



Servant of the Door

Vol. 20, No. 1

Friends of Venerable Henriette Delille

Spring 2019



CONGREGAZIONE
DELLE CAUSE DEI SANTI

Good News from Rome Moves the Cause Forward

“This is a Decree of Juridical Validity for the inquiry that was done in Little Rock, AR. This is not approval of the miraculous healing itself, but states that the inquiry that was carried out to study it was done correctly, so the case can continue moving forward.”

Prot. N. 1623-27/18

The Sisters of Holy Family are pleased to share with you the hopeful news we received from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. Last month the Congregation informed us that the process used in reviewing the alleged miracle in the diocese of Little Rock, AR was accepted and approved. While this is not approval of the alleged miracle, it is a giant step in the right direction.

We ask that you continue to pray for the beatification of Venerable Henriette Delille.

NEW ORLEANS

The Beatification and Canonization
of the Venerable Servant of God **Henriette Delille**
Foundress
of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

In an Ordinary Meeting, held on the 7th day of December of this 2018th year, this Congregation for the Causes of Saints decided the following *dubium*, namely: “Whether the validity of the Inquiry, completed at the ecclesiastical Curia of Little Rock, over the alleged miraculous healing of the youth Christine McGee, obtained through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Henriette Delille, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, is established: the witnesses were duly and correctly examined and the adduced laws legitimately contended in the case and for the effect which it concerns.”

This Congregation, attentive to the vote rendered *ex officio* and having diligently considered the matter, has replied: **AFFIRMATIVE**, that is, the validity of the Inquiry is established in the case and for the effect which it concerns, those things to be corrected by law having been corrected. Whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome, from the office of the Congregation, on the 7th day of December, A.D. 2018.

Angelus Card. Becciu
Praefectus

+Marcellus Bartolucci
Archiepiscopus tit. Mevanien.
a Secretis

Deep in Acadiana - Erath, Louisiana

“We want to know more about her,” was the clarion call of the parishioners of Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Church in Erath. This largely Catholic community, tucked away in a farming town of southwest Louisiana, had very little information about Venerable Henriette Delille. They did something about it.

On the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the pastor, Father Andre Metrejean, creatively joined a celebration of the life of Henriette Delille with a remembrance of Dr. King.

The celebration of Mass preceded a presentation about Venerable Delille and the history of the Sisters of Holy Family by Sisters Carmen Marie Bertrand and Sylvia Thibodeaux. The two Sisters shared the podium by talking about the life and works of Venerable Delille as well as reading from some of the ancient documents commemorating what people said about Mother Delille and her pioneer Sisters.

A lively Q&A session followed, coupled with giving out of prayer cards and brochures. Many purchased books and memorabilia of this holy woman of God. This quiet community had come to know more about Venerable Henriette and thus committed to venerate her faithfully.

The evening ended with musical entertainment and a delicious meal.



Erath, Louisiana

Photo by Sister Sylvia Thibodeaux

St. John Berchmans Manor and Delille Inn Honor

Venerable Henriette Delille

St. John Berchmans Manor and Delille Inn honor Venerable Henriette Delille by exhibiting a poster of her in their lobbies.

Administration, residents and Friends joined the Sisters of the Holy Family, for these two special events.

Father Howard Byrd, SSJ, Chaplain for the Friends of Venerable Henriette Delille, led those gathered in a blessing prayer.

Sr. Leona Bruner, Congregational Leader of Sisters of Holy Family, gave a brief history of the Order and of St. John Berchmans Manor. At Delille, Sister gave an update on the Cause.

Representing Christopher Homes management were Deacon Denis Adams, DeChaun Hicks and Malicia Burns. Terri North of Providence was also present.

The events were enthusiastically attended by the residents of St. John and Delille Inn who appreciated learning more about Venerable Delille and the Sisters of the Holy Family. The occasions ended with refreshments.



Left, Sister Leona Bruner and Deacon Denis Adams
Photo by Sister Richard Francis Daigle

“I believe in God.

I hope in God.

I love.

I want to live and die for God.”

Mere Henriette’s Prayer

NOLA Friends: All Present and Accounted For

As new Friends join various chapters, it is important to tell the remarkable story of Venerable Delille over and over again. At the March meeting of Friends, Dr. Virginia Meacham Gould, historian for the Cause, led the presentation. She also corrected some of the misinformation which inevitably creeps in: confusion regarding most especially, Henriette’s birth, parents, and racial background.

The Sisters are attempting to be proactive by informing the Friends of all verified facts, engaging them in discussions, and preparing them to be fully informed so that they may share their knowledge with the lay faithful and be fully involved at all levels of the canonization process.

Those promoting the canonization process must be aware that the process can take a very long time, possibly beyond their life span. Hence, it is important that the life of this holy woman, Henriette Delille, continue to be spread to engage future generations.

The Friends reported on their work of promotion: the exploration of an Opera to tell the story of Mother Delille in a musical format, distribution of prayer cards and brochures, and making sure the image of Venerable Henriette Delille is in every Catholic Church.

We Welcome Young People to Become Friends of Henriette

Middle school student wants to know.

B.P. is a middle school student who is delighted that her theology teacher is exposing her eighth grade class to the lives of holy men and women of God. This year the class focused on reading about the lives of holy persons who are in the midst of the Canonization Process. **B.P.** says that studying about the virtues of these holy people reminds her that all are called to be saints.

The young students were given the opportunity to learn more about the saints by reading and expanding their classroom reliquary with the hope of each eighth grade student requesting a second or third class relic of a soon to be saint.

During **B.P.**'s study for this theology project, she came across the story of Venerable Henriette Delille. She was totally amazed by the story and now she is looking forward to sharing her learning with classmates. **B.P.**, requested a relic of Henriette to add to her presentation on the life and time of Venerable Delille.

Thank you **B.P.** for becoming one to the youngest Friends of Delille.

Service project at Mother Henriette Delille Religious Education Center

Sr. Maria Gonzales, accompanied by Sisters Geneva James and Laurita Oliver, of the Sisters of the Holy Family, spoke to 5th and 6th Grade students about the life of Venerable Mother Henriette Delille, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, racial harmony issues and the history of the former Sacred Heart Academy that served the African-American/Creole community of Slidell

during segregation.

Members of St. Genevieve Church provided lunch for the students and shared stories about their time as students at Sacred Heart Academy which now serves as the Mother Henriette Delille Religious Education Catholic Social Teaching Center.



Bellevue, LA Honors Venerable Henriette Delille with Glass Triptych

February 17, the congregants of Christ the King Church, Bellevue and the Pastorate of St. Charles Borromeo of Grand Coteau invited the Sisters of the Holy Family and Friends of Henriette Delille to Mass, Dedication and Blessing of the Henriette Delille Glass Triptych created and constructed by Karen Bourque. It was a beautiful ceremony and those who attended enjoyed the event.

Mrs. Karen Bourque explains her work:

"In creating this stained-glass window for Christ the King Church in Bellevue I wanted to embody the mission of the church. Since the Sisters of the Holy Family were integral in establishing this church, I thought it fitting that the image be one of the founder of the Order, the Venerable Mother Henriette Delille, 1812-1862. I designed the



piece to be viewed abstract rather than realistic. Both ways were inspired by Henriette's prayer. *I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God.*

"The central figure in the piece suggests the image of Mother Delille dressed in her blue habit. She is rooted to the green earth with colorful wings carrying her up to heaven. The color red symbolizes Henriette's heart and its capacity for undying love. The design can also be seen as the image of the Trinity. The suggestion of host and chalice in the center represents Christ. The golden rays above, the Father and the pastel rays suggest the Holy Spirit.

"The red symbolizes both Christ's sacrificial blood and His love for everything His Father created. I envisioned Mother Delille's spirituality becoming one with God as she worked tirelessly on earth to serve the marginalized and the underprivileged in churches in schools and in shelters for the elderly.

"My hope is that the glass shines light on her saintliness and inspires others to explore their own spirituality more deeply as they pass through a very real world filled with challenge, trial, mystery, and miracles. It was my honor and privilege to create and make this piece for this loving congregation."

Karen Bourque, 2018

Sister Sheila Marie Williams

Sister Sheila Marie Williams (nec Lucille) the daughter of the late Willie Williams and Hilda Slie entered eternal life on February 10, 2019. She was 85 years of age. Sister Sheila Marie was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family on September 8, 1951, made First Vows on August 15, 1954, and Perpetual Vows on August 15, 1959.



Sr. Sheila Marie served in ministry to the people of God primarily as an educator in Texas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Dangriga, Belize, Central America. She taught at All Saints in New Orleans and served as activity coordinator at Lafon Nursing Facility and as local leader at the Motherhouse. Sister also worked at Holy Rosary Institute in Lafayette, Lake Providence, Louisiana, and at St. Nicholas in Houston, Texas.

Sr. Sheila Marie was an inspiration to all as she served with a spirit of dedication and prayerfulness. Sr. Sheila loved her vocation to religious life and showed that love by her pleasant and joyful demeanor in serving God's people. She was grateful that her many years as a Sister of the Holy Family enabled her to meet many people and live in a variety of places.

In September 2005, she resided in Shreveport and assisted with office work. Upon her return to the Motherhouse in 2006, she assisted in the Delille Office and prayer ministry until her health required her to move to Lafon Nursing Facility in 2012 where she lived until her death.

Sr. Sheila was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers: Willie Williams, Jr. and Dr. Wydell L. Williams, Sr; two step-sisters: Francis Detiege and Lorenza Talbert. She is survived by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Beatrice A. Williams, and a host of beloved nieces and nephews.

More Places Venerable Henriette Honored

Since the **Winter, 2019** newsletter, in addition to those already mentioned in this paper, other speakers also visited and talked about Venerable Henriette Delille and her Cause for Canonization in various cities.

Sister Geneva James and Sister Laura Mercier traveled to Killen, TX and having talked about Venerable Henriette and the Sisters of the Holy Family, participated in the celebration of Dr. King.

In Houston, TX, Sisters Leona and Geneva worshipped with the Sisters in the Spirit, celebrating Venerable Henriette and gave an update of her Cause.

Sisters John Mary Jackson and Doris Goudeaux told Henriette's story to a group of "home schoolers" at the Motherhouse. The students loved Henriette's story.

Archdiocese of Newark Friends of Delille Chapter Update

In November 2018, New Jersey Friends of Delille Chapter received funding from Daniel Rudd Grant to support newly established "Friend of a Friend" Mentoring Project. This initiative allowed the Chapter of Friends to mentor middle grade students, specifically fifth graders, enrolled at Sacred Heart School in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Under the direction of the principal, Sr. Frances Salemi, several of the Chapter Friends go to Sacred Heart School on a monthly basis to engage students in activities which center around the life of Venerable Delille. Since November of 2018, students watched and listened to the life of Venerable Delille; engaged in discussions about holiness; listened to Spiritual and Gospel Music and related the music to the heroic virtues of Delille; learned about the City of New Orleans and its Mardi Gras and the involvement of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

A letter writing activity to Pope Francis (via Delille Commission) expressing why Delille should become a saint: Monthly distribution of Delille prayer cards for students to recite prayer daily and monthly; end of year activity will culminate with each



N J Chapter Photo taken after a happy "Thank You" Dinner

student receiving a Venerable Delille t-shirt and a Venerable Delille Coloring book for their enjoyment. Students will also receive a certificate verifying their status as **Junior Friends of the Friends of Delille** Chapter/signed by Delille Commission Coordinator or Congregational Leader (scheduled for June 2019).

- ◆ November 18, 2018 a Mass Intention was said in honor of Venerable Henriette Delille.
- ◆ December 2018, Friends of Delille Chapter partnered with National Angel Tree Prison Ministry to collect and distribute Christmas gifts to children of incarcerated parents.

See New Jersey Chapter UPDATE, p. 5



Through Henriette's Intercession



On January 28, 2010 my doctor informed me that I had Multiple Myeloma at which time he also told me that my life span was two to five years. Which I told him only my God could determine when my life was over, not him. After discussing what we were going to do, I left his office, went to the parking garage to my car and had a talk with God.

After fussing with God for not giving me a heads up, which He did, I had to apologize and that's

The New Brochure

Dear Sisters,

I picked up a copy the brochure of Venerable Henriette Delille at church last Saturday. What a wonderful piece of history. After reading the brochure, I felt compelled to send this note to tell you how well the brochure was done. A very strong piece of history on one sheet of paper telling a story that everyone should know.

I congratulate the Sisters on Mother Delille's journey and the tremendous work of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Thank you for publishing such a wonderful brochure on the legacy and history of the great work of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Alden and Rhesa McDonald,

Miriam Ortique

Main Meeting Room to Be Named in Honor of Mother Henriette Delille

On Sunday, February 10, 2019, Sisters Leona Bruner and Geneva James joined St. Andrew Parish in Pasadena, CA for their Black History Mass and celebration.

St. Andrew Parish will formally open a new pastoral center which will accentuate their racial diversity with each meeting room being named to honor special persons of various ethnicities. The main meeting rooms will be named for Venerable Henriette Delille.

The focus of the rooms will be to remember African American Catholic history for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. One more effort to keep the memory of Venerable Henriette Delille alive.

Father Paul Sustayta, pastor of St. Andrew, invited the Sisters of the Holy Family to be his guests. Special thanks to the pastor and parishioners.

when I gave it to God. Told Him I did not have time for this, so it was His. Take care of it. And He did.

I then called on Henriette Delille and asked her to intercede on my behalf. I then started 36 weeks of chemo. On my first visit my husband came with me.. He was there for all. He said, "Give me your hand. Let me hold it." I smiled at him and said, "Sorry Babe, God got this one." (meaning my right hand.) He said, "Well give me the other one." Once again, I smiled at him and told him Henriette had this one. "Well what am I supposed to do?" Again I smiled and said, "Baby, you can rub my legs."

After receiving this first treatment there were no after effects, no sickness at all. I thanked God and asked Him if all my treatments could be the same as the first which they were.

Once again. I asked Henrette to intercede on my behalf. After each treatment I would thank the three people who were with me: God, Henriette, and my husband. When I would get home I would thank God, Henriette, my husband, family and friends on social media for all of their prayers and support. After one of my treatments, I sat down and talked to Sister Eva Regina. She gave me a picture of Henriette and her prayer. She told me to pray her prayer also.

On October 31, 2013, I had a stem cell transplant. And here it is 2019 and not a day goes by without me thanking God, Henriette, my husband, family and friends for their prayers and support. Without them I could not have made it through this.

Thanks again, but you know "Thank You" never seems to be enough.

J.R., Louisiana

New Jersey Chapter UPDATE from page 4

- ◆ Additional partnerships were formed with Mountainside/Hackensack Hospital in Glen Ridge, N.J.; Also collaborative efforts with Holy Name of Jesus Parish in East Orange, Our Lady of Mt Carmel/St. Theresa of Calcutta Parish in Montclair and Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River were formed which allowed many parishioners to donate toys/gifts/ and cheerful Christmas stockings. All of the recipients were truly happy to receive the gifts.
- ◆ February 1, 2019 approximately 35 individuals were fed through the MESH (Montclair Emergency Services for Homeless) at St. Peter Claver Church. The Friends of Delille hosted this meal with many delicious food items provided to the guests for the evening.
- ◆ March 9, 2019 the Friend of Delille Chapter provided prayer cards and bios to approximately 2000 women in attendance at the Archdiocese of Newark Women's Day of Reflection at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ.
- ◆ Thank you to Tina Schumacher and Michele Perrella, two of the Delille
- ◆ Friends, who coordinated the Delille Table at this annual Day of Reflection.
- ◆ May 5, 2019 All of the Friends of Delille Chapter will receive a heartfelt THANK YOU at a special dinner hosted by Dr. Susan Rich to thank all of the friends and contributors since the Chapter's inception in 2016.
- ◆ A special THANK YOU to all of the Friends of Delille, updates regarding Delille's cause and upcoming events will be provided.
- ◆ In June 2019, the culminating activity for the close of the school year will be held at Sacred Heart School in Jersey City, NJ. The fifth graders will receive certificates of participation in the Friends of Delille Chapter as Junior Members.
- ◆ In July 2019, additional grant funding will be sought for an additional school in the Archdiocese of Newark to become Junior Members. (Pending Approval of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.)

Respectfully Submitted, Susan Rich

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in God.
I hope in God.
I love,
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Venerable
Henriette Delille

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Have You Seen Our New Brochure?

*Tracing the Footsteps of
One of God's Holy Ones in New Orleans*

The Sisters of the Holy Family sent every church in the Archdiocese a copy of their latest brochure, *Tracing the Footsteps of one of God's holy ones in New Orleans*, which details the legacy of Venerable Henriette Delille and the Sisters in fulfilling their role in developing the spiritual growth of many New Orleanians. They invite all parishes to help make the contributions of Venerable Henriette known in their parish communities.

There is no cost associated with the brochures; just request the number you need. Phone: Sr. Doris, 504 241-3088, X. 118 or delillecomoff@yahoo.com.

If you live out of town and would like a copy of our new (open-fold) brochure, send a self addressed stamped envelope to us. We will send you one.

Dear Sr. Sylvia,

Just yesterday I received in the mail the summer issue of *Servant of the Poor* dealing with the Cause of Venerable Henriette Delille. I was delighted to see that the Cause is being so well carried forward.

The Cause of Henriette continues to be in my prayers, as does your Congregation which is a living memory and memorial of her. May all go well with its members and its various ministries. And may God continue to bless and guide you each and every day.

Fr. FitzPatrick, Australia

Please accept our sincere apology for the mix-up in the mailing addresses. We have worked to remedy the problem.