

# The NEWS FROM Inland See

February 19–25, 2022

FOR THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

## Sculptor Edmonia Lewis shares message of human dignity through time

Edmonia Lewis, the first African American and Native American sculptor to achieve international recognition through works that reflected her Catholic faith and the dignity of people, is being commemorated on a new postage stamp.

The stamp, the 45th in the U.S. Postal Service's Black Heritage series, will be issued Jan. 26 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington.

The stamp's design features a painted portrait based on an Augustus Marshall photograph taken between 1864 and 1871 while Lewis was in Boston, the USPS said.

Lewis overcame multiple obstacles before arriving in Rome in 1865 and opening a studio where she incorporated the neoclassical style popular at the time and establishing herself as one of the most significant sculptors of the 19th century.

Her work is in the permanent collections at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Howard University Gallery of Art in Washington. Works also are scattered in church institutions in the U.S. and Europe. Some continue to be discovered after being missing for decades.

Art historian Elizabeth Lev, who grew up in Boston and has lived in Rome for 30 years, said it was in the Eternal City, where its cosmopolitan atmosphere meant skin color mattered little, that Lewis found inspiration to pursue sculpting in her preferred medium of marble.

Lev described Lewis' work as reflecting her mixed ancestry as she created sculptures of notable abolitionists as well as figurative images that reflected experiences of people of color, particularly following the abolition of slavery.

Lewis also portrayed religious images, at times imitating neoclassical and Renaissance artists.

Details of Lewis' early life are limited. She was born in 1844 in Greenbush, New York, near Albany. Her father was Haitian American and her mother was Chippewa. Both died before Lewis was 5.

Lewis was raised by her mother's family until she was 12 and was known as "Wildfire," according to a Smithsonian American Art Museum biography. In 1859 at age 15, her older

brother, who had become a successful gold miner in California, helped Lewis enroll at Oberlin College in Ohio, one of the first institutions in the country to admit African Americans. She took the name Mary Edmonia Lewis.

She did not graduate, however. Despite the school welcoming African Americans, Lewis was subjected to racism and sexism. In 1862, two friends became ill after Lewis served them wine, opening the way to charges that she poisoned them.

The charges were dismissed at trial, but soon after Lewis

was severely beaten by white vigilantes who left her for dead. About a year later, she was accused of stealing artists' materials from the school, but again was acquitted because of a lack of evidence. Lewis left Oberlin in 1863 for Boston, again with her brother's assistance. There she studied under portrait sculptor Edward Brackett.

Having saved enough money from the sale of her work, Lewis traveled to Europe in 1865 at age 20 in the hope of establishing her sculpting career. After stops in London, Paris and Florence, Italy, Lewis settled in Rome, where she opened a studio during the winter of 1865-1866 collaborating with other female sculptors in a male-dominated discipline.

Lev said that how Lewis became Catholic is uncertain. Lev related one story which finds that the Native American tribe that raised her in New York was being ministered to by Jesuit missionaries. Lev, however, doubts that was the case and points to Lewis' time in Rome as likely being more influential in the development of her Catholic faith.

One of Lewis' most well-known sculptures is "Forever Free," created in 1867. That sculpture and others, Lev said, is how Lewis used her art to communicate in a subtle and nuanced way to address issues of social justice.

"That's where I think we can learn from someone who knew about racism really, the woman who was beaten to within an inch of her life at Oberlin. The woman who every step of the way had to overcome obstacles," Lev told CNS.

Lewis died in London in 1907 at age 63. She never married and had no children. She is buried in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery in city's borough of Brent.

— *Dennis Sadowski, Catholic News Service*



Edmonia Lewis, an African American and Native American sculptor who was Catholic, is honored on a stamp as part of the U.S. Postal Service's Black Heritage series, set for release Jan. 26, 2022. — CNS photo/courtesy U.S. Postal Service

# Upcoming Events



02|22 TUESDAY  
**Saints and Sinners**  
Online • 7 pm

Join us in February when Fr. Robert Murphy presents on Saints Therese of Lisieux. There will be time for prayer, small group and large group discussion. **For more info:** [vermontcatholic.org/saints-and-sinners](http://vermontcatholic.org/saints-and-sinners).



02|24 THURSDAY  
**Lenten Presentation "Quarantine"**  
Holy Family, Essex Junction • 7 - 8:30 pm

Fr. Richard Berube, SSE presents on The Forty Days of Lent, of Jesus, of Elijah, and the desert experience of God's People. Israel.



02|26, 03|05, 12, 19, 26 SATURDAYS  
**SoulCore**  
Blessed Sacrament, Stowe • 3 - 4 pm

SoulCore is an invitation to nourish body, mind and soul through prayer and functional movement. Workout can be modified to suit ability and comfort level; the prayers are the main focus. Freewill donation. Suggested items: mat, water, weights (optional, 1-3 lbs popular).



03|03, 04, 05 THURSDAY – SATURDAY  
**40 Hours Devotion**  
St John Vianney, S. Burlington • 40 hours

Help us start Lent off with 40 continuous hours of Eucharistic Adoration and prayer. There will be Masses, a penance service, and other special devotions; please see schedule on our webpage: [www.stjohnvianney.vermontcatholic.org/40hours](http://www.stjohnvianney.vermontcatholic.org/40hours). Adoration will begin after the 5:30 Mass on Thursday and continue until Benediction at 10 AM on Saturday. We are in need of two people for each shift, especially during the overnight hours which are traditionally difficult to cover. Sign up for a shift on our website. **MORE INFO:** [Connie McDonald, SJVGGoodNews@gmail.com](mailto:ConnieMcDonald,SJVGGoodNews@gmail.com)



03|03, 10, 17, 24, 31, 04|07 THURS  
**Vermont Catholic Women's Group Lent 2022**  
via Zoom • 7:30 - 9 pm

Join the Vermont Catholic Women's Group on Zoom as we go through *Restore: A Guided Lent Journal for Prayer and Meditation* by Sr. Miriam James Heidland. YWe will have weekly edifying discussions. Join us for one or all meetings. Women of all ages are welcomed. Sign up for our mailing list at [www.stlukev.org](http://www.stlukev.org) and contact Carolina for more details.



03|05 SATURDAY  
**First Saturday Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

In these times, let us seriously consider one of the important messages from our Lady of Fatima — the First Saturday devotion for Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This would include attending five consecutive first Saturday masses, going to confession within eight days, receiving Holy Communion, and meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary for fifteen minutes. Please prayerfully consider this for 2022! The Saturday Vigil Mass (for Sunday) may be used for the First Saturday Devotion offered in reparation for offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



03|05 SATURDAY  
**Grief Support Group**  
Holy Family Parish Hall, Essex Jct. • 8-10 am  
Calling all Widows and Widowers. . . You are

invited to join us for a support group, run by Catherine "Kate" King, UVM Mental Health Clinician (LCMHC) on the first Saturday of the month. Kate has been a group therapist in the community for over 20 years and is a widow herself. Join us for prayer, discussion and peer support for working through grief, at 8 am at Holy Family Parish Hall (upstairs' library). **FOR MORE INFO:** call Kate (802) 881-5973.



03|06 SUNDAY  
**Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion**  
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Burlington • 3 - 4 pm

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion will be celebrated by Bishop Coyne on the First Sunday at Lent. During the Rite of Election, the Church "elects" those seeking full initiation into the Church through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at Easter. The Church also recognizes those already-baptized Christians seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church and pledges the support of prayer as they journey toward Full Communion in the Catholic Church. Friends and family of those being participating in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion and all the faithful from around the diocese are invited to celebrate with us. A small reception follows the liturgy.



03|09 WEDNESDAY  
**Dealing with Doubt — How will you Respond?**  
Holy Family, Essex Jct. • 7 - 8:15 pm

Speaker Joe Blanchette's lively presentation provides Catholic parents with well-researched, effectively presented talking points for defending the faith to counter the arguments presented by the secular world that young people are exposed to, especially when they first leave home for college. All are welcome. Sponsored by Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Fanny Allen #1060.



03|19 SATURDAY  
**Annual Men's Conference**  
Our Lady of Angels, Randolph • 8:30 am - 2 pm  
Join with other Catholic Men for a day of

time of fellowship. This year's theme is 'Band of Brothers' and the keynote speaker will be Fr. Scott Gratton, serving as chaplain for the VT Air National Guard, recently deployed to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Bishop Christopher Coyne will celebrate Mass. Please contact Nicole Hamilton at [nhamilton@vermontcatholic.org](mailto:nhamilton@vermontcatholic.org) or call (802) 658-6110, ext. 1131 for the link to register. Registration deadline is March 4, 2022. Lunch is included in the \$30 fee.



03|25 FRIDAY  
**The Challenge Club for Catholic Girls**  
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston • 6 - 8 pm

Challenge is a club for girls to grow in virtue, friendship and their Catholic faith. **FOR MORE INFO:** [Mary Niekrewicz, mary.of.vt@gmail.com](mailto:MaryNiekrewicz,mary.of.vt@gmail.com), (802) 878-5538 or [Audrey Walko, audreycgsvt@gmail.com](mailto:AudreyWalko,audreycgsvt@gmail.com), (802) 373-9564.

A MESSAGE FROM THE  
U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking



February 8 was the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita, patroness of kidnapped and trafficked children. Situations caused by Covid-19 have pushed traffickers online and out of sight, making the exploitation of children more convenient.

U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a 501 c (3) organization, 2039 N Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131 ([sistersagainsttrafficking.org](http://sistersagainsttrafficking.org))



for a  
communal  
Church

"Pope Francis has announced a universal Synod inviting all Catholics across the globe to discern together how to better listen and communicate with each other to bolster our communion in Christ Jesus." — Bishop Coyne

We are asking every parishioner to participate by completing the online survey: [vermontcatholic.org/universalsynod](http://vermontcatholic.org/universalsynod)