

**Info Alert 213**

**February 13, 2024**

*"History has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own." Michelle Obama*

**Black History**

February has been designated National Black History Month. One challenge of this month is to learn about the lives of African Americans whose courage, self-sacrifice, and contributions are woven into the fabric of our nation's history. Do you recognize the name Anna Murray? She was an abolitionist who helped a man named Frederick Bailey escape slavery in Maryland. You can read about them and learn about the contributions of more African Americans to our culture and history by following this link.

<https://americansall.org/nonprofit-legacy-partner/african-americans-contributions-our-nation>

I was surprised and amazed to learn about the origins of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, the man who left the first footprint on the North Pole, and the teacher from Baltimore who is responsible for Autism Awareness Month.

**Walking with Moms in Need**

Walking with Moms in Need is a nationwide, parish-based initiative that offers support to pregnant and parenting mothers in need. Through this ministry, the Catholic Church connects with women who may be experiencing difficulty during pregnancy and early parenting years. Parish volunteers accompany these mothers, offering them the gift of friendship, connecting them with resources, and providing support from their parish community. You can learn more about this accompaniment opportunity at: <https://www.usccb.org/respectlife> under the heading SERVE. This short video shares further information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FZ5W0ncpBo&t=18s>

**Haiti: Six Sisters Kidnapped**

Six Sisters of the Sainte-Anne congregation together with an unknown number of laypeople and their driver were kidnapped on January 19, 2024, by armed men in Haiti. The kidnapping took place in broad daylight in the center of the capital Port-au-Prince. Haiti, the poorest country on the American continent, has been in a profound political crisis for years. Gang violence and political instability have led to many demonstrations on the streets of the capital. Demonstrators are calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who has been in power since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. After the Angelus on Sunday, Pope Francis appealed for the release of the sisters and peace in Haiti. He said: "I have learned with sorrow of the kidnapping, in Haiti, of a group of people, including six religious sisters: in my heartfelt plea for their release, I pray for social concord in the country, and I invite everyone to bring an end to the violence, which is causing a great deal of suffering to that dear population."

The Sisters were released unharmed on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for the people in Haiti. Source: Vatican News, HCR <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48961>

**CRS**

Spend Lent this year with Catholic Relief Services and Operation Rice Bowl. Download your own Lenten calendar here: [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)

**Prayer for Lent** ( excerpt adapted from I Must Refrain – CRS)

Lord, help me look beyond the comforts of my table, my society, and my possessions. For without your grace and mercy, I indeed have nothing and everything is little more than dust. I thank you, Lord, for as far as I wander, here in the wilderness, a path home revealed to me in the faces of the least of your people. Amen

<https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/usops-resources/if-i-must-refrain-3.pdf>

**Action**

1. Support Haiti Awareness Week February 18-25, 2024
2. Support Operation Rice Bowl/ Download the CRS Lenten Calendar