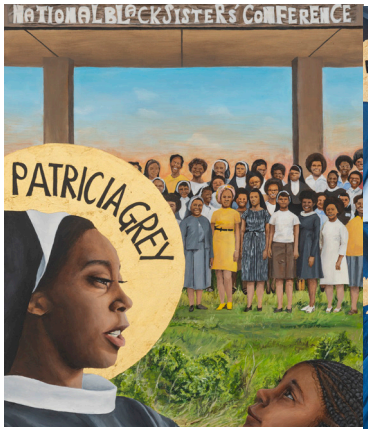
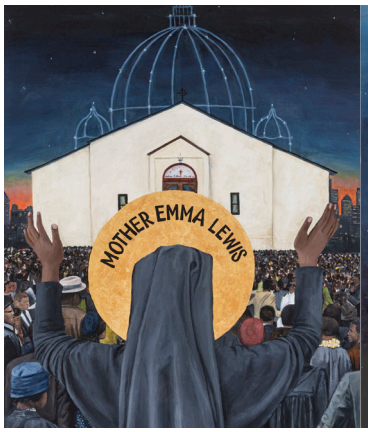
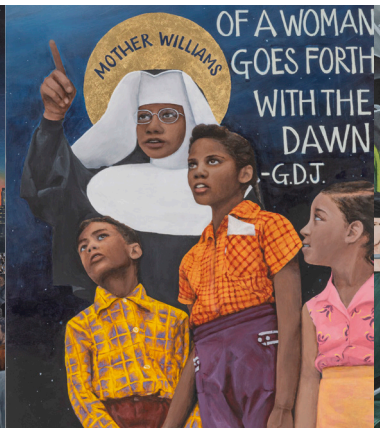
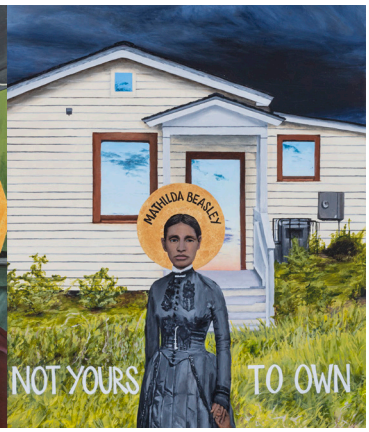








FUTURECHURCH

Women Witnesses for Racial Justice

THE ARTIST'S VISION

Chloe Becker's Art and Words

Sr. Antona Ebo

This portrait represents the active and public contributions that Sr. Antona Ebo made to racial justice movements throughout history. I painted from her iconic picture of speaking to the press at the march from Selma, as that was a monumental moment for her beginnings in publicly acting against racism and for nationwide representation for Black nuns. The background shows the march in the front (you might be able to spot Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), and transitions to depict the protests in Ferguson for the police officer's murder of Michael Brown, which Sr. Antona Ebo also spoke at, decades later. I wanted the crowd to convey that the racism of the Civil Rights Era is the same racism that America has now---it is the same evil, just in slightly different form. Lastly, the dove in the sky is a reference to Sr. Antona Ebo's public love of the Holy Spirit, and how reliant we are on the Spirit in our work for justice.

Mother Mary Lange

Mother Mary Lange is sitting with a young student from St. Frances Academy, the school she started for Black girls. The positioning and colors of the two reference the iconic Black Madonna of Czestochowa as a means to emphasize Mother Lange as a powerful mother figure in the Church and her community. I wanted to center Mother Lange's portrait around her focus on women in her racial justice work (as her school was initially created only for girls, and also formed the Oblate Sisters of Providence). So, I connected the Say Her Name campaign of today with what I believe would've been the Say Her Name campaign of the early nineteenth century---the countless Black women who were lynched and/or raped by white Americans during this time period. The names near the bottom of the painting are of those from the 1800s, and transition halfway to names of Black women who were killed by police in the twenty first century. Finally, the hands held at the top of the painting are layered with meaning. They represent the unity and support that Mother Lange provided for her Black community still dealing with the aftermath and continual existence of slavery after the Civil War. They represent the women of the names on the painting holding hands together in God's Kingdom. They can even represent people holding hands while praying. All interpretations apply.

Dr. Sr. Thea Bowman

First and foremost, it was important for me to feel Sr. Thea's energy through this portrait. I wanted to show her as she spent most of her time on earth: lively, joyful, singing, teaching, and preaching her truth as a Black Catholic woman. She is lighting up the cool night sky with her warmth, and preaching to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as she did famously in 1989. I chose to add in a crowd larger than just the bishops to convey how Sr. Thea taught the larger white Catholic community about the beauty and legitimacy of Black Catholic religious expression, and even more so, the urgent need to dismantle racism in the Catholic Church and United States. The constellation and moon display in a divine way what she is preaching: "I bring myself, my Black self, as a gift to the Church." -Sr. Thea Bowman.

Mother Anna Bates

Mother Anna's portrait is centered on her grass-roots work to form a Black Catholic church in Detroit, Our Lady of Victory, amidst resistance and racism from the Church. The positioning of Mother Anna and her parishioners emulates the architecture of Our Lady of Victory, as after Catholic authority refused to grant her request for a church, Mother Anna created a "church" with the people in her popular summer programs. The stained glass behind Mother Anna further emulates the church's architecture, and displays in the three panels the ways in which women like Mother Anna are excluded from the Church. The left panel shows discrimination and lack of representation of Black women with natural hairstyles; the middle displays a Black Madonna (for the white-washing of Mary and Catholic motherhood, and the Church's ignorance of the racism-caused high rates of infant mortality for Black mothers as a life issue); the right panel conveys the exclusion of Black song and spirituals from "typical/traditional" Masses or prayer services. The stained glass---chosen for its unbelievable lack of representation of Black figures---conveys a future Church where all Black women are centered and valued.

Venerable Henriette DeLille

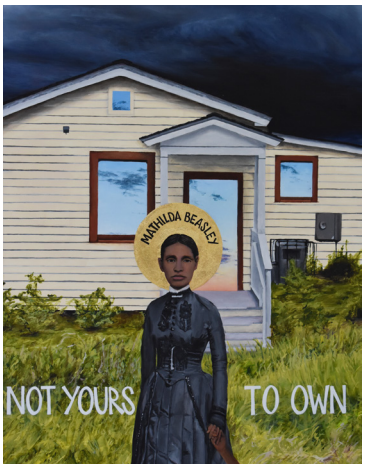
Henriette DeLille's portrait is centered on her biracial identity. Although she could've passed as white, she chose to claim her Black identity by working at a Black school and refusing to register as white with her family; the contrasting white and Black hands in the portrait illustrate this duality. DeLille's biracial identity allowed her to seek connections within the Black and white communities in New Orleans (where the painting's background is set). The white hand and Black hand reaching for each other represent her efforts for multiracial community through her attempt at an interracial sisterhood (that was ended by 1830 law that defined interracial groups as illegal) and in her work with all those in poverty, the elderly, the orphaned, and people who were enslaved. True interracial community requires more than just shared spaces though, but solidarity. The hands in the "hands up, don't shoot" positioning (widely known after the shooting of Michael Brown, and used as a chant in Black Lives Matter protests) shows this; It emphasizes that solidarity requires white people to stand with the Black community not only when it is comfortable or popular, but especially when it is challenging. Using this modern phrase in DeLille's context reinforces that white people today are called to the same solidarity that her white colleagues practiced when joining their Black sisters in an illegal interracial sisterhood. Finally, the hands from the sky, opened towards the sacred heart, portray the Holy Family. This is in reference to the Sisters of the Holy Family (the Black Catholic sisterhood that she eventually formed), while also uplifts Blackness as divine, something Black sisterhoods proclaimed with their existence and vibrant spirituality.

Dr. Patricia Grey (Sr. Martin de Porres Grey)

Dr. Patricia Grey is displayed at the first National Black Sisters' Conference---a meeting she organized and led specifically for Black women religious after being the only woman in attendance at the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus in 1968. The piece examines the free and bountiful space she and the Black sisters created by celebrating their Black, female, and Catholic identities, without the suffocation of racism or patriarchy. The women are surrounded by the transcendent, fruitful landscape of the Sahel in its rain season. The Sahel (primarily in the region of West Africa) symbolically and emotionally represents the sanctuary that the National Black

created by celebrating their Black, female, and Catholic identities, without the suffocation of racism or patriarchy. The women are surrounded by the transcendent, fruitful landscape of the Sahel in its rain season. The Sahel (primarily in the region of West Africa) symbolically and emotionally represents the sanctuary that the National Black Sisters' Conference was from racism and sexism that were forced upon Black people through colonialism and slave trade. Black women in the U.S. have yet to experience the same freedom that women in Africa had before white people---specifically white men---colonized, kidnapped, sold, and enslaved Africans. The life-filled landscape calls to an almost-utopia where Black women are valued, centered, and free as history indicates was the reality of most communities in pre-colonial Africa. The young girl looking up at her is symbolic of Black children, at the time and for generations to come, who were and are able to be invigorated by seeing a Black woman in a public position of leadership at a time when that was a rarity.

Mother Mathilda Beasley



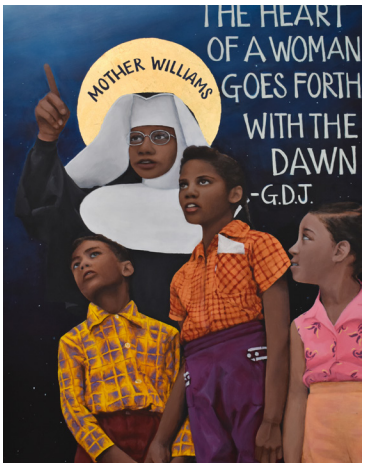
Mother Mathilda is standing in front of her home in Georgia where she educated free and enslaved Black children, which was markedly illegal to do at the time. She is holding a child's hand to represent her commitment to those children in Georgia, and further, to all of the children in which she later devoted her life's work. The sky within the home's door and windows symbolizes the hope she forged for her students as they lived under the suffocating storm of slavery and a deeply racist society represented by the contrasting threatening sky above the house. Finally, the phrase, "Not yours to own," has a dual meaning: that Black people are not anyone's to own through enslavement or the less literal "owning" of Black people through racism's dehumanization throughout history and in the present day; that Indigenous land as Mathilda Beasely's father was Indigenous (his Tribe is unknown is not to be owned, especially not by the white colonizers who stole the land to be "their America" through forced removal and the genocide of what is widely estimated to have been 20 million Indigenous people across the Americas. The phrase applies then as it does today, as Black and Indigenous communities in the U.S. continue to resist white supremacy's inherent "owning" of their identity, power, and land.

Sr. Anne Marie Becraft

Sr. Becraft is standing in front of two schools: the one on the left she founded in Washington D.C. when she was fifteen years old for Black children who could no longer attend schools with white teachers; the one on the right is where she continued to teach after she joined the Oblate Sisters of Providence, furthering her commitment to education. The phrase in the sky pays homage to Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise" and directly names how white society disenfranchised Anne Marie Becraft, and further, all Black women. White society has degraded her mind by limiting access to education (like the D.C. policy that hindered many Black students), and also through propaganda insinuating that Black women are incapable of being smart a lie present in many aspects of America. Society has degraded Black women's souls, as when Becraft was alive, a significant amount of white people believed that Black people did not have souls; remnants of

that belief exist today in the lack of "mainstream" religious art that depicts Black people and the (subconscious and overt) suspiciousness of Black Americans' goodness. Society has degraded Black youth through systems that stunt their futures (like the school to prison pipeline) and by perpetuating the lie that their power is foolish and incapable of impacting society. This is the same lie that Anne Marie likely faced as she fearlessly harnessed her power at fifteen, yet still she rose and rose and rose.

Mother Mary Theordore Williams

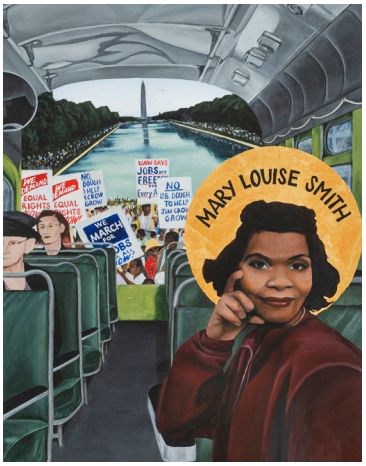


Mother Williams is shown with three children to reference her youth-centered work in her co-founded religious order, ultimately known as the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. They established schools, (some of the first ever) pre-schools, and orphanages for Black children in Georgia and New York City. She is pointing towards the rising sun; reinforced by the painted quote, "The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn," which is the first line from the poem "The Heart of a Woman" by Georgia Douglas. Johnson, a Black poet from the Harlem Renaissance (Mother Williams moved the order to Harlem in 1923, during the heart of the Renaissance). The dawn is an allegory for so much of Mother William's life always finding possibility and chasing it with conviction: she formed her own order of Black nuns, moved that order to New York City, established schools and nurseries, formed religious education programs for parishes, started a soup kitchen in Harlem during the Great Depression, a food pantry for Staten Island, and countless other initiatives. Yet the dawn is also a much greater symbol for the hope needed to commit to the difficult work of dismantling racism. The complete eradication of racism in all forms may be far away, but we can learn from Mother Williams: not allow our despair to stop us from continually pursuing the next visible possibility for a more just world, in hopes that one day, the sun of a united, all-inclusive world will rise.

Dr. Lena Edwards

Dr. Edwards is portrayed with a blue cloak with twelve stars on it, as a reference to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and other Marian depictions; this maternal reference stands for her work as an obstetrician-gynecologist. The two arms with the stigmata and red cross in her cloak are a reference to the Franscican coat of arms, as Dr. Edwards was born on St. Francis's birthday, and took vows in the order in 1940. I chose for the Tau symbol to be red and look more like a cross to resemble the red cross medical symbol, further depicting Dr. Edward's medical impact. The two hands in the coat of arms are also symbolic of the communities that Dr. Edwards most especially advocated for. She was known for working to increase healthcare access for people in poverty; she especially focused on underfunded Black communities who had minimal access, and for migrants, as she worked with a Latinx migrant community in Texas in her later years, establishing a hospital and drastically reducing their infant mortality. I want to stress that there is a wide variation of skin tones within the Black community as well as within the Latinx community; thus, either hand is meant to represent the Black and Latinx communities that Dr. Edwards centered her work in, showing two possible variations of those skin tones. The background above her is a quilt; I was inspired by Faith Ringgold's quilting as a way to show Dr. Edward's Black pride, as quilts were vital in passing on African ancestry for enslaved people, and have continued to be an important art form for honoring African American ancestry and culture.

Mary Louise Smith

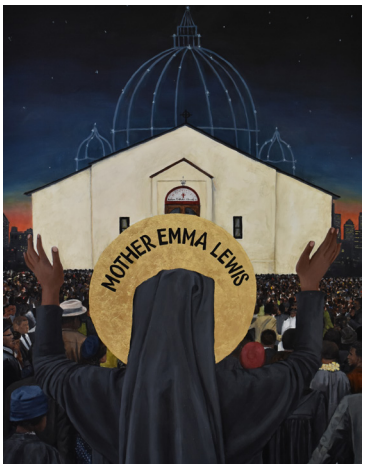


Ms. Smith is sitting at the front of a bus as a tribute to her being one of the first revolutionary contributors to the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, refusing to give up her seat to a white person. The back of the bus is left open to display the March on Washington, which Ms. Smith would participate in almost a decade later. This conveys how Ms. Smith's life-long activism began with the bus boycotts as a teenager, and continued and grew in her adulthood. Therefore, in the painting the bus is literally leading the way for the March on Washington to follow after it. Her personal progression mirrors the movement in the nation at large: the bus boycotts were revolutionary in sparking momentum for the fight against Jim Crow, and distinctly led the way for future protests like the March on Washington, which have deeply shaped how our country currently exists. This shows that as we continue to work for justice today, our actions are still only possible because of the prophetic and radical actions of those who came before us, and that our actions will, too, lead to further protest and activism in the future, bringing us closer and closer to a world completely infiltrated by racial justice.

Martha Jane Chisley Tolton

This portrait focuses on Mother Tolton's motherhood, specifically through the lens of her escape from enslavement with her children. Although she was helped by Union soldiers along the way, this portrait portrays the moment when she and her children crossed the Mississippi River alone in a small row boat. However, in the painting, Mother Tolton and her children are not portrayed in the row boat, but floating on top of the water to reference and directly relate them to the divine, Christ-like imagery of Jesus's walk on water. Additionally, Mother Tolton is wearing the color red to relate her to Moses, as in Black Liberation theology, Moses's escape in Exodus is often compared to escape from U.S. enslavement. Finally, the plantation house in the background, representative of the enslavers that Martha Tolton and her children fled from, has a statue of Mary in front to clearly identify those enslavers as Catholic.

Mother Emma Lewis



Mother Lewis has her arms outstretched toward the church that she founded in Atlantic City, New Jersey, named St. Monica Church. Their Diocese closed the parish in 2015, merging multiple parishes in the area. The painting centers on this closing of the parish, with parishioners and community members processing---almost like a funeral procession----toward the church in mourning; this imagery metaphorically displays the depth of loss this parish community experienced. Above the church, the sky has a faint outline of St. Peter's Basilica from the Vatican, as a reference to the fact that the parishioners wrote a letter to Pope Francis to try to repeal their Diocese's decision, but it was ultimately denied. This imagery is also used for outsiders to understand that St. Monica Church is as historical and as important to that church community as St. Peter's Basilica is viewed by Catholics. The painting is ultimately reflective of the pattern of Black

Catholic churches being closed by dioceses across the country---an observation that needs to be taken seriously and studied more to truly understand it's causes in order to prevent it from continuing and repair the damage that has been already done.

Mother Josephine Charles

Chloe Becker did not finish her statement for Mother Josephine Charles because she was awaiting the publication of Dr. Shannen Dee Willisms' book, "Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle." Williams' book was pubished in 2022 by Duke University Press. According to Williams, Sr. Charles was a co-founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family along with Henriette Delille and Juliet Gaudin. Williams' notes that Mother Charles' records make it most clear that the establishment of the Sisters of the Holy Family was a direct protest against slavery and sexual exploitation and clear alternative for women of the day. One can imagine that in this artist rendering, Sr. Charles is instructing other sisters who have joined the community on the Sisters of the Holy Family's foundational principles and charisms that ensured all women dignity, education, and greater freedom.

Dear friends,
Please feel free to use these resources in your own community and parish as you develop ministries and educational materials so that Catholics will be inspired to take action for racial and reparative justice.

Commissioned by FutureChurch
2020-2021


DR LENA EDWARDS


JOSEPHINE CHARLES

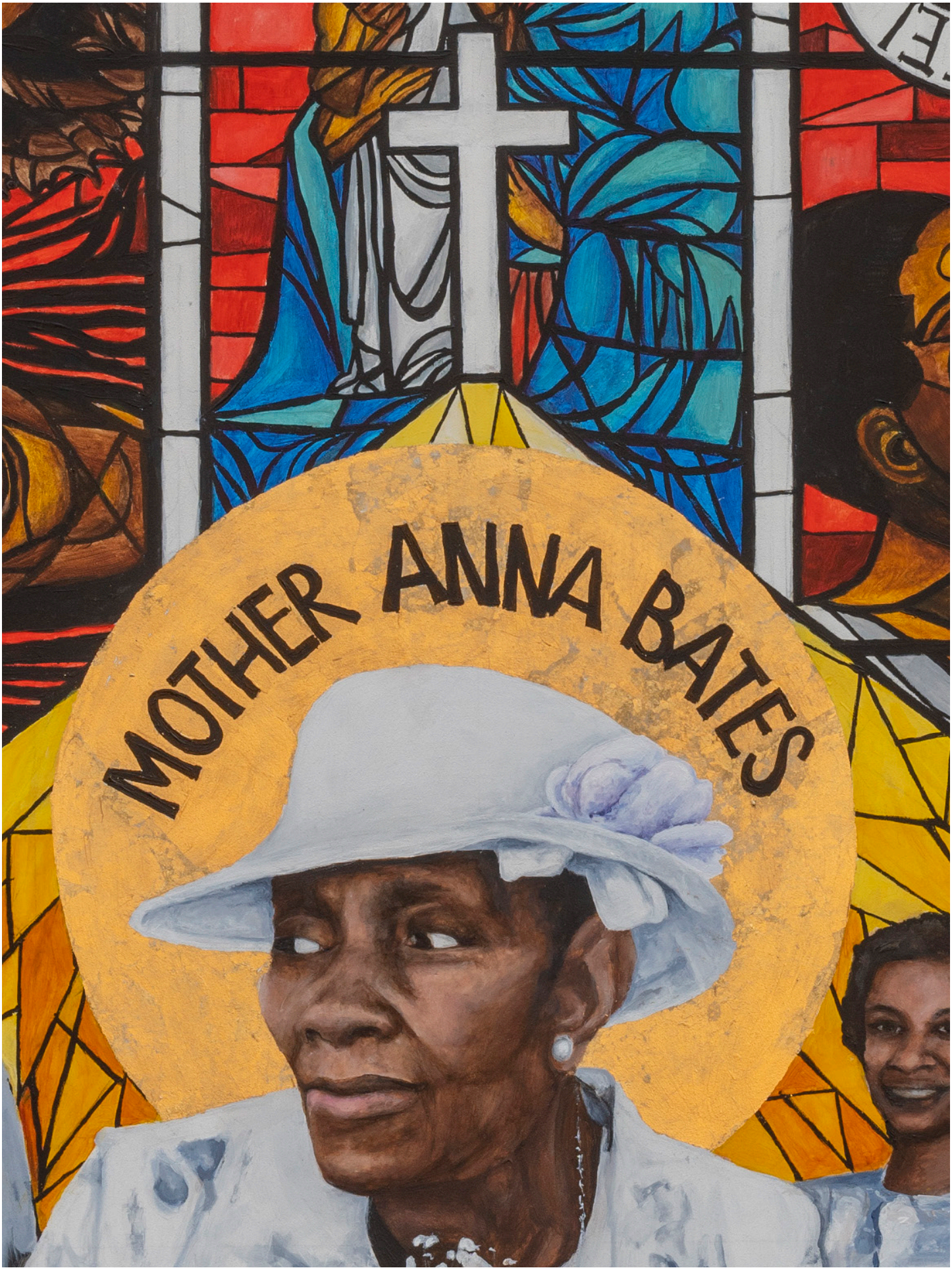

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILE, A LONG WAY LONG WAY FROM HOME
MOTHER ANNA BATES

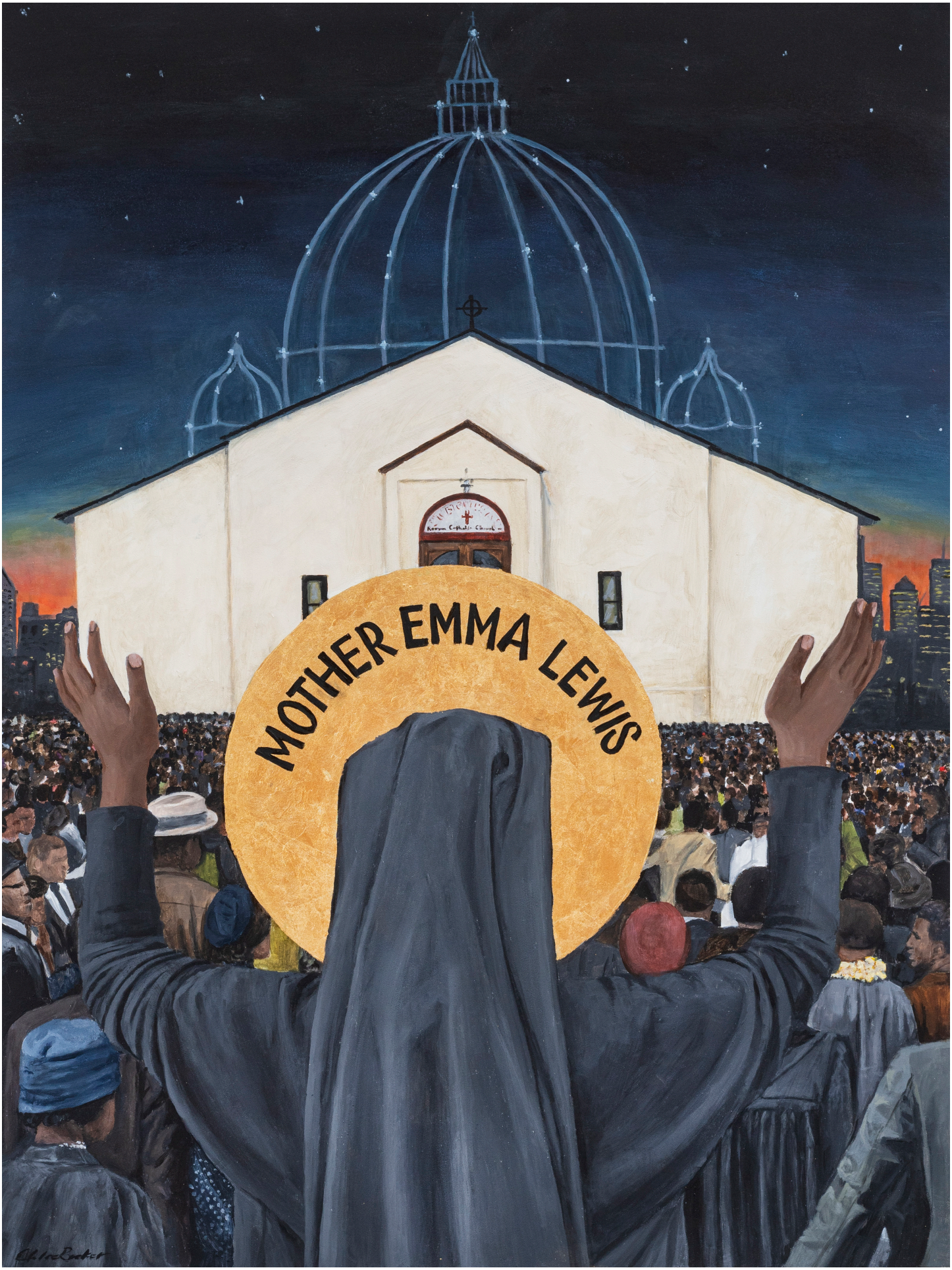

UTH,
BUT
STILL,
WE
RISE
ANNE MARIE BECRAFT

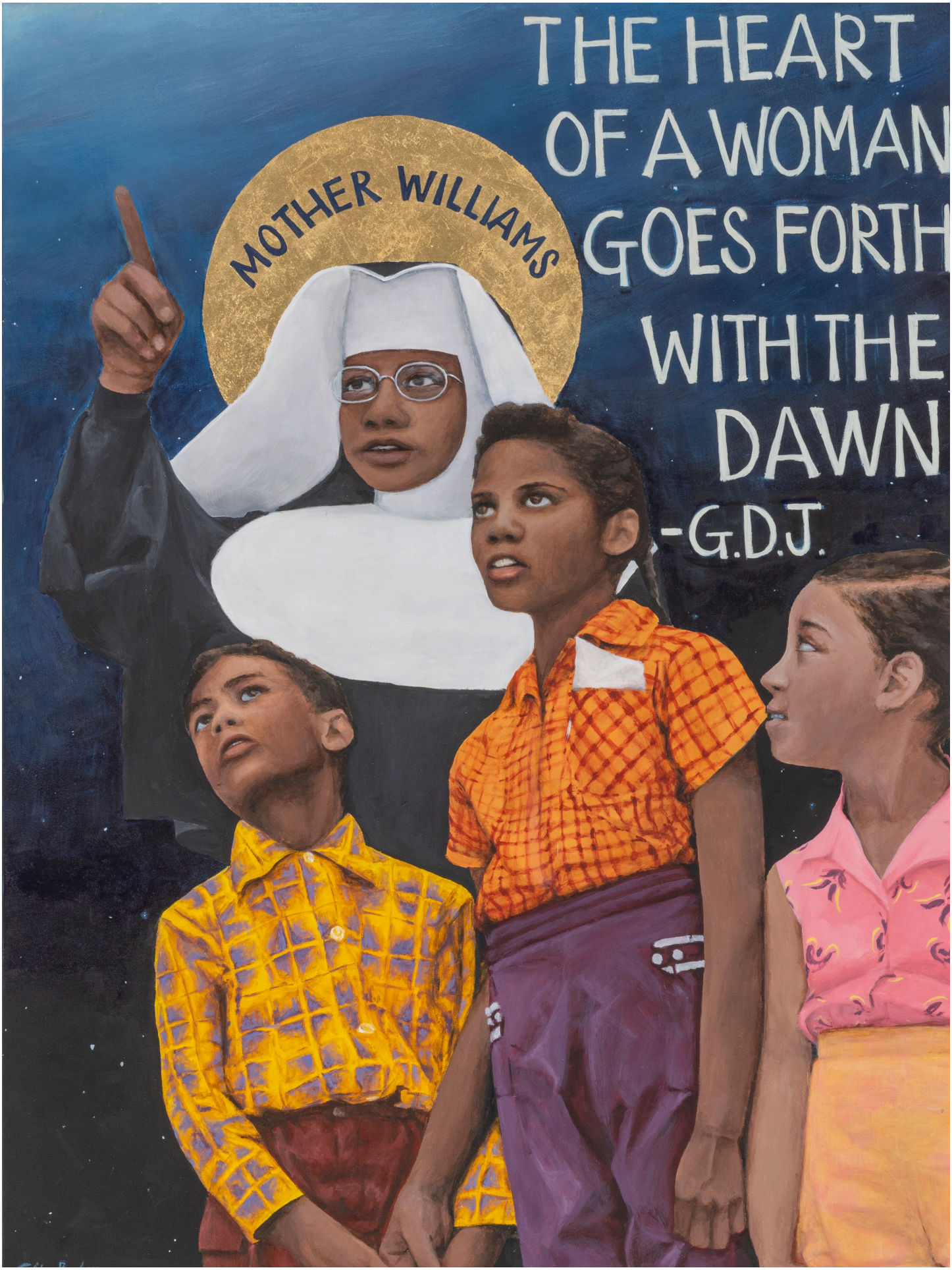

MATHILDA BEASLEY
YOURS


I BRING MYSELF, MY BLACK SELF AS A GIFT TO THE CHURCH.
SR THEA BOWMAN

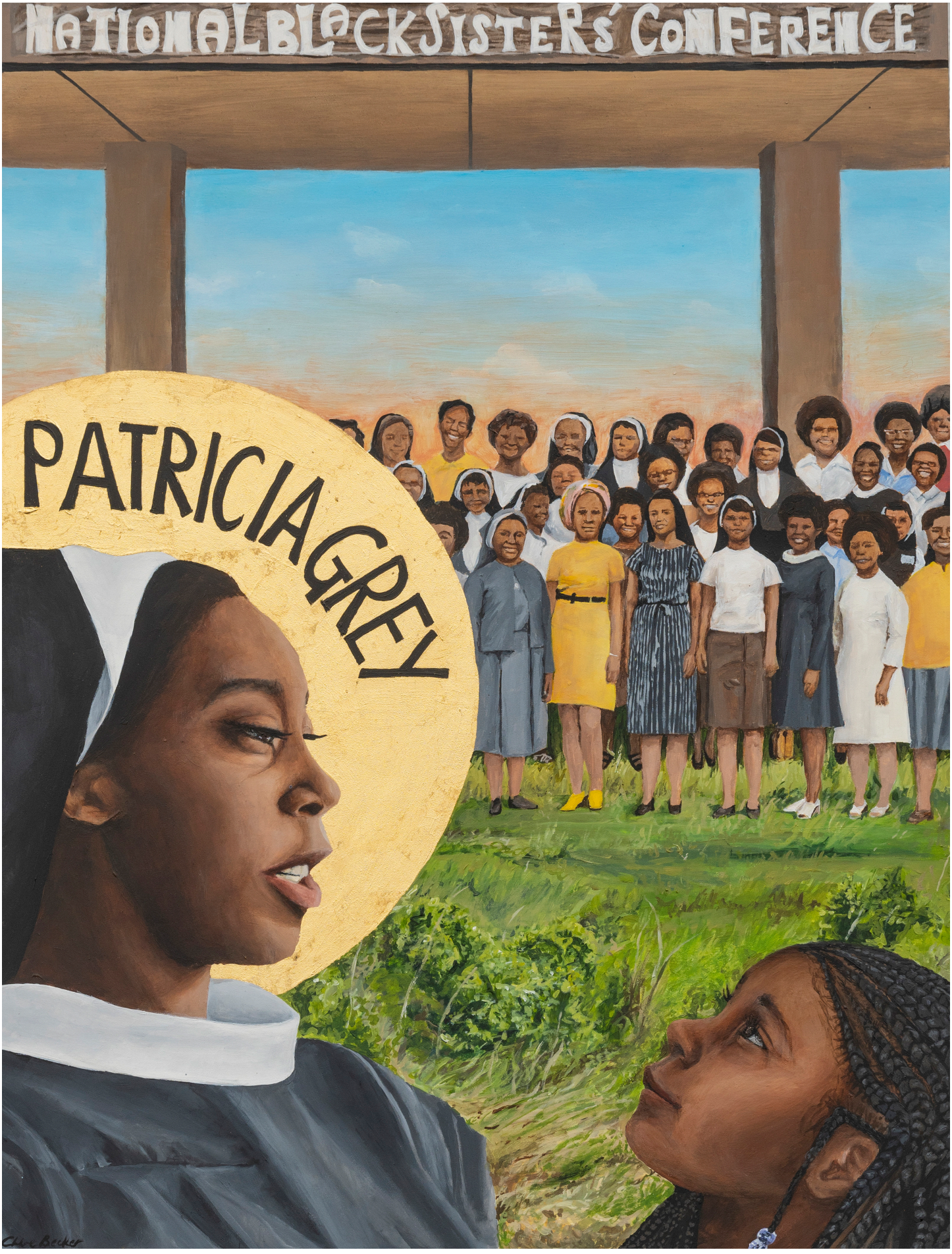

MARY LOUISE
NO
U.S. DOUGH
TO HELP
JIM CROW
GROW
UAW SAYS
JOBS are
FREE
Every A
NO
DOUGH
HELP
CROW
GROW
WE
MARCH
FOR


MOTHER ANNA BATES


MOTHER EMMA LEWIS


MOTHER WILLIAMS
THE HEART
OF A WOMAN
GOES FORTH
WITH THE
DAWN
-G.D.J.


HANDS UP
DON'T SHOOT
HENRIETTE DELILLE


NATIONAL BLACK SISTER'S CONFERENCE
PATRICIA GREY


MARTHA JANE CHISLEY TOLTON


MOTHER MARY LANGE
SAY HER NAME
APRIL WEBSTER,
CYNTHIA FIELDS,
INDIAN NELSON
ALTERIA WOODS
SONJI TAYLOR,
KATHRYN JOHNSTON,
TARIKA WILSON,
BREONNA TAYLOR
MIRIAM CAREY,
ALBERTA SPRUILL,
REKIA BOYD,
JONIE BLOCK,
KORRYN GAINES,
LARONDA SWEATT
MELBA PATTILLO,
ANNETTE BUTLER
SHELLY MEAGAN
LAJUANA PHILIPS,
FREY, NINA ADAMS,
HOCKADAY, MYA HALL,
SANDRA BLAND,
BETTY JEAN OWENS,
GERTRUDE PERKINS,
ANN BOSTICK,
ROXIE ELLIOTT,
AMANDA FRANKS
MARY JACKSON,
MARY TURNER,
ELIZA WOODS,
MOLLY WHITE,
CELIA,
MARY DEANE
MARTHA GREEN
ELIZA LOWE

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1 Paul Murray, "Selma March at 50: 'This Is the First Time in My Life I Am Seeing a Negro Nun,'" National Catholic Reporter, March 13, 2015, www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/selma-march-50-first-time-my-life-i-am-seeing-negro-nun.
2 Shannen Dee Williams, "Sister Antona Ebo's lifelong struggle against white supremacy, inside and outside the Catholic Church," America Magazine, November 22, 2017, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/22/sister-antona-ebos-lifelong-struggle-against-white-sup remacy-inside-and-outside.
3 Ava Duvernay, "13th (Documentary)," October 7, 2016, http://www.avaduvernay.com/13th.

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4 "Servant Of God Mother Mary Lange, O.S.P.," Black and Indian Mission Office, 2018, https://blackandindianmission.org/servant-god-mother-mary-lange-osp.
5 John Lavernburg, "Black Religious Orders Broke Racial Barriers in the U.S.," The Tablet, February 11, 2021, https://thetablet.org/black-religious-orders-broke-racial-barriers-in-the-u-s/.
6 David V. Baker and Gilbert Garcia, "An Analytical History of Black Female Lynchings In The United States, 1838-1969," Quantitative Criminology, October 1, 2019, https://www.qualitativecriminology.com/pub/v8i1p5/release/1;
"Sexual Exploitation of Black Women," Equal Justice Initiative, August 8, 2016, https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-sexual-exploitation-black-women/.

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7 "Biography," Sister Thea Bowman Cause for Canonization, https://www.sistertheabowman.com/biography/.
8 Dawn Araujo-Hawkins, "Black spiritual traditions have long history in Catholic Church," Global Sisters Report, March 19, 2018, https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/spirituality-equality/black-spiritual-traditions-have-long-history-ca tholic-church-52606?gsr_redirect=1; "Thea Bowman: religious sister, civil rights advocate, candidate for sainthood," Catholic News Agency, June 18, 2020, https://dioceseofraleigh.org/news/thea-bowman-religious-sister-civil-rights-advocate-candidate-sainthood.
9 Tia Noelle Pratt, "'I Bring Myself, My Black Self': Sr. Thea Bowman's challenge to the Catholic Church," Commonweal Magazine, November 3, 2020, https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/i-bring-myself-my-black-self.

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10 Shannen Dee Williams, "Celebrating unsung Black Catholic women in U.S. history," U.S. Catholic, February 24, 2014, https://uscatholic.org/articles/201402/celebrating-unsung-black-catholic-women-in-u-s-history/;
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11 Sarah Salvadore, "Catholic schools slow to accept cultural significance of black hair," National Catholic Reporter, February 20, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/catholic-schools-slow-accept-cultural-significance-black-hair.
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13 Dawn Araujo-Hawkins, "Black spiritual traditions have long history in Catholic Church," Global Sisters Report, March 19, 2018, https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/spirituality-equality/black-spiritual-traditions-have-long-history-ca tholic-church-52606?gsr_redirect=1.
14 "Editorial: Why white Jesus is a problem," National Catholic Reporter, June 30, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/editorial-why-white-jesus-problem.

Venerable Henriette Delille: Henriette Delille's portrait is centered on her biracial identity; the contrasting white and Black hands in the portrait illustrate this duality. The light-skinned hand and dark-skinned hand reaching for each other represent her efforts for multiracial community through her attempt at an interracial sisterhood (that was ended by an 1830 law that defined interracial groups as illegal; she later founded the Afro-Creole and Black Catholic sisterhood, the Sisters of the Holy Family, alongside Juliette Gaudin and Mother Josephine Charles) and in her work with all those in poverty, the elderly, the sick, and the uneducated.15

The hands in the "hands up, don't shoot" positioning (widely known after the shooting of Michael Brown, and used as a chant in Black Lives Matter protests) emphasizes that solidarity requires white people to stand with the Black community not only when it is comfortable or popular, but especially when it is challenging, and destructive to white privilege.16 Using this modern phrase in Delille's context is meant to reinforce that the interracial community that Delille and her colleagues struggled to achieve is the same interracial solidarity that white people are called to continuously work toward by dismantling their own white privilege and the system of racism at large in today's society. Finally, the hands from the sky, opened towards the sacred heart, portray the Holy Family as a reference to the Sisters of the Holy Family.

15 "VENERABLE HENRIETTE DELILLE," Henriette Delille, 2018,
https://www.henriettedelille.com/henriette-delille;
Shannen Dee Williams, "Black Catholic Women are Forgotten Prophets of American Democracy," Black Perspectives, March 2, 2021, https://www.aaihs.org/black-catholic-women-are-forgotten-prophets-of-american-democracy/.
16 Matthew Alemu, "Solidarity is not acknowledging your white privilege, but relinquishing it," Detroit Free Press, July 7, 2020, https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/contributors/2020/07/07/solidarity-not-acknowledging-your-white-privil ege-but-relinquishing/5375261002/.

Dr. Patricia Grey (Sr. Martin de Porres Grey): Dr. Patricia Grey is displayed at the first National Black Sisters' Conference---a meeting she organized and led specifically for Black women religious after being the only woman in attendance at the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus in 1968.17 The piece examines the free and bountiful space she and the Black sisters created by celebrating their Black, female, and Catholic identities, without the suffocation of racism or patriarchy.18 The women are surrounded by the transcendent, fruitful landscape of the Sahel in its rain season.19 The Sahel (primarily in the region of West Africa) is used to symbolically and emotionally represent the sanctuary that the National Black Sisters' Conference was from racism and sexism that were forced upon Black people through colonialism and slave trade. Black women in the U.S. have yet to experience the same freedom that women in Africa had before white people---specifically white men---colonized, kidnapped, sold, and enslaved Africans.20 The life-filled landscape is meant to call to an almost-utopia where Black women are valued, centered, and free as history indicates was the reality of most communities in pre-colonial Africa.21 The young girl looking up at her is symbolic of Black children, at the time and for generations to come, who likely were and are able to be invigorated by seeing a Black woman in an important, public position of leadership.

17 Dawn Araujo-Hawkins, "A sisters' community apologizes to one woman whose vocation was denied," Global Sisters Report, January 8, 2018, https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/trends-equality/sisters-community-apologizes-one-woman-whos e-vocation-was-denied-51191.
18 Spalding Hurst, "National Black Sisters' Conference celebrates 50 years," Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, August 1, 2018, https://scnfamily.org/national-black-sisters-conference-celebrates-50-years/.
19 "Sahel," ed. Amy McKenna, Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/place/Sahel.
20 Kathleen Sheldon, "Women and Colonialism," In obo in African Studies, (2018): https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733/obo-9780199846733-0067.xm l.
21 Christine Saidi, "Women in Precolonial Africa," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History, (2020): https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-978019027 7734-e-259.

Mother Mathilda Beasley: Mother Mathilda is standing in front of her home in Georgia where she educated free and enslaved Black children, which was markedly illegal to do at the time.22 She is holding a child's hand to represent her commitment to those children in Georgia, and further, to all of the children in which she later devoted her life's work.23 The sky within the home's door and windows symbolizes the hope she forged for her students as they lived under the suffocating storm of slavery and a deeply racist society represented by the contrasting threatening sky above the house. Finally, the phrase, "Not yours to own," has a dual meaning: that Black people are not anyone's to own through enslavement nor the less literal "owning" of Black people through racism's dehumanization throughout history and in the present day;24 that Indigenous land as Mathilda Beasely's father is believed to have been Indigenous (his Tribe is unknown) is not to be owned, especially not by the white colonizers who stole the land to be "their America" through forced removal and the genocide of what is estimated to have been about 13 million Indigenous lives across the United States (although estimations can vary, it is widely understood that millions of lives were lost).25 The phrase applies then as it does today, as Black and Indigenous communities in the U.S. continue to resist white supremacy's inherent "owning" of their identity, power, and land.26

22 David Withun, "Mother Mathilda Beasley (1832-1903)," Black Past, February 21, 2018, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/beasley-mother-mathilda-1832-1903/.
23 Ellie Jung, "Mother Mathilda Beasley, O.S.F.: Georgia's First Black Nun," Georgia Historical Society, 2018, https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/historical-markers/hidden-histories/mother-mathilda-beasle y-o-s-f-georgias-first-black-nun/.
24 Kimetta R. Hairston, "Dehumanization of the Black American Female: An American/Hawaiian Experience," Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Volume 1, Number 1: pp. 65-66, https://escholarship.org/content/qt72m382mk/qt72m382mk_noSplash_761149e916e9d86b6f99cf7fa571f6 5f.pdf.
25 "From Slavery to Savannah," Georgia Historical Society, https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/online-exhibits/featured-historical-figures/mother-mathilda- beasley/from-slavery-to-savannah/; David Michael Smith, "Counting the Dead: Estimating the Loss of Life in the Indigenous Holocaust, 1492-Present," University of Houston-Downtown, https://www.se.edu/native-american/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/09/A-NAS-2017-Proceedings-Smit h.pdf.

26 Erica Belfi, "Native Solidarity with Black Lives Matter as Both Communities Confront Centuries-Long State Violence," Cultural Survival, June 20, 2020, https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/native-solidarity-black-lives-matter-both-communities-confront-centuries-long-state-violence.

Anne Marie Becraft: Sr. Becraft is standing in front of two schools: the one on the left, she founded in Washington D.C. when she was fifteen years old for Black children who were being pushed out of schools with white teachers due to a D.C. policy; the one on the right (Saint Frances Academy), is where she continued to teach after she joined the Oblate Sisters of Providence, furthering her commitment to education.27 The phrase in the sky pays homage to Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise" and directly names how white society disenfranchised Anne Marie Becraft, and further, all Black women. White society has degraded her mind by limiting access to education (like the D.C. policy that hindered many Black students in the nineteenth century), which is present today in the limited access and discrimination in schools and academia for Black students.28 Society has degraded Black women's souls, as when Becraft was alive, a significant amount of white people believed that Black people did not have souls;29 remnants of that belief exist today in the lack of "mainstream" religious art that depicts Black people and the (subconscious and overt) suspiciousness of Black Americans' goodness (such as with racial profiling).30 Society has degraded Black youth through systems that stunt their futures (like the school to prison pipeline), which perpetuate the lie that they're incapable of impacting society.31 This is the same lie that Anne Marie likely faced as she fearlessly harnessed her power at fifteen, yet still she rose and rose and rose.

27 "Building to Be Renamed for Pioneer Black Educator Anne Marie Becraft," Georgetown University, April 13, 2017, https://www.georgetown.edu/news/building-to-be-renamed-for-pioneer-black-educator-anne-marie-becraft /.
28 Ibid; Isha Trivedi, "Faculty say higher education, research is 'rife' with discrimination," The GW Hatchet, August 31, 2020, https://www.gwhatchet.com/2020/08/31/faculty-say-higher-education-research-is-rife-with-discrimination/; Kim Fischer and Gregory Anderson, "Systemic racism has led to education disparities," Temple University, June 25, 2020,

https://news.temple.edu/news/2020-06-25/systemic-racism-has-led-education-disparities.
29 "Building to Be Renamed for Pioneer Black Educator Anne Marie Becraft."
30 "Editorial: Why white Jesus is a problem," National Catholic Reporter, June 30, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/editorial-why-white-jesus-problem;
"Racial Profiling: Definition," American Civil Liberties Union, https://www.aclu.org/other/racial-profiling-definition.
31 "Deconstructing Racism and Ableism in the School-to-Prison Pipeline," Temple University, https://disabilities.temple.edu/school-to-prison.

Mother Mary Theodore Williams: Mother Williams is shown with three children to reference her youth-centered work in her co-founded religious order, ultimately known as the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. They established schools, (some of the first ever) pre-schools, and orphanages for Black children in Georgia and New York City.32 She is pointing towards the rising sun; reinforced by the painted quote, "The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn," which is the first line from the poem "The Heart of a Woman" by Georgia Douglas Johnson, a Black poet from the Harlem Renaissance (Mother Williams moved the order to Harlem in 1923, during the heart of the Renaissance).33 The dawn is an allegory for so much of Mother William's life always finding possibility and chasing it with conviction: she formed her own order of Black nuns, moved that order to New York City, established schools and nurseries, formed religious education programs for parishes, started a soup kitchen in Harlem during the Great Depression, a food pantry for Staten Island, and countless other initiatives.34 Yet the dawn is also a much greater symbol for the hope needed to commit to the difficult work of dismantling racism. The complete eradication of racism in all forms may be far away, but we can learn from Mother Williams: not allow our despair to stop us from continually pursuing the next visible possibility for a more just world, in hopes that one day, the sun of a united, all-inclusive world will rise.

32 "Mother Mary Theodore Williams," St. Joseph of the Holy Family, https://www.stjosephsharlem.com/reredos/mother-mary-theodore-williams.
33 Georgia Douglas Johnson, "The Heart of a Woman," Poetry Foundation, 1918, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52494/the-heart-of-a-woman; "Georgia Douglas Johnson," Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/georgia-douglas-johnson; Pat McNamara, "From Savannah to Harlem: Mother Theodore Williams," Patheos, April 11, 2011, https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2011/04/from-savannah-to-harlem-mother-theod ore-williams-pat-mcnamara-04-12-2011?p=2.
34 "Mother Mary Theodore Williams."

Dr. Lena Edwards: Dr. Edwards is portrayed with a blue cloak with twelve stars on it, as a reference to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and other Marian depictions; this maternal reference stands for her work as an obstetrician-gynecologist.35 The two arms with the stigmata and red cross in her cloak are a reference to the Franscican coat of arms, as Dr. Edwards was born on St. Francis's birthday, and took vows in the order in 1940.36 I chose for the Tau symbol to be red and look more like a cross to resemble the red cross medical symbol, further depicting Dr. Edward's medical impact. The two hands in the coat of arms are also symbolic of the communities that Dr. Edwards most especially advocated for. She was known for working to increase healthcare access for people in poverty; she especially focused on underfunded Black communities who had minimal access, and for migrants, as she worked with a Latinx migrant community in Texas in her later years, establishing a hospital and drastically reducing their infant mortality.37 I want to stress that there is a wide variation of skin tones within the Black community as well as within the Latinx community; thus, either hand is meant to represent the Black and Latinx communities that Dr. Edwards centered her work in, showing two possible variations of those skin tones. The background above her is a quilt; I was inspired by Faith Ringgold's quilting as a way to show Dr. Edward's Black pride, as quilts were vital in passing on African ancestry for enslaved people, and have continued to be an important art form for honoring African American ancestry and culture.
35 "Our Lady's image on the Tilma," Our Lady Guadalupe Church, https://olg.cc/about/about-our-patroness/our-ladys-image-on-the-tilma/; "Dr. Lena Frances Edwards," Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School, https://www.drlenaedwardscharterschool.org/Content2/6.
36 Jack Wintz, OFM, "The Franciscan Coat of Arms," Franciscan Media, https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/the-franciscan-coat-of-arms; "Dr. Lena Frances Edwards Biography," Changing the Face of Medicine, 2015, https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_96.html.
37 "Dr. Lena Frances Edwards Biography."
38 Street Story Quilt, Faith Ringgold," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/485416; Shantay Robinson, "The Quilting Tradition," Black Art in America, November 9, 2018, https://www.blackartinamerica.com/index.php/2018/11/09/the-quilting-tradition/.

Mary Louise Smith: Ms. Smith is sitting at the front of a bus as a tribute to her being one of the first revolutionary contributors to the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, refusing to give up her seat to a white person. The back of the bus is left open to display the March on Washington, which Ms. Smith would participate in almost a decade later.39 This conveys how Ms. Smith's life-long activism began with the bus boycotts as a teenager, and continued and grew into her adulthood. Therefore, in the painting the bus is literally leading the way for the March on Washington to follow after it. Her personal progression mirrors the movement in the nation at large: the bus boycotts were revolutionary in sparking momentum for the fight against Jim Crow, and distinctly led the way for future protests like the March

on Washington, which have deeply shaped how our country currently exists.40 This shows that as we continue to work for justice today, our actions are still only possible because of the prophetic and radical actions of those who came before us, and that our actions will, too, lead to further protest and activism in the future, bringing us closer and closer to a world completely infiltrated by racial justice.

39 "Black History Month: Mary Louise Smith, Remembering the Women Who Came Before Rosa Parks," The Forgiveness Foundation Christian Ministries, https://www.theforgivenessfoundation.org/index.php/holidays/black-history-month/2764-black-history-mon th-mary-louise-smith-remembering-the-women-who-came-before-rosa-parks.
40 "Montgomery Bus Boycott," History.com, January 27, 2021, https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/montgomery-bus-boycott.

Martha Jane Chisley Tolton: This portrait focuses on Mother Tolton's motherhood, specifically through the lens of her escape from enslavement with her children.41 Although she was helped by Union soldiers along the way, this portrait portrays the moment when she and her children crossed the Mississippi River alone in a small row boat.42 However, in the painting, Mother Tolton and her children are not portrayed in the row boat, but floating on top of the water to reference and directly relate them to the divine, Christ-like imagery of Jesus's walk on water.43 Additionally, Mother Tolton is wearing the color red to relate her to Moses, as in Black Liberation theology, Moses's escape in Exodus is often compared to escape from U.S. enslavement.44 Finally, the plantation house in the background, representative of the enslavers that Martha Tolton and her children fled from, has a statue of Mary in front to clearly identify those enslavers as Catholic.45

Mother Josephine Charles: This artistic rendering of her instructing other Sisters of the Holy Family is drawn from the work of Dr. Shannen Dee Williams, "Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle." Duke University Press (2022).
41 "Fr. Tolton's Life and Times," Archdiocese of Chicago, https://tolton.archchicago.org/about/life-and-times.
42 Caroline Hemesath, From Slave to Priest: The Inspirational Story of Father Augustine Tolton (1854-1897) (Ignatius Press, 2010).
43 Mt. 14:22-33 Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition.
44 James H. Cone, "The Relationship of the Christian Faith to Political Praxis," American RadioWorks, 1980, http://americanradio-works.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/jcone.html.
45 Clifani Stephen, "Biography of Father Tolton," Fr. Tolton Catholic High School, https://toltoncatholic.org/biography-of-father-tolton/.

Mother Emma Lewis: Mother Lewis has her arms outstretched toward the church that she founded in Atlantic City, New Jersey, named St. Monica Church. Their Diocese closed the parish in 2015, merging multiple parishes in the area.46 The painting centers on this closing of the parish, with parishioners and community members processing---almost like a funeral procession toward the church in mourning; this imagery metaphorically displays the depth of loss this parish community experienced. Above the church, the sky has a faint outline of St. Peter's Basilica from the Vatican. This imagery is used for outsiders to understand that St. Monica Church is deeply historical and important to their church community, as St. Peter's Basilica is to Catholics worldwide.47 The painting is ultimately reflective of the pattern of historical Black Catholic churches being closed by dioceses across the country an observation that needs to be taken seriously and studied more to truly understand it's causes in order to prevent it from continuing and repair the damage that has already been done.48
46 Peter G. Sánchez, "Mother Emma Lewis and her lasting impact in South Jersey," Catholic Star Herald, November 25, 2020, https://catholicstarherald.org/mother-emma-lewis-and-her-lasting-impact-in-south-jersey/.
47 Jacqueline L. Urgo, "An especially diverse A.C. church hopes to stave off closure," The Philadelphia Inquirer, December 28, 2014, https://www.inquirer.com/philly/news/local/20141228_An_especially_diverse_A_C church_hopes_to_sta ve_off_closure.html.
48 Alexander Thompson, "Closures of Catholic schools in Black neighborhoods provoke sense of abandonment," National Catholic Reporter, April 21, 2021, https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/closures-catholic-schools-black-neighborhoods-provoke-sense-abandonment; Charles Williams, "My black Catholic church was closed in the name of integration," America Magazine, February 7, 2020, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/02/07/my-black-catholic-church-was-closed-name-integratio n;
Damon Sims, "St. Adalbert Church, home to Cleveland's first black Catholic congregation, faces loss of its building amid diocesan downsizing," Cleveland.com, March 27, 2019, https://www.cleveland.com/religion/2009/07/st_adalbert_church_home_to_cle.html; Maudlyne Ihejirika, "Sense of loss on a familiar story as Corpus Christi, 4 other Black South Side parishes merge," Chicago Sun Times, June 10, 2021, https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/6/10/22528497/sense-loss-familiar-story-corpus-christi-4-other-black-south-side-parishes-merge.