

In Celebration of

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Throughout the month of February, Noble's Diversity & Inclusion Council will share some of the great achievements of Black Americans to our country and our world. To learn more about this initiative or to nominate a person for recognition, please contact co-chairs Kelvin Solares and Molly Lang.



St. Josephine Bakhita

“I am definitively loved and whatever happens to me, I am awaited by this love. And so, my life is good.”

Information gathered from <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/st-anthony-messenger/february-2018/st-josephine-bakhita-a-model-of-faith> and <https://www.nd.edu/>

Born in 1869 in western Sudan, **St. Josephine Bakhita** was surrounded by a loving family of three brothers and three sisters. Her world took a horrific turn when she was kidnapped by slave traders at just 7 years old. Over the next 11 years, she endured unspeakable trauma as she was bought and sold many times. Under one master, she endured the very painful process of scarification by salt being poured into hundreds of razor cuts to ensure permanent scarring.

Due to the trauma of being captured, sold, and brutally beaten as a slave, St. Josephine Bakhita had no memory of her real name. “Bakhita” was the name given to her by her captors, meaning “fortunate one,” and Josephine was a name she chose for herself.

At age 19, she was taken to Italy, where she served as a nanny to a young girl. When the family left town on business, she and the child were placed in the care of the Canossian Sisters in Venice. With their help, she obtained her freedom and entered the convent. The rest of her life was marked by service to others, but this time, it was of her own choosing. Although she was a slave for many years, her spirit was always free and eventually that spirit prevailed.

She died in 1947, and was canonized as a saint 53 years later. While Josephine endured unimaginable physical and psychological torture, she showed everyone mercy and forgiveness.

Today, Josephine Bakhita is venerated as a modern African saint and a powerful statement against the brutal history of slavery around the world. She is the patron saint of Sudan and of human trafficking survivors everywhere.