



**Episcopal Vicar for the Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion,
Archdiocese of Southwark**

Month of October – Black History Month

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

October is a month when we, as a country, celebrate Black History Month. As many of us know, Black History Month began over a hundred years ago in the United States. In the United Kingdom, it was first recognised and celebrated in 1987 to acknowledge and honour over 150 years of Caribbean emancipation from slavery and the 25th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity. We owe thanks to Ghanaian analyst and activist Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, who organised the first Black History Month celebration, giving us this important opportunity to promote and celebrate Black contributions to British society.

Black History Month has taken various forms, and societies and communities will celebrate it with different emphases, motivations, and aspirations. For us as Catholics, it is a month of great joy and thanksgiving to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon Black people. It serves to recognise the hardships and sadness that Black individuals have endured through slavery, systemic racism, prejudice, and stereotypes throughout history and into the present day. Ultimately, it is a time of reflection, fostering inclusion and integration in the spirit of oneness in Christ, where all are welcomed, and acknowledging that there is always space for one more.

I am immensely proud of the diversity within our Archdiocese, which underscores our respect for differences. To be different is to be considered beautiful. St. Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:26-28 that we are all sons and daughters of God through faith. There is no Jew or Greek, no slave or free, no male or female, for we are all one in Christ.

Canon Victor Darlington
Episcopal Vicar for the Southeast Area,
Commissions for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion,
Education and Director of Caritas, Archdiocese of Southwark

Suggested Bidding Prayer for Black History Month:

Loving God,

You have called us together from different backgrounds, languages, and cultures to work as brothers and sisters in our Archdiocese. As we celebrate Black History Month, help us to continue to grow in love for one another.

Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer.