

*From the windows of our Convent, we could see the smoke rising from the battlefield in the plains of Chalmette, and we could hear the report of guns and the thunder of cannons. "*

This account from the annals of the Ursuline Convent conveys the overwhelming fears of the people of New Orleans in January of 1815.

On December 23, 1814, Andrew Jackson appealed to the Sisters and Bishop DuBourg to begin gathering the citizens to pray in earnest for a victory. He warned them about the enemy forces having been particularly brutal in their plundering, treatment of women, stealing of valuables, burning of cities and towns in the earlier battles on the Atlantic coast in the War of 1812...even the burning and destruction of Washington D.C. Jackson pledged to do his best to protect them and the citizens of New Orleans.

*"The night of January 7 was spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament...our Chapel was continuously thronged with pious ladies...all weeping and praying at the feet of the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Prompt Succor...and, there, as a mother in the midst of her sorrowing children, did Mary listen to the supplications of her devout clients and plead their cause with the heart of Her Divine Son. "*

Thick fog covered the battlefield on the morning of January 8 as Bishop DuBourg began the Mass. The Convent Superior, Mother Ste. Marie Olivier de Vezin, boldly made a vow to have a Mass of thanksgiving sung every year, should the Americans gain the victory.

*"At the moment of Holy Communion, a courier entered the Chapel to announce the glad tidings of the enemy's defeat...the 'Te Deum' was sung with an accent of such lively gratitude that it seemed as if the very vaults of the Chapel should open to allow this touching thanksgiving to ascend more freely to the throne of God. "*

Andrew Jackson did not hesitate to publicly acknowledge "*Divine Interposition,*" and he exclaimed to his Army, "*While, by the blessing of Heaven, directing the valor of the troops under my command, one of the most brilliant victories in the annals of the war was obtained!*"

Subsequently, he made a visit to the Convent to personally thank the Sisters for their days and nights of prayer, and he made a request of Bishop DuBourg that there be a

*"...service of public thanksgiving to be performed...in token...of the great assistance we have received from the Ruler of All Events."*

*A 200 year old promise kept...*

On January 8, 2015 at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Prompt Succor was honored at the Bicentennial Eucharistic Celebration of Thanksgiving for the Miraculous Victory in the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815 at the National Votive Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, presiding, and celebrated by more than a dozen visiting bishops and priests. The historical commemoration was attended by almost one thousand Our Lady of Prompt Succor devotees from New Orleans and from around the world, including members of the Ursulines worldwide, other religious congregations and the clergy, the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, the Louisiana Battle of New Orleans Bicentennial Commission, State and local government officials, dignitaries from the British, Canadian and French Consulates and the British Royal Navy, and the Our Lady of Prompt Succor family of associates, volunteers, friends and benefactors.