In the Shadow of the Cross:
Black Women and the Making of U.S. Catholicism

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Contrary to popular belief, Black women and girls have never been inconsequential figures in the history of the U.S. Catholic Church. In this talk, Williams will trace the lives, labors, and struggles of African American Catholic women and girls from their earliest appearance in the historical record in 16th-century Spanish Florida to the present day. Drawing upon a host of previously ignored sources, including archival records and oral history, Williams will demonstrate why any narrative of the U.S. Catholic experience that marginalizes or ignores Black women and girls is woefully incomplete and perhaps even intentionally insincere.

Shannen Dee Williams is the Albert LePage Assistant Professor of History at Villanova University. She is a historian of the United States with research and teaching specializations in African American, women’s, religious, and civil rights history, and in the fall of 2016, she began a three-year term as a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians. Williams’ first book, Subversive Habits: The Untold Story of Black Catholic Nuns in the United States, is under contract with Duke University Press.

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 | 6 p.m.
Free and open to the public. This lecture will be virtual, and a Zoom link will be sent upon registration. Registration is required. For more information, or to RSVP, email cacs@fordham.edu.