



# Servant of the Poor



NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS

OF HENRIETTE DELILLE

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1862

## Through Henriette Delille's Intercession

In September 2000, at thirty-five years of age, I suddenly fell ill. I was hospitalized with severe heart failure and ventricular arrhythmia secondary to severe ventricular distension (cardiomyopathy).

I stayed in the hospital from September 13-28. I received intensive treatment. I was also on bed rest for almost four months. I remain on drug therapy today.

When I entered the hospital, my heart function was at approximately 8%. Normal heart function is 50% - 55%. The doctors were befuddled by my condition. The Chief of Cardiology became my primary physician.

Currently, my heart function is drastically improved and is about 40% - 45%.

While in the hospital my wife, Chimene Grant Connor, gave me a prayer to Mother Delille asking her intervention with *GOD*.

On two occasions Mother Delille intervened and aided my recovery. First, after a failed attempt by the doctors to test my heart to see if I needed a defibrillator, which landed me in intensive care. I asked for a sign letting me know whether to allow them to perform the sur-

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## Researchers Explore Delille's Formation in Convent, LA

In mid-January, Doctors Virginia Gould and Charles Nolan, of the Historical Commission, returned to Rome to spend time in the International Archives of the Religious of the Sacred Heart to find documental proof of Henriette's initial formation with the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

In her journal, Sister M. Bernard Deggs wrote, "Both the first and second superiors were instructed by the sisters up in St. James Parish, by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart." Both the Sisters of the Holy Family and the Religious of the Sacred Heart have strong oral traditions that Henriette Delille received her initial formation in religious life at St. Michael's in Convent, LA, upriver from New Orleans.

St. Michael's was a favorite spot for Bishop Antoine Blanc. He visited there often, spending time with the Sisters and students. The convent at St.

Michael's was a natural place to send Delille for a period of instruction in religious life prior to forming her own community. It was

secluded from New Orleans. No one would have known her. There were few, if any, novices there.

See **RESEARCHERS**, page 5

## Mass Promotes Devotion



Fr. John Ford, ST, gives the homily as Archbishop Hughes and Deacons Hull and Rayfield listen during the Memorial Mass honoring Henriette Delille. Photo by Sidney St. Martin

"Expectation is the power that shapes our lives," said Father Ford as he began his homily. Then he asked what about our expectations - of ourselves, others, and God.

He continued, "Henriette's expectations of God were not immature nor misguided.

ed. She expected that it was her calling to address the needs of our people."

This she did as she expressed in her prayer: "I believe in God. I hope in God. I love, I want to live and die for God."

See **MASS**, page 2

## Dr. Ambrosi Named New Postulator for Delille



Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, the new Postulator for the Delille Cause

Mr. Andrea Ambrosi is a canon and civil lawyer of the Roman Rota, and licensed in Sacred Theology.

He has been a lawyer of the Congregation of Saints for 20 years.

During this time Dr. Ambrosi has taken care of and completed hundreds of causes in different parts of the world, 34 countries altogether.

In almost 30 years of

experience many causes have been pursued. Some of them include Pope John XXIII and currently 10 in the United States. Some of the easily recognizable names are: Father Peyton, Cardinal Cooke, Bishop Sheen, Father Moreau, and Mother Henriette Delille.

Dr. Ambrosi plans a visit to the Sisters of the Holy Family Motherhouse in June.

# Question: What Is Happening with the Cause?

The first answer is: The Cause is moving very well. Devotion to Henriette Delille is growing. From the members of the Historical Commission to the latest Friends of Henriette Delille, everything is positive, hopeful, and exciting.

More than 85 documents in French, Spanish, Latin and English are being transcribed and notarized. Dr. Charles Nolan is preparing

the twelve chapter document which tells Delille's story and gives the research on her life.

This document will be ready to present to the Congregation of Saints by June 2004.

The new Postulator will visit the Motherhouse in June and he is ready to move the Cause as speedily as possible.

Father Cyprian Davis'

book, *Henriette Delille: Servant of Slaves, Witness to the Poor*, the definitive biography of Henriette Delille, may be ordered from the Henriette Delille Commission Office after June 1, 2004.

Other books featuring Delille are also available, either at the Commission Office or Amazon: *Henriette Delille, Servant of Slaves*, Virginia Gould

and Charles Nolan; *Servant to the Slaves*, a children's book, David Collins; *Henriette Delille, Servant of Slaves*, a historical novel, William Kelley; *No Cross, No Crown: Black Nuns in 19th Century New Orleans*, Sr. Bernard Deggs, edited by Gould and Nolan; and *Religious Pioneers* edited by Nolan and Dawes.

## MASS *continued*



Waiting to feed the homeless

Mass was celebrated November 15 at the Motherhouse.

The annual Memorial Mass was well attended. As usual we had the cooperation of Archbishop Hughes, Fathers John Ford, Howard Byrd, and Jerome Robinson; Deacons Larry Calvin, Samuel Hull and Rudy Rayfield; seminarians from Notre Dame; the choir from St. Peter Claver, under the direction of Veronica Downs-Dorsey; the Fourth Degree Knights of Peter Claver of E.O. Moss Assembly #4; liturgical dancers from St. Mary's Academy, and of course, the faithful Friends of Henriette Delille and the Events Co.

"Desserts of New

Orleans" contributed by St. John Berchmans Center, was a delectable addition to the reception after Mass.

This was Sister Daniel Cooper's idea and the Sisters at St. John collaborated to make this feature a tasty success.

The Saturday preceding the Mass is the feeding of the poor at Ozanam Inn. A hot, fresh cooked meal is served, plus a good-will bag containing a Delille T-shirt and toiletries.

Other events commemorating Delille include: a talk at St. Augustine Church in Cane River, LA where her photograph was placed in the church annex; the hosting of 250 Girl Scouts, of the Archdiocese, and their moderators at the Motherhouse for pilgrimage honoring Mother Delille; welcoming of 60 young men discerning their vocation, with Father



Reception after the Delille Mass in the dining room

Fernand Cheri and four other priests; a talk at St. Brigid's Church where young parishioners dressed as Henriette, Juliette, and Josephine; re-enactment of Delille's story at St. John Berchmans' Child Development Center; a special program at Holy Ghost School, New Orleans; a presentation on Delille by Father Cyprian Davis at the Conference, Uncommon Faithfulness of African Americans, at the University of Notre Dame.

There are also Chapters of *Friends of Henriette Delille* and devotion to her in other cities where Mass has been held in her honor, that the Commission Office knows of. We believe there are many more areas of devotion that have not been reported.

These include: in Louisiana, Opelousas, Lafayette, and New Orleans; in California, Oakland, Compton, and Los Angeles; in Arizona, Phoenix; in Texas, Houston; New York; Washington, DC; Gutierrez, Vera Cruz, Mexico and Benin City, Nigeria, West Africa.



St. Brigid's Henriette, Juliette, and Josephine

We are planning to visit many other cities. If you would like us to come to your city, please write to us. Please let us know what you are doing in your area.

*Thank you!*



Mr. Scartino and Sr. M. Consilia ready bags to give to homeless.

# Let Us Remember . . .



**Sr. Anthony Allen**



**Sr. Romuald Cormier**



**Sr. Esther Marie Estero**



**Sr. Francis Paula Guillory**

**Sister Anthony Allen**, after rendering many years of service to youth in the elementary schools, is now at the Motherhouse where she can spend more time in prayer and relaxation.

She is happy as she assists with the filing in the Medical Records Office at the Motherhouse.

As Sister looks back on her life, she thanks God for the opportunity to have ministered in so many places and to have traveled to many places she never would have seen if she hadn't become a religious. Sister Anthony thanks God for His bounty!!

**Sister Romuald Cormier** is still in ministry. She serves at Lafon Child Development Center.

For years Sister Romuald has helped to form young children in the love of God and in learning the fundamentals of education.

Sister thanks God for His goodness to her and strives to continue her ministry for as long as she lives.

**Sister Esther Marie Estero** has spent many

years teaching and ministering to God's people. And she continues today in Ville Platte, LA, by accompanying Sr. Clara Jackson in her work.

Although all of her teaching years have been memorable, Sister cherishes her "Teacher of the Year Award" given to her at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Sister will celebrate 60 years as a religious in 2005.

**Sister Frances Paula Guillory's** name is readily recognized by parents and students of Our Lady of Victory and St. Albert Schools in Compton, CA and also at St. Paul, now Holy Family, in Lafayette, LA where she ministered as principal for many years.

Today Sister serves at Holy Ghost Parish in Opelousas, LA in the CCD program.

She says, "Always remember that if you trust in the Lord, He will see you through, with no questions asked."

**Sister Marie Antonia Rideau** is from the small

country town of Lebeau, LA. She entered the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1944 and has taught in schools in Texas and Louisiana for fifty years.

In 1997 she left the classroom and began working with the CCD Program in Holy Ghost Parish in Opelousas, LA.

Sister also visits the sick and serves as Eucharistic Minister and lector in the parish.

**Sister Luke Rubit** is a native of Lake Charles, LA. She has been a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family for 61 years.

During the course of years she has served as Maintenance Supervisor at Notre Dame Seminary, Lafon Nursing Facility and the Motherhouse, where she is working.

Sister states, "As we continue to celebrate and witness the power of Jesus to transform our lives, we will have a closer relationship with Him."

**Sister Marie Francine Thomas**, after having served our Congregation

for over 30 years as treasurer at the Motherhouse and St. Mary's Academy, is getting a well deserved break.

Sister uses this time to pray, to relax, and just to enjoy the blessings that come with having done a job well.

Not only did Sister serve as treasurer, but she also taught in several schools in Louisiana. Her most memorable is St. Mary's Academy, her alma mater.

We wish Sister much joy. **Sister Frances Cabrini Turnbull** was born in Baton Rouge, LA. She came to St. Mary's Academy at a very young age.

After seeing the heavy front doors of the convent, she felt strange to be in such a huge building with a door that had about ten locks on it.

Sister treasures a friendship that began in third grade and has fond memories of her teachers.

Sister has served on many missions as principal and teacher. Currently she ministers at the House of the Holy Family.



**Sr. Marie Antonia Rideau**



**Sr. M. Luke Rubit**



**Sr. Marie Francine Thomas**



**Sr. Frances Cabrini Turnbull**

# Developing News . . .

**Y**um! Yum! Is the best description for the 2003 fruit-cakes. They were delicious. Thanks to all who supported our season and thanks to all who sent us notes and letters of encouragement. It makes it all worthwhile.

The *Celebration of Christmas* with the Sisters was a tremendous success. Although it was cold, the party-goers were welcomed, entertained and fed warmly.

The food was provided compliments of the River boat Natchez, Brennan's, Gason Nelson, Sodexo Catering, Aramark (Leon West), and Veron Provision Co., Inc.

Entertainment was provided by Sharon Martin, Rahasaana Ison, and the Rich Ison Experience, and our own Sr. Elizabeth Ann Holmes, principal of House of the Holy Family.

In addition, our own St. Mary's Academy Choir greeted everyone with Christmas carols. Amidst all that fun, food and dance there was a silent and an open auction.

It was a great evening to spend with wonderful people coming together to share conversation and dancing.

Thanks to all of our Major Donors, and Supporters. The Sisters' ministry is sustained by you, believers in our work, among the people of God.

As we look to the future, be reminded of the annual Lenten Appeal which invites you to continue to help the Sisters in their work for the church.

We are also planning our Convention which we're hoping to see grow with the inclusion of the associates and Friends of Henriette Delille participating.

The conference begins

with "meet and greet" evening on Friday in the Hospitality Suite at the Doubletree Hotel on Canal Street. On Saturday morning there will be two conference tracts, and vendors peddling their wares.

After lunch break, there will be tour choices to make and take. Sunday begins with Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by the banquet at 12:00 noon.

Details will be forwarded to you later. Please plan to attend.

## Tidbit.

The Development Office is the happy and grateful recipient of an antique mirror donated by Elizabeth Marsh, a benefactor.

The mirror adorns the wall of the Development Office conference room, located on the west wing of the Motherhouse. If you are ever in the area, you must come and see it.

## Trip Down Under

It is not too late to sign up for our fabulous trip to Australia. The Development Office is sponsoring a trip to Australia. June 1, 2004 to June 16, 2004. The cost is \$4,255.00 (double occupancy) plus air tax and travel insurance. Price is good until February 28, 2004.

A fabulous package awaits you. A free trip to the Fiji Islands is included in your package, airfare, meals, tour costs, portage, four star hotels, and more. Call Connie Tregre at (504) 244-4445 for details. If you are not interested in the Fiji Islands, you will leave the United States on June 5th for "God's country.", Australia. Same price applies. Come and join us for a fun filled tour of Australia,

Soooooooooooooo llong !!!

## Dear Associates, Alumni and Friends of the Sisters of the Holy Family:

You are cordially invited to attend the Sisters of the Holy Family's Annual Convention, "Come Dance with Us to the Father" June 25-27, 2004.

The convention will be held at the Doubletree Hotel, 300 Canal Street, and St Mary's Academy, 6905 Chef Menteur Highway. Our Keynote speaker will be nationally acclaimed Joyce Grant. Come join us. Something exciting will happen that will change your life and the lives of others. We are excited about our new component to the convention. We will add an SSF Associates' tract to the event. We are looking forward to the Associates from all over the country and Belize joining us.

We are planning a wonderful weekend of inspiration, information, health and wellness. For conventioners traveling, we have reserved rooms at the Doubletree Hotel, 300 Canal Street. The Doubletree has offered us a special rate of \$99.00 plus tax, a night. You must register by May 25, 2004 to guarantee this rate, after which the rooms will revert to the going rate at the time. Register as soon as possible. The block of rooms are on a first come-first serve basis. Please note there is no guarantee on availability. There will be a hospitality suite available for you to unwind after your travel on Friday night, June 25th. For reservations, call 1 (504) 581-1300 or the toll free number, 1 (888) 874-9074.

**The Pre-Registration Weekend Package is \$115.00- Includes: registration for Saturday Conference, Lunch, Souvenir, and Tour; Sunday Mass, and Banquet. (Your room registration is separate). Late Registration Weekend Package is \$140.00.**

*In order to take advantage of this price you must send in your registration and your check payable to the Sisters of the Holy Family Development Office. Please mail to: Sisters of the Holy Family Annual Convention, 6901 Chef Menteur Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70126*

Saturday, June 26 – Pre Registration \$40.00

Late or On-site Registration \$45.00

Includes souvenir, conference, and lunch.

Individual: Pre Registered Tour on Sat. p.m. \$40.00

On-site \$50.00

We will visit the highlights of New Orleans and historical sites of Henriette Delille. There will be a dramatization of Henriette at her grave site.

Sunday, June 27 Mass – Motherhouse

– *Conventioners will be bused.*

Luncheon - Doubletree Hotel Pre registered \$40.00

On-site \$45.00

**If you are interested in being a coordinator in your city or state, please contact Connie Tregre at 504.244.4445.**

**Come and bring a friend!**



*Come Dance with Us to the Father*

## Constitutions Update

All the members of the Congregation gathered at the Motherhouse February 20-22 to finalize the approval of our rewritten *Constitutions* and *Directory*.

Beginning with a holy hour Friday evening and an all night Eucharistic adoration, we were spiritually ready for our most solemn work.

Archbishop Hughes gave us his blessings as he celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit Saturday morning.

In a spirit of readiness and sincerity, we voted and approved almost unanimously all of the articles of the *Constitutions* and those of the *Directory* before 4:00 p.m. Sunday.

Sister Sylvia will bring this document to Rome in May when she goes to attend the UISG Conference.

We are grateful to Almighty God for His goodness to us and also to all of you who remembered us in prayer.

**Order the Definitive Biography  
of Henriette Delille,**

***Henriette Delille:  
Servant of Slaves,  
Witness to the Poor***

by  
**Father Cyprian Davis, O.S.B.**

from the  
**Delille Commission Office  
6901 Chef Menteur Blvd.  
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70126-5215**

**504.241.5400**

**E mail:  
srdorisgoudeaux@aol.com**

**website:  
www.sistersoftheholymfamily.org**

## Thank You Father James Fitzpatrick, O.M.I.

For all the things you did to promote devotion to Henriette Delille, we thank you. For the manner in which you directed us to get the Cause moving, we thank you.

For all of your great suggestions for making Henriette's name known, we thank you. For traveling with us to different cities and preaching at the

Masses honoring Delille, we thank you. For taking interest in the welfare and holiness of our Congregation, we thank you. For assisting us in so many ways that we could not enumerate, we thank you.

We shall miss you, but we wish you well in your ministry in Australia. We will keep you in our prayers and we will be



*What is this "... thing of  
beauty . . . a joy forever?"*

happy to see you when you come to New Orleans. God bless you!

### To Whom It May Concern . . .

Blessed Henriette Delille is so worthy of praise and canonization to Sainthood.

Through my prayers and requests to Mother Henriette Delille and her intercession to almighty God on my behalf with her prayers, the following favors were granted:

My oldest son's life was turned around and he was

ordained a Catholic priest.

After many mishaps my daughter gave birth to a healthy, very intelligent baby girl. My daughter was recently offered a very high paying job working in D.C. My son-in-law was promoted to a higher position in the navy as an officer.

My other son turned his life around and has a good

job in Houston and goes to church regularly.

Everything and everyone I pray for to Henriette Delille all my favors have been granted through her intercession to Almighty God.

Please canonize her to sainthood.

**Sedonia D. LaBee  
New Orleans**

### RESEARCHERS

Mother Annette Praz, superior at St. Michael's, was a French immigrant Sister and close to Madeleine Sophie Barat. She did not have an assistant and thus would have been able to direct Delille herself.

Sacred Heart historians have written different accounts of when Delille received this formation at St. Michael's. Sister Jeanne de Charry, in her multi-volume edition of the Barat-Duchesne letters, indicated that this instruction took place in 1836. A thorough review of her professional correspondence provided no indication of the source for this statement. Other evidence found in the archives points to the more probable 1851-1852 period just after Delille's first profession of

vows.

Our week in Rome also provided an opportunity to review the correspondence, constitutions, rules, and



daily schedule at St. Michael's to better understand the time and formation program that Delille undertook.

Like others who presented themselves to the community having been "touched by God," Delille would have followed a rigorous daily schedule, been tested to discern that her vocation was truly from

God, and been instructed in the fundamentals of religious life "according to her gifts." At the center of this formation was the development of an openness to serve God "according to his will and good pleasure."

The Sisters of the Holy Family have always recalled with special appreciation the role of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in helping establish their community in the contentious years before the Civil War.

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart share this special bond with the Sisters of the Holy Family. They welcomed us warmly and worked fervently to help add flesh to bones of this part of the historical connection between the two communities.

**Virginia Meacham Gould  
Charles E. Nolan**



FRIENDS OF HENRIETTE DELILLE  
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NEW ORLEANS, LA 70126-5215

Henriette's Prayer:

**"I believe in God.  
I hope in God.  
I love.**

**I want to live and die  
for God,"**

encapsulates her life  
and promotes devotion.

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Delille.

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Sisters of the Holy Family

"Mother  
Delille  
is truly of  
GOD  
and I squarely  
credit her for  
my life."

*Editorial Staff:*

Charles E. Nolan, Sister Doris  
Goudeaux, Dorenda Dupont,  
Gail Johnson,  
Sister Barbara Marie Francis,  
Sr. Gloria Lewis, and Carolyn  
Washington

## LETTERS FROM NEAR AND FAR

*continued from page 1*

perform the surgical procedure. I slept with the prayer card on my chest overnight. Second, I spent the next several days praying for Mother Delille's further intervention.

Things were looking bleak but one day my wife and I witnessed a double rainbow outside the hospital window on a sunny day. I allowed the doctors to perform the surgical procedure. It was successful. I took a dramatic turn for the better. While my actual heart function had not improved greatly during my hospital stay, I felt normal. I was not winded. I pray for Mother Delille's intervention each night since then. After one year my heart function had increased to 20% and within two years it was up to 40%.

Every night after I pray to thank Mother Delille, I tell

myself I will write to you.

As I sat in my hospital bed I knew that God was not finished with me yet. I am unaware of my ultimate purpose on this earth. If it is to be a conduit by which Mother Delille's canonization occurs, it would be worth all the hardships I have endured. Mother Delille is truly of GOD and I squarely credit her for my life.

**Karl J. Connor, New Orleans**

Dear Sisters:

I always pray to Mother Henriette Delille. I have lots of faith in her.

In December my brother-in-law, Joseph, called me from the hospital about 9:30 PM. He had been in the hospital for three months. He had a fall and fractured his hip. He has been in pain

ever since he was in the hospital. One Friday night he called and said that he was in so much pain and that he needed a miracle. I prayed to Mother Henriette Delille. I asked her to help him with his pain.

That Saturday morning he called and said that he had had a miracle. He said that he didn't have any more pain. His doctor did not know why he was not hurting anymore. He told the doctor that he had had a miracle. Mother Henriette Delille heard my prayers.

I have lots of personal prayers that Mother Henriette Delille has answered for me. I don't know if they were miracles or not, but she answered my prayers. I will continue to pray to Mother Delille.

**Agnes Brumfield, New Orleans**