

D.C.'s Mother Church of Black Catholics Unveils "St. Augustine School Way" in Historic Ceremony

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, January 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Saint Augustine Catholic Church is set to host an unveiling ceremony on Friday, January 26, 2024, designating the 1400 block of V Street, N.W., as "St. Augustine School Way." The ceremony, scheduled to commence at noon at St. Augustine School (1421 V St NW, Washington, DC 20009), will include Ward 1 Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, who, at the School's request, agreed to sponsor the bill approving this symbolic designation.



St. Augustine Catholic School is the first Catholic school dedicated to educating African American children.

[St. Augustine Catholic School](#) is the second oldest Roman Catholic Parochial School in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., and the first Catholic school dedicated to educating African American children. In 1858, a group of African-American Catholics established St. Augustine Catholic School before building [St. Augustine Catholic Church](#). Celebrating its 165th anniversary, St. Augustine Catholic Church is recognized as the "Mother Church of Black Catholics" in Washington, D.C. The church served as a beacon to the formerly enslaved population even before the Civil War. It is not only the first Black Catholic church in the District but also the oldest Black Catholic parochial school.

"The unveiling of St. Augustine School Way pays tribute to the rich history and spiritual legacy of St. Augustine Catholic Church and School. Founded five years before the Emancipation Proclamation, the Black Catholic community, while not yet having a church of their own to worship (the community worshipped in the basement of St. Matthew's Church - later Cathedral), nonetheless opened the first Catholic school for Black children in the District, making it clear that the education of their children was their highest priority," stated Father Patrick Smith, the current Pastor of the parish.

Today, St. Augustine Catholic School educates children from ages three and four in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The school is committed to laying a threefold foundation of academic excellence, spiritual growth, and moral virtue in all students who enroll, resulting in holistic character development.

The church's involvement, past and present, in affordable housing, including senior housing and advocacy for the poor and the homeless, highlights its dedication to community development. As steadfast community partners, St Augustine Parish, which encompasses both the church and the school, has consistently provided office and meeting spaces for non-profit organizations working with vulnerable residents in our city.

Deeply committed to community outreach and engagement, St. Augustine Catholic Church and School actively strives to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need in our neighborhood and beyond.

The unveiling ceremony is a culmination of the introduction of Bill 25-70, the "St. Augustine School Way Designation Act of 2023," on January 25, 2023, by Councilmember Nadeau. This approved bill points the way to a legacy not only worth celebrating but, most importantly, worth continuing in the community today.

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