

FOR INFORMATION:  
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[www.stlukeproductions.com](http://www.stlukeproductions.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **New Live Drama on First African American Priest Coming to Stevensville**

**Event:** *Tolton: From Slave to Priest*, the live theatrical one-man drama performed by actor Jim Coleman and directed by Leonardo Defilippis of Saint Luke Productions, will be presented at Lakeshore High School Auditorium.

**Details:** Sunday, April 22, 2018 at 4:00pm, at Lakeshore High School Auditorium in Stevensville, MI. Admission will be \$5 per individual. Additional free-will donations will be accepted. Coordinated by St. Joseph Parish Office, (269) 983-1575.

**About the Production:** *Tolton: From Slave to Priest* is a powerful new live production based on the life of Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first African American priest. This compelling true story of courage, forgiveness, and reconciliation resonates deeply with modern American audiences. Bishop Joseph Perry of Chicago, postulator for Fr. Tolton's canonization cause, is calling *Tolton* a production that will "inspire a new era of peace, hope and forgiveness in America."

*Tolton* is a riveting multimedia drama not to be missed. The production runs 75 minutes, and is suitable for middle school age and up.

**About Father Tolton:** To characterize Fr. Augustus Tolton's life as remarkable is an understatement. He was born a slave on a Missouri farm in 1854, and his mother risked everything to reach freedom in Illinois with her three small children. After settling in the town of Quincy, Illinois, the family continued to experience hardships and prejudice. In spite of this, he persevered in his deep desire to become a Catholic priest. When every seminary in the United States rejected him, Augustus did not give up, and he was finally ordained in Rome. Upon his return to Illinois, Fr. Tolton worked tirelessly to serve people of all races, especially the former slaves who flocked to Chicago.

Fr. Tolton saw the Catholic Church as the antidote to the discrimination and rejection that he experienced in his own life. "It was the priests of the Church who taught me to pray and to forgive my persecutors," he said. "We should welcome all people into the Church, not send them away."

At the young ages of 43, Fr. Tolton died after collapsing from heat exhaustion in Chicago. Now his cause for sainthood is moving forward, as more and more people are beginning to recognize the humble perseverance, courage, and compassion of this extraordinary man.

**About the Actor:** Jim Coleman is excited and honored to be playing the role of Father Tolton. Prior to his acting career, he served in the US Army as a medic. Having appeared in more than 50 national commercials, Jim is best known for his role of Roger Parker in the hit Nickelodeon show *My Brother and Me*.

“Father Tolton’s story needs to be told,” says Jim. “As a black man, this very important part of history is something that I want the world to hear about. I truly feel blessed to be the one to share Father Augustus Tolton with all who will listen!”

Jim and his wife Robin reside in Florida; they are the proud parents of six children.

**About Saint Luke Productions:** For nearly 40 years, Saint Luke Productions has been creating inspiring live dramas, films, radio programming, and more. Their productions on the Gospels and the lives of the saints, including the acclaimed feature film *Thérèse*, have been seen by millions of people worldwide. For more information about Saint Luke Productions, visit [www.stlukeproductions.com](http://www.stlukeproductions.com).

**Interview Contact:** Actor Jim Coleman and Leonardo Defilippis, *Tolton* director, producer, and founder of Saint Luke Productions, are available for interview by appointment and by phone. To schedule an interview, contact Lisa Meany, Public Relations for Saint Luke Productions.

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### **INFORMATION AT A GLANCE:**

***Tolton: From Slave to Priest*** ([www.toltondrama.com](http://www.toltondrama.com))

Sunday, April 22, 2018 at 4:00pm  
5771 Cleveland Avenue, Stevensville, MI 49127

#### **Admission:**

Admission will be \$5 per individual. Additional free-will donations will be accepted.  
*Suitable for Ages 10 & Up*

#### **Tickets & Information:**

St. Joseph Parish Office  
(269) 983-1575