

# PTS NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF BLACK MINISTRY—PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

W I N T E R 2 0 1 5 E D I T I O N

## A WORD FROM YOUR COORDINATOR



Scholars Deborah A. & Nate W.  
Sunday, Oct. 30, 2014  
SPLASH Immersion  
trip in New Mexico

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I pray you all had a great start to your New Year and that you are prepared for a wonderfully blessed 2015! The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program had a great 2014 and we're looking forward to even better 2015. Scholars had wonderful opportunities to be of service throughout the year, carrying on the legacy of Venerable Pierre Toussaint. Whether through your parish or school community, continue to be of service in the new year, and be on the look out for more information from us as to opportunities to be of service, to share in your faith and/or to travel to do both! We hope to have scholars attend NY Catholic Youth Day, Steubenville NYC, World Meeting of Families, SPLASH 2015, and World Youth Day in Poland!

So stay in touch and as always...WORK hard and PRAY often! - Leah

The Venerable Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund Awards Dinner was held on Thursday, September 25th at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square. This dinner is held annually to benefit the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund which supports our local



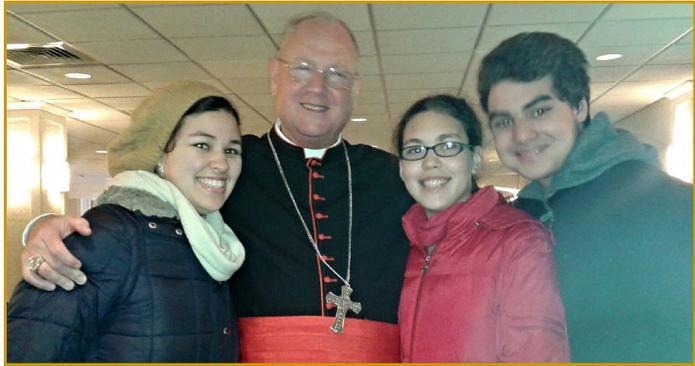
archdiocesan college student leaders and College Pierre Toussaint, a secondary school located in the rural community of Sassier, in southwest Haiti. At this year's dinner we had our recent alum, Michael H. (St. John's

University '14) serve as our student speaker, along with the parent of three of our current scholars, Mrs. Miriam Ezike. It was another successful event not only due to their participation but largely due to all of the wonderful supporters. A special thanks to all of the scholars and alumni who attended and assisted throughout the night!



THANKSTO  
ALL!!

Every time my family travels to the Dominican Republic, we make certain to visit one of the many great churches devoted to Mary. Since the big churches are far from where we live, the trip has to be planned in advance and usually requires waking up very, *very* early. I remember once, when I was 8 years old, we (my parents, siblings, grandparents, aunt, and uncle) woke up at 2 am in order to go to the Basilica of Higüey, the national shrine in the Dominican Republic dedicated to Our Lady of Altagracia. The journey was long, hot, and annoying, but also fun, informative, and spiritually uplifting.



Scholar Clarisa (left) with Cardinal Dolan, & Clarisa's sister and cousin

Such journeys only seem to exist in countries outside of the United States. Sometimes it seems that such great devotion in the Catholic Church does not exist in the U.S. – but this is not true. In fact, on Saturday, November 15, 2014, I was able to see over a hundred New Yorkers participate in an old Christian tradition: making a pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “a journey to a holy place.” Indeed, that was what happened on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. But, for many of us, the pilgrimage was much more than just a journey. For me, it was a great opportunity to experience my religion with my sister and my cousin outside of the usual Sunday Mass or daily rosary.

We woke up before 5 am in order to make it to the meeting location on time. Along with other New Yorkers, we traveled a peaceful five hours to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. There, we were given the opportunity to explore the amazing basilica, which includes two churches and about a hundred shrines. In only four hours, we were able to see how Mary and Jesus are depicted in many different countries and cultures around the world. My sister, cousin, and I were able to have lunch with Archbishop Cardinal Dolan and buy our loved ones some great keepsakes before participating in Mass. We were even able to go to the St. John Paul II Shrine, located only about 15 minutes away from the basilica. However, the most impactful part of the day occurred when we missed the last bus leaving from the shrine back to the basilica.

At 3:30 pm, my cousin's watch beeped, as it always does, and snapped us out of the trance-like state we were in, ever since entering the shrine (it really is amazing!). I suddenly remembered that the last bus going back to the basilica was going to depart at 3:15 pm. The three of us ran through the rest of the exhibit, up the two flights of steps, past the security guards...and out into the empty parking lot. We sadly looked down the driveway as two other pilgrims from Newark, who had also missed the bus, got into a taxi and left. Suddenly, chaos broke out. My younger companions blamed each other, then me, then each other again for what had happened. Things went from bad to worse when we realized that we were going to miss the rosary scheduled to happen right before mass.

We stood outside of the shrine for 10 minutes trying to decide what to do. Not knowing what else to suggest, I told them that we would walk back to the basilica. After all, wasn't walking a large part of early Christian pilgrimages? As our 15 minute walk began, the air was filled with tension. I was upset because we were not on schedule, my sister was upset because she couldn't see the end of the St. John Paul II exhibit, and my cousin was upset because we were missing the rosary. Suddenly, my sister began the Divine Mercy Chaplet and my cousin and I joined in.

I cannot explain the tranquility that washed over me as we walked through the quiet campus of Catholic University and said the prayers. What started off as a tension filled, angry walk slowly became a serene, fun walk to the basilica. We reached the entrance, hand in hand, just as we finished the chaplet and made it to the lower church just in time for Mass.

Just like other pilgrims around the world, we were able to find God's peace in our journey and put that to good use in our daily Christian living.

## BLACK & INDIAN MISSION: SPLASH 2014 by Deborah Adewale

New Mexico's logo is "The land of enchantment." New Mexico is also home to 18 of the 19 Native American pueblos in the United States. It was there that SPLASH took place for its second year. SPLASH is a short-term cultural and spiritual immersion experience of Native Americans sponsored by the Bureau of Catholic Indian Mission. Led by Father Paysse and Sr. Judy SPLASH 2 was a one of a kind opportunity.

My journey to SPLASH began with an email from Ms. Leah and it ended with me leaving with the knowledge of Native Americans and understanding my faith in a new way. I was excited to be a part of SPLASH 2 because I felt I knew so little about Native Americans. Within American society Native Americans have become an invisible race. SPLASH 2 was my opportunity to learn more. I was eager to learn from and keep my mind and heart open to the experience.

The first night in New Mexico, the SPLASH 2 group gathered and was welcomed by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Native American Ministry and archbishop. We were welcomed by some of the members of the Native American Ministry with dinner and it was my first experience learning about Native American life in the US. In preparation for our visit to Santa Ana and Jemez pueblo we all were handed guidelines for visiting a pueblo village. The guidelines outlined the 'do's and don'ts' when visiting the pueblos and reading these made me a little nervous about the upcoming visits to the pueblos. A majority of the participants in SPLASH 2 were Native American and after speaking to them, I began to understand why the rules were the way they were.

With my mind at ease, I was ready to learn. The next day we began our immersion by visiting the Pueblo Cultural Center. The cultural center explored the history of Native American's in America, especially in New Mexico. Native Americans have a history that is full of trials and small victories that are under appreciated by a majority in America. It showed a history of a people who have faced unimaginable challenges, who yet survived and try to preserve their heritage. There were many wonderful exhibits in the cultural center and all focused on the development of Native American culture through the view point of the people who were directly affected by it. One exhibit was about a period of time when Native American children were forced to go to a boarding school. The children were forced to assimilate to the American way and this left many Native American children disconnected from their roots. Some of the children were taken at such a young age that they no longer knew who their parents were. The tour helped me to understand more of why the guidelines are in place and the importance of maintaining their Native American heritage.

Later that day, we visited Santa Ana and Jemez Pueblo. We were allowed to see the church at the Santa Ana Pueblo. The church had been around for hundreds of years and the wear of the weather had degraded the adobe the church was built out of. The people in the pueblo worked hard for years to raise the money themselves to rebuild the church. With hard work and prayer, they were able to rebuild the church and restore it to its original form which has collapsed over the years. The church now stands tall and remains a staple of

Santa Ana's place of worship. After we went to the Jemez Pueblo and were invited to attend mass. After the mass celebration, Margie, one of the people who helped organize our SPLASH 2 experience talked about how the catechism has played an important role within the community. Many people in the pueblo were able to reconnect to Catholicism through a rekindling of their knowledge and faith. Margie then opened her home to all of us and we partook in an amazing family dinner. By the end of the second day of the mission all of us had become familiar with each other.

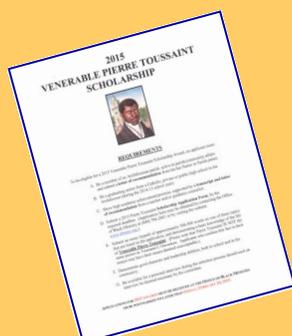
Each of the four days of SPLASH 2 ended with a reflection and prayer. The nightly reflection and pray was a time for me to remember my experience and write down the moments. Once during the experience, Sr. Judy said "Experience is not the best teacher it is prayer and reflection on those experiences [that teach us]." Through reflection, I revisited my day and explored moments of the day that was significant to me. My reflection encompassed my feelings and thoughts about my new found knowledge. Through the visit to the two churches in the pueblos, I saw how the Catholic and traditional religious practices of the pueblos entwined together to form a unique expression of faith. Seeing how important faith and heritage was to the people I encountered in New Mexico gave me a renewed sense of wanting to explore more aspects of my own faith.

SPLASH 2 was a wonderful experience and program that would not have been made possible without the organization of Fr. Paysse and the welcoming of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Native American Ministry and archbishop.

## SPECIAL MASSES CELEBRATED FOR THE PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARS



Sunday, January 4, 2015 at 10:00am ~ St. Paul the Apostle, Manhattan  
Sunday, February 1, 2015 at 9:30am ~ Blessed Sacrament, Staten Island  
Sunday, March 1, 2015 at 11:30am ~ Sts. Philip & James, Bronx  
Sunday, April 12, 2015 at 7:30am ~ Holy Family, New Rochelle  
Sunday, May 3, 2015 at 9:30am ~ Sts. Peter & Paul, Mount Vernon  
Sunday, June 7, 2015 at 8:00am ~ Immaculate Conception, Staten Island  
Sunday, July 5, 2015 at 10:00am ~ St. Joseph of the Holy Family, Manhattan  
Tuesday, August 4, 2015 at 8:30am ~ St. Augustine Our Lady of Victory, Bronx  
Sunday, August 30, 2015 at 12:15pm ~ St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus, Bronx  
Wednesday, September 2, 2015 at 12:00pm ~ St. Rita Cascia Shrine, Bronx  
Sunday, October 4, 2015 at 10:00am ~ Sts. Peter & Paul, Bronx  
Sunday, November 29, 2015 at 1:00pm ~ Holy Rosary, Bronx



**The 2015 Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Application  
is now available...the deadline is Feb. 20, 2015.  
Interested candidates may contact the office  
via phone and/or email to request an application.**

**Please encourage any well deserving  
high school senior(s) who you may know  
to apply.**

The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund (PTSF) and Program was established in 1983 and administered by the Archdiocese of New York, Office of Black Ministry. PTSF has provided scholarships to graduating high school seniors of diverse backgrounds from public, private and parochial schools throughout the Archdiocese of New York, to assist them with the educational fees and expenses associated with their college studies. Students selected into the PTSF are chosen based on their strong academic record, their active participation with their parish and school communities, and their demonstration of good character and sound leadership ability. Scholarship awards are renewable for up to 3 consecutive years, based upon their meeting certain academic and service requirements. PTSF also provides the scholars with ongoing mentorship and advisement: spiritually, professionally and personally.

For the **2014-15 academic school year**,  
we have **30 scholars**, in **24 universities / colleges**, from **21 high schools** and **20 parishes**.

To obtain more information regarding and /or to support the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund  
contact the office at 646-794-2681 or via email at [obm@archny.org](mailto:obm@archny.org).