

Sainthood for Mother Lange?

By Shelly Rae **AI**

Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, O.S.P., founder and the first superior of the Oblate Sisters of Providence—the very first convent for Black women established in Baltimore on July 2, 1829—could become the first Black saint of the Roman Catholic Church. **AFRO-AM**

Archbishop William Henry Keeler will announce on Sunday, April 28th that the Vatican in Rome has authorized the Archdiocese of Baltimore to initiate the first step leading to beautification and ultimately the canonization of Mother Lange who died on February 3, 1882.

The 10:30 a.m. announcement will be made from the present day home of the order founded by Mother Lange at Our Ladies of Providence Convent, 701 Gun Road, in Catonsville. **APR 27 1991**

Mother Lange was born somewhere during the early part of the 17th Century in Cuba where her parents, natives of San Domingo, had fled to avoid an insurrection.

Arriving alone in the United States in 1817, she first settled in the Carolinas, then Virginia, before heading to Baltimore to join other French speaking Catholics from San Domingan who had migrated to the city.

At the urging of the then Archbishop of Baltimore, Monsignor James Whitfield, she established a religious congregation for Black children.

That congregation—originally located on Paca Street—became the Oblate Sisters of Providence order, the first religious congregation for Black women in the history of the Catholic Church. **AFRO-AMERICAN**

According to the Director of Public Relations for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Father William Au, the process leading up to a declaration of sainthood could be lengthy.

"It is not a quick process. During the first stage theological experts will request and review her writings to determine what they reveal about her views and spirituality. If and when it goes to the next stage, the Vatican will request that a tribunal and a historical commission do a more indept investigation."

Father Au said that the last stage in the canonization process centers around any miracles of healing which can be attributed to prayers offered up in the name of the person; in this case Mother Lange. **APR 27 1991**

"Three miracles must be attributed to them after their deaths," said Father Au.

According to the priest any person being considered for sainthood must have "lived a virtuous life," have been credited with the miracles and be viewed as an appropriate "role model for spirituality for those who are living." **AFRO-AMERICAN**



Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange