So happy to return to our in-person, weekend long retreat program this summer and it was beyond GREAT! We had over 70 scholars in attendance on the beautiful grounds of the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, Long Island where scholars participated in daily Mass, Rosary walks, service projects, mental health workshops and fun, inspiring interactive presentations thanks to our awesome retreat leader, Ela Milewska. Our weekend long retreats together have always been a good way for our scholars to refresh their spirits and grow closer to God, as we pray and play together!

I’m excited to share that we’ve had a great year of programs and service projects, with a lot more ahead. We had 6 scholars participate in the Ignatian Family Teach-in for Justice in Washington D.C., thanks to the work of our new Social Justice Coordinator! And our programming continues as we have two virtual workshops this fall assisting our scholars in creating resumes & cover letters, and preparing for summer internships.

We also are preparing for our Thanksgiving Day Service project, our Giving Tuesday campaign, and our annual Winter Workshop...not to mention our upcoming alumni networking event in December, that’s being hosted and coordinated by our alumni! In addition, we are happy to have 6 scholar delegates who will be traveling to Portugal next summer for World Youth Day with Bishop Espaillat and the Archdiocesan delegation! Therefore, scholars, be on the look out for more ways to be involved and engaged. Until next time, as always...work hard & pray often!  

- Leah
WELCOME OUR NEW CLASS OF SCHOLARS

NAANA A. - UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
Arlington High School;
St. Luke’s Church, Bronx

GORDON PHILIP B. - NORTHWESTERN UNIV.
Fordham Preparatory School;
Holy Name Church, New Rochelle

ROBERT C. - PACE UNIVERSITY
Msgr. Farrell High School;
Holy Child Church, Staten Island

NAIA C. - VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
Hunter College High School;
St. Charles Borromeo, All Saints, Resurrection Church, NYC

SOFIA PILAR C.S. - BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
Notre Dame School of Manhattan;
Church of the Ascension, NYC

DILON C. - STEVENS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Xaverian High School;
Blessed Sacrament Church, Staten Island

JULIANA D. - PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
St. Vincent Ferrer High School;
Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, NYC

SAMANTHA H. - DUKE UNIVERSITY
IN-Tech Academy;
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Bronx

DENZEL H. - MANHATTAN COLLEGE
Fordham Preparatory School;
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Bronx

SEBASTIAN H. - NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
Regis High School;
Church of the Ascension, NYC

MICHAEL L. - SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
Msgr. Farrell High School;
St. Charles Church, Staten Island

ALLISON L. - LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND
Dominican Academy;
Annunciation - Our Lady of Fatima Church, Crestwood

DAYANA L. - BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
Sacred Heart High School;
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Elmsford

ANGEL M. - FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
Cardinal Hayes High School;
St. John Chrysostom Church, Bronx

ADRIANNA S. - BARNARD COLLEGE
Peekskill High School;
Church of the Assumption, Peekskill
June 30th marks the memorial of Pierre Toussaint’s death, and is our program’s official “Day of Service.” This year we were invited to assist at The Dwelling Place, a Catholic Charities agency, where scholars were asked to create a garden space for the residents of this women’s shelter. Scholars planted flowers, potted plants, de-weeded shrubs, added new soil and deeply watered roots…and were happy to do so! They worked tirelessly with love!

Earlier this year we received a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, which will greatly benefit our scholars majoring in the sciences / health professions. These select scholars (now referred to as 'PT-MC Scholars') will receive added support services and opportunities. Thus, an orientation was held to help prepare them for the new initiative.
Scholars and Alumni were happy to assist our Program Chaplain, Fr. Kareem Smith, at his parish’s Feast Day Celebration in Co-op City. Scholars helped to set up, clean up, served food and organized games for the young parishioners!

As we prepared for this year’s Awards Dinner video, scholars and alumni, alike managed to make time for snacks and jokes during the filming. Abundant thanks to Cardinal Dolan for allowing us to use his studio...Tyler enjoyed the Cardinal’s favorite snacks, as well!
As a Pierre Toussaint Scholar and seminarian studying for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of New York, I would like to share my experience last summer while on retreat and studies in Omaha, Nebraska. My classmates and I were among 125 seminarians praying on retreat and studying at the Institute of Priestly Formation (IPF) at Creighton University. One grace I received during the retreat was having recognized my abiding friendship with Christ. This past summer has given me a greater desire to follow Christ through my vocation to the diocesan priesthood.

My summer began with an eight-day silent retreat consisting of daily Mass, individual spiritual direction, and four daily holy hours. During retreat we prayed with scripture passages and adored Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Then we would discuss our prayer with our spiritual director. During this time of silence and prayer, I recognized that I have always had a deep friendship with Jesus. While I prayed my Holy Hour, I felt how Christ sees me with great delight and an abiding friendship.

Holy Communion at daily Mass became a powerful moment for me during the retreat. It was a great blessing to be among many seminarians lined up to receive Our Lord. During communion, I would think forward about our respective ordinations, for just as Christ offers His life for us on the Cross and offers His very self in the Eucharist, so seminarians are on that journey to imitate Christ and offer ourselves through the priesthood.

My brothers' incredible strive for holiness, perseverance, and devotion inspired me to enter into greater prayer and friendship with Christ. These months of retreat brought significant growth in our spiritual lives and deep brotherhood through our fraternity. While in Omaha, we explored different sites such as the Holy Family Shrine, learned about Boys Town, which was once a former boarding home for boys in need and has since become a child care agency, and some of us even attended the College World Series. We also enjoyed praying with and meeting the faithful of Omaha in their different parishes and sharing about the faith life in our hometowns. These months of retreat and formation have invigorated my discernment for the priesthood.

I ask my fellow scholars and friends of the Pierre Toussaint Program to pray for an increase in vocations, for my brother seminarians, and me as we continue this journey to the diocesan priesthood.
Annual Summer Retreat
The annual summer retreat was held at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, Long Island from Friday, June 24-Sunday, the 26th. This year’s theme “Fan the Flame” was taken from 2 Timothy, and brought to life by our great Retreat Leader, Ela Milewska, the Executive Director of the Department of Youth Faith Formation for the Archdiocese. The weekend affords the scholars an opportunity to come together to reflect, pray, and refresh! Our Musical Director - Jeremy Laguerre led our Praise & Worship Team, Fr. Wesbee Victor, a PTS alum & Assoc. Chaplain celebrated our closing Mass, with our Program Chaplain - Fr. Kareem Smith as the Homilist.
This summer I had the incredible opportunity to intern at Deloitte. For eight weeks I worked as a part of Deloitte’s Summer Scholar Program. I was also fortunate enough to have the chance to live in Atlanta, Georgia for the duration of the internship. I am forever grateful for all the friends and mentors I met along the way. This experience really helped me to grow and develop professionally and has been an invaluable resource in helping me prepare for life post-graduation.

Currently I am a rising senior and a computer engineering major at UMass Amherst. My coursework centers around various computer technologies involving both hardware and software; I have written code in python, C, arm assembly, etc. and I have worked with different kinds of integrated circuits and microcontrollers. My schoolwork was always so straight forward and technical, I assumed my career plan would be the same. My plan was to intern at a big technology or defense firm that my school always promotes and that would eventually transition into a full-time role. I learned early on in my internship that things do not always go as planned.

When I first applied for the internship position at Deloitte, the role was advertised as “Solutions Engineering Summer Scholar”. I was told that interns in this program would all be engineering students and that we would be working with all different kinds of technology. This sounded like the perfect opportunity to expand on all technical skills I learned during my time at UMass. That is why I was shocked to learn during orientation that the team I had been placed on worked within the Customer and Marketing division. From that moment I knew this internship was not going to be anything like I expected and that I was going to have to adapt very quickly to succeed.

The team I was placed on works with government funded organizations in Kentucky to help people learn about and enroll in various state-run programs which included healthcare, food assistance, child support, etc. We did this through the creation and deployment of email/SMS awareness campaigns that informed the Kentucky residents about these various programs and provided detailed instructions about the enrollment process. The work I did while on this project was completely different than what I expected. The most important task I was given was creating the email templates for multiple campaigns that were to be deployed later this year. Essentially, I was creating the emails that would
be sent to hundreds of thousands of Kentucky residents later this year. This work helped me work on my precision and attention to detail as well as collaborating with others; each email had to be checked and go through various rounds of approval by upper management before they were approved to be released. Much of my other work also helped to develop similar skills. Some of my lesser responsibilities included: scheduling client meetings and taking notes, attending and assisting content creation meetings, compiling campaign statistics to use during presentations, and creating templates that were used to translate email content into other languages.

Even though this was not the work environment that I expected, I appreciate the lessons and skills I learned during my time with Deloitte. I firmly believe that working outside of my comfort zone helped to broaden my perspective and really gave me a feel for the different career paths available. I also want to leave everyone with one piece of advice that I found extremely useful during my internship: make connections! The connections you make during a summer internship are invaluable. Networking and interacting with your coworkers is extremely important, the people you meet can become your best friends or your most valuable resource. They can be there to lend a hand or to open doors you never even imagined. I think my biggest regret from my time at Deloitte is not making enough connections and that would be the only thing I would change if I had the chance to do it all over again.

I would like to thank the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund, especially Leah, Father Kareem, and Brother Tyrone for helping me throughout my academic career. I am also extremely grateful to them for allowing me the chance to write in this newsletter and share my experience with my fellow Pierre Toussaint Scholars.

Here is a picture of my team & I when we gathered in-person in Kentucky.

(Thomas in center in blue shirt)
NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR by Colin Bereth, Esq.

With exuberant ardor, she took her 1-page typed-paper of prepared remarks and returned it to its binder bearing the Seal of the United States. That typed page, unlike when the staffer first removed it, now contains notes in the margins - notes she took as this 45-minute constituent meeting on immigration policy comes to a close. Still smiling from the excitement of the conversation, she receives and attaches to that same one-page paper a handful of business cards etched with the insignia of the Office of Black Ministry, Archdiocese of New York.

The staffer is the Legislative Director of Policy for a U.S. Representative in the Washington D.C. office. Sitting in a large brown chair just in front of her boss’s rustic desk, she listened intently as Pierre Toussaint Scholars demonstrated their faith in action, zealously advocating for the injection of humanity in our immigration and climate change policies. From the much smaller brown chair to the side, my gaze tracked back and forth between scholars as they each presented the talking points they’d formed and transformed in the days and hours prior.

That day, October 24, 2022, was the first time the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program sponsored an out-of-state trip since before the pandemic’s peak. It was the first time the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program sent scholars to Capitol Hill to meet and speak with their U.S. Senators and Representatives. It was the first time the program partnered with the Ignatian Solidarity Network’s Teach-In; a conference of religious institutions and university students from across the country convening to examine the role of Faith in Social Justice Action. And, it was the first time the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program attended any event with a newly appointed Social Justice Coordinator (for the PTS & PT-MC Programs).
My name is Colin Bereth and I am, officially, Coordinator of Social Justice Programming and Activities for the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program. My role is to help establish the continued awareness of our Catholic Moral and Social Responsibility within the program through various opportunities and collaborations. Simply put, my job is to find where the passions of our scholars, where service, and where Catholic values are junctured, and then maintain a program that can faithfully support and serve the scholars in that endeavor.

In my own experiences as a life-long Catholic student and parishioner, the connection between the Catholic faith and social justice action was, at best, muddled. But a deeper understanding of the history and teachings of this faith recognized the strong relations between faith and the social needs of the time. As PTSP/MC service initiatives develop, my hope is not only to bring clarity to that long-standing connection, but to also make an argument for the overwhelming value of realizing such a connection. I bring to this role my experiences as a former secondary school educator, a former criminal Public Defender, my passions for justice, my faith, my music, my Haitian-American upbringing, and all of the intersections of identity that envelop me. And I am excited to do so serving as the Social Justice Coordinator.

Stop me if you see me - I look forward to learning more about you as well! Blessings & Thank you.
Support the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program this Giving Tuesday, November 29th!

Alumni are asked to give their college graduation year, and Scholars are asked to give their anticipated college graduation year, in any denomination. Family, friends and supporters of the program can give the grad year of a scholar they know or donate any amount, as all contributions are greatly appreciated & accepted!

The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund (PTSF) and Program were established in 1983 and are administered by the Archdiocese of New York, Office of Black Ministry. PTSF provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors of diverse backgrounds from public, private and parochial schools throughout the Archdiocese of New York, to assist them with the educational fees and expenses associated with their college studies. Students are selected into the PTSF based on their strong academic record, their active participation with their parish and school communities, and their demonstration of good character and sound leadership ability. Scholarship awards are renewable for subsequent, consecutive years of undergraduate and graduate studies, based upon their meeting certain academic and service requirements. PTSF also provides the scholars with ongoing mentorship and advisement: spiritual, educational, professional/career, and personal.

To obtain more information regarding the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund and to support PTSF, contact the office at 646-794-2681 or via email at obm@archny.org.