

# SERVANT OF THE POOR

Vol. 10 No. 7

NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF HENRIETTE DELILLE

December , 2008

## Vatican historical panel approves Delille bio

By Peter Finney Jr. from the *Clarion Herald*  
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A commission of historians with the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints has overwhelmingly approved the official biography submitted in the beatification cause of Mother Henriette Delille, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family in pre-Civil War New Orleans.

Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, the Rome based postulator of Mother Henriette's beatification cause, wrote Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes Oct. 8 that the six members of the historical commission had approved the "positio" - the comprehensive biography of her life - at a two-hour meeting Oct. 7.

Ambrosi told Hughes in his letter that the vote was overwhelmingly positive. Each of the six historians was asked to respond to a total of 18 questions, for a total of 18 responses.

Ambrosi said there were "17 positive responses and one suspensive vote, which is not negative."

"As you can understand, this result comes to us as higher than any of us anticipated," Ambrosi said. "We must thank the Lord and trust in his protection for the Servant of God Henriette Delille."

*"As you can understand, this result comes to us as higher than any of us could have anticipated," Ambrosi said. "We must thank the Lord and trust in his protection for the Servant of God Henriette Delille."*

Archbishop that the vote was overwhelmingly positive. Ambrosi said that the historical commission had approved the "positio" - the comprehensive biography of her life - at a two-hour meeting Oct. 7.

Mother Henriette, a free woman of color, founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1842 in New Orleans in order to attend to the spiritual and physical needs of slaves and the elderly. She did this in an era in which Louisiana law prohibited the education of slaves.

Mother Henriette's cause now will be forwarded to the congregation's theological commission, which will review not only the historical documents with respect to her life and virtue but also make a determination of



## Abp. presents Delille bio to Pope

By Peter Finney Jr. from the *Clarion Herald*  
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Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes took another step in the Vatican's exacting process for the possible beatification of Mother Henriette Delille by personally presenting Pope Benedict XVI with the official biography of the foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family on Dec. 3.

At the conclusion of the pope's general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall in Vatican City, Archbishop Hughes handed the pope a white, leather-bound copy of the official "positio" of Mother Henriette, who founded the congregation of African-American women religious in New Orleans in 1842 to teach the slaves and care for the elderly.

The positio is an academic study that contains a presentation on the life, reputation for sanctity of Mother Henriette, who is recognized by the church as a Servant of God. . . .

"I reminded the Holy Father of his previous intercession and support for her beatification and canonization," Archbishop Hughes said. "I also mentioned that a miracle has already been assessed medically in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and has been submitted for medical certification in Rome. He expressed gratitude and hope that the cause could move forward."

Sister Eva Regina, superior of the Sisters of the Holy Family, said she was overjoyed that Archbishop Hughes had been able to make the presentation directly to the Pope.

"Lord, have mercy, we're just so happy it occurred," Sister Eva Regina said. "It's overwhelming. We're filled with joy

*The positio is an exhaustive academic study that contains a presentation on the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Mother Henriette. (It is also a defense.)*

exhaustive contains a pre-virtues and ty of Mother recognized Servant of Holy Father est in and sup-tion and can-Archbishop mentioned already been

# Wonderful woman, wonderful life, wonderful story

Mrs. Laura Rubit's story should be told to inspire and to strengthen the rest of us.

Mrs. Rubit has lived fully for 112 years. This includes all that makes up her personality: physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally and totally.

It is important to mention that she bore six children and is grandmother, great grandmother and great great grandmother to many. Mrs. Rubit has been a witness to the progress that has made life so much better for the struggling poor.

She is a happy person who possesses and spreads to all those around her, her love for life, her love for God and His Blessed Mother. She delights in singing,

dressing up, wearing good perfume, and having a good time, all in the name of what is good, true, and beautiful -- in short, all for



Mrs. Laura Rubit at age 112

the honor and glory of God.

Because of her faithfulness, God has blessed her with generous and compassionate children who take care of her. Two daughters are Sisters of the Holy family - Sisters Luke and Charlotte.

She courageously faced life's challenges - the deaths of her beloved husband, Oneazifor, and a son, Lester; a bout with cancer, from which she was miraculously healed.

She triumphed because of her great love for God and His Mother and also for her deep faith, prayerfulness, and spirit of loving gratitude.

## VATICAN from p.1

whether her life and virtue were "heroic."

"We're contending that they were, No. 1, because of the kind of life she had to leave behind in order to enter the life she led," Archbishop Hughes said, referring to the cultural expectations that Henriette would become a mistress to a white aristocrat. "Second, she had the courage to offer education and health care services to slaves when that was forbade by state law. Third, she formed a religious community for black Catholics in a whitedominated Catholic Church at

that time."

If the theological commission approves the positio, medical experts then must evaluate a miracle that has been attributed to Mother Henriette's intercession. It involves the healing of a Houston girl from life-threatening double pneumonia and internal bleeding 11 years ago.

Then the full body of the Congregation, mostly Cardinals, would vote on the beatification cause. Peter Finney, Jr. can be reached at [pfinney@clari-onherald.org](mailto:pfinney@clari-onherald.org).

## Readership Update:

By Barbara Duhe

"As to even better news, the Cause for Henriette Delille has been given absolute precedence over other Causes." ..These were the words in a November email to Sr. Eva Regina, Superior General, from Dr. Ambrosi, the postulator for Henriette's Cause in Rome.

We know now, that it is through the prayers offered by you, our faithful readership, that a statement like the one above can be made. Our newsletter now has a readership of over 9,000 and continues to grow.

All friends, alumnae, contributors, petitioners, church parishes, clergy, reli-

gious and many other interested persons are recipients of the quarterly newsletter.

We encourage all of you to continue your prayers on behalf of the Beatification and Canonization of Servant of God Henriette Delille. Pray that the theologians will render a positive judgement in April '09.

It is at this time of year that we ask you to notify us if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter by emailing us at [delillecomoff@yahoo.com](mailto:delillecomoff@yahoo.com) or returning the address label. We always welcome new readers.

## ABP. PRESENTS

from p. 1

and filled with a lot of hope and enthusiasm that our foundress, who we know lived a holy life, is being reviewed by the whole church. We know now that she no longer belongs just to us but also to the entire church."

Archbishop Hughes was in Rome last week as a member of Vox Clara ("Clear Voice"), a group of English-speaking bishops from around the world that are discussing the translation of liturgical texts.

If the theological commission approves the positio,

medical experts then must evaluate a miracle that has been attributed to Mother Henriette's intercession . . .

Then, the full body of the congregation, mostly cardinals, would vote on the beatification cause.

*We express our sincere sympathy and prayers to Mr. Edward LeBoeuf on the death of his wife.*

# November belongs to Servant of God Mere Henriette

Servant of God Mere Henriette Delille died November 17, 1862.

The date of our foundation as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family is observed on the Feast of our Lady's Presentation in the temple, November 21.

For many years we have also had an annual Mass honoring Henriette.

Although we feed some poor at our door everyday, we have a special day to feed the homeless at Ozaman Inn in her honor, with our



Gifts are brought by Sisters Judith and Rose de Lima, Virginia Gould and Deacon Ron Guidry, Master of Ceremony at the annual Mass.

Sisters and Friends headed this year by Mrs. Gail B. Johnson. A Triduum in preparation for Founder's Day is celebrated; the retreat guide this year was Father Joseph Brown, SJ.

There were many presentations and visitations since the last issue of *Servant of the Poor*.

## SPEAKERS

The following Sisters have spoken about Mother Henriette this session: Sisters Eva Regina, Clare of Assisi, Agnes Marie, Mary Laura, Gloria, Doris, and others, unknown at this writing.

## VISITATIONS

The following are places we have visited and spoken of Mere Delille.

Mercy Endeavors Senior Center

St. Andrew the Apostle Ladies Guild

St. Joan of Arc Church

St. Paul the Apostle Church

St. Juliana Church, Alexandria, Louisiana

St. Bridgit in Los Angeles

The Louisiana Creole Research Association Conference, New Orleans

A special Mass in Washington, DC

St. Francis Xavier, Baton Rouge

St. Joan of Arc School, New Orleans

Holy Ghost School, New Orleans

Holy Ghost, Opelousas

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lafayette, LA

St. Mary's Academy had an installation of Friends of Henriette and a special Mass honoring her.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Kenner, LA

Sr. Mary Anthony Allen promotes Delille's Cause at the Tri Community Nursing Facility in Palmetto, LA.



Gala at the Bourbon Orleans

## DONATIONS

Not only are the people welcoming and hospitable, but they also give very generous donations to help with the Cause of canoniza-

tion. After Mass, the patron party was held at the rectory and the gala at the Bourbon Orleans Hotel Ballroom.

The entire night was filled with appreciation of



Scenes from Mass at St. Bridgit in Los Angeles

tion. For this we are most grateful.

Mere Henriette Delille by the the Sisters and their supporters.

Mere Henriette also was featured on TV. CBS local morning show gave time to explain the canonization process and to promote the Mass and Gala.

The beautiful annual Mass was held at St. Louis Cathedral.

Archbishop Hughes was celebrant and homilist. The inspirational music was rendered by Dwight and Connie Fitch and St. Raymond/St. Leo Choir.

## Mass at St. Brigid

Having permission from Father Thomas Frank, SSJ to have a mass honoring Mere Henriette Delille at St. Brigit Church in Los Angeles, California, the planning committee, Kim De-Lay Manning, Pauletta Oliver James, Celeste Chretien, Annette Lockett, Michelle Olinger Jolly, Effie Clark, Cynthia LaCour-Smith, readied every phase of the celebration November 9.

See CALIFORNIA, p.5

## Sacred Heart in Joliet, IL promotes Delille's Cause

Dear Sister Doris:

Father Raymond Lescher, the pastor of Sacred Heart Church here in Joliet, has asked me to write you to let you know what we did here at Sacred Heart to help promote the beatification of your foundress, Mother Henriette Delille. We thank you for sending the prayer and brochure so promptly.

Sacred Heart Church is a small mixed community of worshippers. . . .with a good Gospel Choir.

The prayer for Henriette Delille and the brochure were placed in the bulletin. At the homily Father Lescher said a few words of introduction and then invited me up to speak about Henriette Delille and the Holy Family Sisters. . . .The people were quite receptive. . . . Father Lescher is sending you a donation of \$250.00 from Sacred Heart Church.

We shall continue to promote the cause of Mother Henriette Delille.

Sincerely,

Edward Cabey

Below are a few excerpts from Mr. Cabey's talk.

"I know how well they work for I am a product of their care and nurturing. I remember my very first real encounter with the Holy Family Sisters. It was Christmas of 1950. I was in the seminary at Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, about 60 miles from New Orleans. All the seminarians were

going home for Christmas, but two of us from the West Indies and two from Belize in Central America. We could not afford to go home. The Sisters of the Holy Family came to the rescue, took us in at the Lafon Home for Boys in New Orleans and provided for us what I consider to be the best Christmas ever.

They fed us well and showered us with Christmas gifts. . . . After all these years I still fondly remember Sister Florence, Sister Ann and Sister Martin de Porres. They left a lasting impression on me. I will never forget the care and concern I received from those Sisters at Notre Dame Seminary. The names that come to mind are Sister Leontyne, Sister Magdalen and Sister Sarah.

The influence of the Holy Family Sisters on Black Priests and Brothers is very great.

"We all know that one needs money and clout in order to get a person canonized. The Holy Family Sisters have neither. But what they do have is a dedicated band of people who pray with them for the canonization of their foundress, HENRIETTE DELILLE. I am in that prayer group and would ask all of you to join in."



Scenes from the feeding of the poor at Ozanam Inn

## Join us as we pray and await word from Rome

All of us who are waiting for the beatification of Servant of God Mere Henriette Delille are excited by the news that has come from our Postulator, Dr. Andrea Ambrosi and the happenings in Rome.

In addition to the news of the printing of the positio, the email continues, "As to other even better news, the Cause for Henriette Delille has been given absolute precedence over other causes."

"Everything has been taken care of and now we are waiting for the judgment to be made during the

month of April by a group of nine theological professors. Their job will be to say if she exercised virtue in a heroic way. Preparations are also being made to study the miracle by medical experts in Rome. This is very, very good news."

We are greatly encouraged and believe and pray that the good news we are really waiting for will not be too far away.

We invite all of you to join us in extra prayers at this exciting, very special time in the process.

## Bishop Shelton visits our Sisters in Alexandria



Most Reverend Shelton Fabre, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans officiated at Mass then visited with and shared a meal with the Sisters of the Holy family in Alexandria, Louisiana

during November.

Bishop Fabre was in Alexandria to give a retreat to the priests there. Father Thompson accompanied him. Sisters Eva Regina and Clare of Assisi were present.

## CALIFORNIA from page 3

The celebrant for the Mass was Father John G. Harfman. Father Chifrilla, Superior General of the Josephites, concelebrated. The congregation was welcoming and hospitable.

Sisters Doris Goudeaux and Laura Mercier spoke at



Judith's dates are 1832-1911

Mass. It was the highlight and culminating event, but the trip consisted of much more.

We lived at Mr. and Mrs. Harold Anderson's home in Compton, California where we were treated royally.

Traveled to Diamond Bar offered us an opportunity to spend a relaxing day and night Sister Laura's sister.

At St. Albert the Great Delille Center we joined the Associates to share in their Annual Day of Recollection.

There we met Gabriel Osei, a high school student who was so impressed with Henriette's life and mission that she chose Henriette for her confirmation name.

Mrs. Jolly and her mother, relatives of Mother Henriette, drove us to Calvary Cemetery to visit the grave of Judith Vincent, the daughter of Jean Delille,

Mother Henriette's brother. The celebration continued at Michelle Olinger Jolly's house to meet more relatives of Mere Henriette.

## Latest Book on Henriette Delille

The latest book on Mere Henriette Delille, *The Subversive Power of Love, The Vision of Henriette Delille*, was written by M. Shawn Copeland. It is the 2007 Madaleva Lecture in Spirituality.

In 2004, Dr. Copeland was appointed by Archbishop Hughes as a member of the Theological Commission "to evaluate Delille's writings and and render judgement on their conformity to Roman Catholic teaching on faith and morals."

M. Shawn Copeland, a prolific writer, is associate professor of systematic theology at Boston College and (adjunct) at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier in New Orleans. The book is published by the Paulist Press for \$9.95.

[www.paulistpress.com](http://www.paulistpress.com). A review will appear in another issue of *Servant of the Poor*.

## Through Mere Henriette's Intercession

Mrs. Henry is a graduate of Holy Ghost High School in Opelousas, LA.

She is a retired nursing administrator of St. Mary's Hospital in Port Arthur, TX.

Dear Sister, My family and I were all ready to evacuate for Hurricane Rita in 2005. I decid-

ed to make one last trip through the house.

As I did I prayed, especially to Mother Henriette Delille, asking her to please ask Jesus to protect our home and have it there for us when we would return.

After one of the most terrible storms in the Texas area and weeks of delay, we finally returned.

In spite of the destruction surrounding my home, I'm happy to report that my home was not severely damaged, but saved.

See INTERCESSION,6



## The Garifuna Mass

By Sister Jean Martinez

The annual Garifuna Mass was held for the first time after Hurricane Katrina at Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Catholic Church on Dauphine Street, November 9, 2008. Under the direction of Mrs. Maria Elena Zuniga, and Mrs. Austra Zapata, a small choir and drummers practiced steadily since October for the event.

Hours of practice of new songs paid off as the church swelled on November 9 with a Hispanic congregation that listened with bright eyes to the new sounds of the Garifuna language, and swayed to the haunting rhythms of the Garifuna drums.

The Garifuna, a people of the African Diaspora from Central America, tradition-

ally celebrate their exile from their island home of St. Vincent in the late 1800's, in the month of November.

Kudos to Father Benson, the pastor, the associate, the congregation, the Garifuna leaders, and community for the support, and joy of worshipping together.

### Correction

In the Summer, 2008 issue, on page 3, it was mistakenly written "Archbishop Philip Hannan's 92nd birthday." It was really his 95th birthday.

Relatives and friends of Delille



Merry Christmas from SSFs



Snow in New Orleans 2008



Sisters of the Holy Family  
Henriette Delille Commission Office  
6901 Chef Menteur Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70126

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"I believe in  
God.  
I hope in God.  
I love.  
I want to live  
and die for God."  
-Henriette Delille

## Inside . . .

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### Staff

Sister Doris Goudeaux  
Sister Judith Therese Barial  
Sister Shelia Marie Williams  
Barbara Dube  
Carolyn Washington  
Elizabeth Malone  
Dorothy Ganier  
Claire Wilson

## Through Henriette's Intercession from page 5

I firmly believe that Mother Henriette interceded for me at that time as she does for me, in so many instances, so many other times. I depend on her.

I consider myself a leader in promoting devotion to Mother Henriette Delille in my parish and in my personal life.

**Maggie B. Henry, TX**

Dear Sir(s)/Madam(s)

I recently prayed and asked Ms. Delille, who is being considered for Saint-hood, to consider my needs.

I am a teacher who was injured and has not received Workers Comp. funds or Disability insurance payments in nine months! I initiated my

prayers to Ms. Delille, Monday evening, Thursday morning, 11-13-08, I received a call, affirming that the Disability insurance payments are en-route.

Nothing has been done recently, to allow this payment to be processed. In my prayers, I shared with Ms. Delille, that if any of these long awaited payments were received, through her intercession and aid, I would contact the Catholic Church.

This is a miracle and Ms. Delille, who is being considered for Canonization had it fulfilled. Please direct this to the Canonization board, so that they will proceed with Ms. Delille's

Canonization.  
**EMB, CA**

### Director's Note

Many of our Friends of Henriette Delille, other Sisters, and Associates tell me about favors you receive from Servant of God Mere Henriette Delille, but you forget to write to us.

Just tell us **who, where, when, why, and how.**

We really would like to hear from you. If an email is easier, please send an email: [delillecomoff@yahoo.com](mailto:delillecomoff@yahoo.com)

**Pray Henriette Delille's prayer very frequently.**