

Venerable Pierre Toussaint



Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

Prayer for intercession and canonization of Ven. Pierre Toussaint

Lord God, source of love and compassion, we praise and honor You for the virtuous and charitable life of our brother in Christ, Ven. Pierre Toussaint.

Inspired by the example of our Lord Jesus, Pierre worshipped You with love and served your people with generosity. He attended Mass daily and responded to the practical and spiritual needs of friends and strangers, or the rich and the poor, the sick and the homeless of 19th century New York.

If it is Your will, let the name of Ven. Pierre Toussaint be officially raised to the rank of Saint, so that the world may know this Haitian New Yorker who refused to hate or be selfish, but instead lived to the full commandments of heaven and the divine law of love – love for God and for neighbor. By following his example and asking for his prayers, may we, too, be counted among the blessed in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ven. Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853) was a slave whose owners moved to New York. He was educated and made his own money as a hairdresser, even caring for his owners when they could not care for themselves. His owner freed him after she died in 1807.

Pierre attended Mass daily and was devoted to the Rosary. He and his wife, (whom he freed with his own money) cared for orphaned and needy children. They also adopted a daughter who died at age 14. Pierre died in 1853. St. Patrick's Cathedral holds his remains in a crypt, where only archbishops and cardinals are buried. St. John Paul II declared him venerable in 1996. The church celebrates his feast date on June 30.