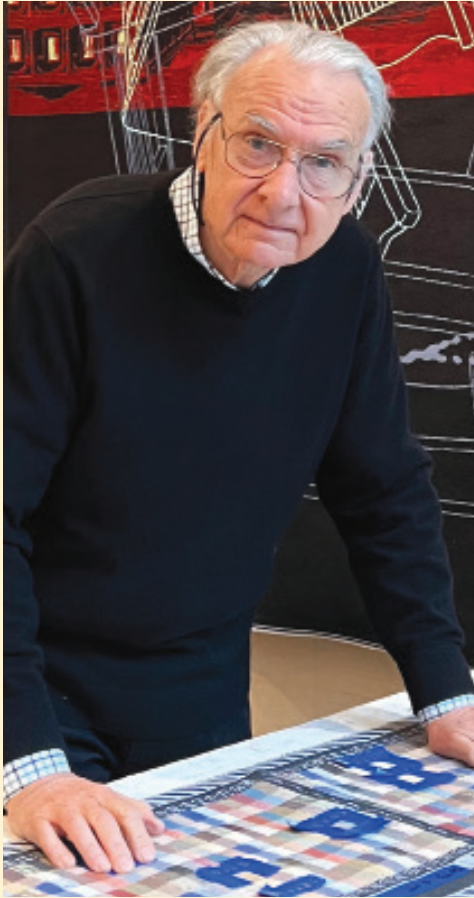
YOUNG PEOPLE

“These young people symbolize the object of the struggles of the figures portrayed around them. That is: the work to gain a better and more just life for future generations. At the same time, the context of the image makes clear that the burden to carry on these efforts now falls to these newer generations. Including nonfamous, anonymous figures among a group of the well-known make for a sense of connection. The viewer is positioned on the inside rather than being on the ‘outside looking in’ at a group of extraordinary others.”

John Nava

Artist, *Into Light and Truth: Holy People of the Americas*

The shirt design on the young woman in the central group, on the west wall, commemorates the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing victims who are seen at the lower left of the tapestry.



ABOUT THE ARTIST: JOHN NAVA

John Nava studied art at the College of Creative Studies at UC Santa Barbara and did graduate work at Villa Schifanoia Graduate School of Fine Art in Florence, Italy. His work is found in numerous private, corporate, and public collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan.

In 2003, Nava's tapestries for Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels won the National Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture Design Honor Award for Visual Art.

In 2017, *Sacred Material*, a book that covers the work done for the Los Angeles cathedral tapestry project, was published by Angel City Press.

Additional projects include large-scale murals, paintings and tapestries for Tokyo Grain Exchange in Japan, Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Ronald Tutor Campus Center at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Firestone Library at Princeton University, and School of Music at Yale University. Further large-scale tapestry cycles include projects for Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Las Vegas, and University of San Diego in California.

In 2021, five new large-scale tapestries were unveiled depicting Our Lady of the Angels for the sanctuary wall of Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

