

SERVANT OF THE POOR

Vol. 11 No. 1

NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF HENRIETTE DELILLE

Spring , 2009

Because of Henriette . . .

Dear Sisters of the Holy Family,

I attended the Mass at St. Bridgit's Catholic Church and was impressed with the information and history of Henriette Delille. As a result, I have given her prayer cards to people who are in need of help and have been saying the prayer for the Beatification of Henriette Delille and her individual prayer frequently.

I have asked her for the following favors/miracles and all have been granted: First, I had a pain on my right side for months. I went to the doctor, took tests but they couldn't find anything wrong. After praying, the pain has stopped. Secondly, my son and I have been struggling with our weight and have not been able to stay on our diets, after praying, we have both lost pounds and inches.

Thirdly, we are having major cuts on my job due to the current budget crisis. After saying the prayer, I was told that my unit will be saved and we will have our jobs next year.

Fourthly, my mother who is 81 years old has chronic health issues such as: cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, on cumidin and has had congestive heart failure. Her arm becomes swollen. Every time this happens she has either a blood clot forming or breathing problems that lead her to be hospitalized. This time, after saying the prayer, we took her to the doctor who told us that no clots had formed. She was given an inhaler to assist her with her breathing and was sent home.

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Theologians to meet May 29, 2009

By Barbara Duhe



In our last newsletter we shared with you that a commission of Historians with the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints overwhelmingly approved the official biography submitted in the beatification cause of our foundress,

Mother Henriette Delille. This happened in October, 2008.

On January 29, 2009, our postulator in Rome, Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, informed us that the Theological Consulters at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will hold a congress on the 29th of May, 2009 to discuss *Servant of God Henriette Delille's Positio*.

In Dr. Ambrosi's message to us he expressed that he felt our Archbishop Hughes' presentation of Mother Henriette's *Positio* to the Holy Father had a great impact on the decision. (An article on the presentation also appeared in the December '08 issue).

The *Positio* is a comprehensive academic study and a defense on the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Mere Henriette.

As a bit of background ...

In April 1988, Henriette Delille's canonization process was initiated by Archbishop Philip M. Hannan, at the request of Mother Rose de Lima Hazeur, Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Family. In June of that same year, a special commission in Rome reviewed the case and gave permission to officially open the process.

In 1997, our then Archbishop Francis B. Schulte of New Orleans, made a request to the National Catholic Conference of Bishops (NCCB) for a *voluntum* to support and formally endorse the appropriateness and timeliness of a Cause for Beatification and Canonization of Henriette Delille which was in progress in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. At that November 11, 1997 Conference, seven bishops and archbishops gave supportive statements.

Most Rev. Anthony M. Pilla, Bishop of Cleveland and President of the NCCBUSCC formally notified Archbishop Schulte that the bishops voted unanimously to affirm the pastoral timeliness of the formal initiation of the cause of the servant of God, Mother Henriette Delille.

Within a two year period from 2006-2008 the Henriette Delille Office sent packets of information

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*The Theological Consulters at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will hold a congress on the 29th of May, 2009 to discuss *Servant of God Henriette Delille's Positio*.*

"Touching the Hem of Healing"

By David Ciampichini of New Jersey

Where can I begin in describing an experience so compelling as to elicit laughter, tears, heartfelt joy as well as the lifting of sorrow?

The Gospels provide a strong beginning in the story of the ill woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment seeking a healing. The Gospel story relates that Jesus felt divine grace leave Him at the woman's faith-filled touch. She was healed!

In visiting the Sisters of the Holy Family in February, I experienced a personal reflection of this Gospel narrative. I was in search of spiritual comfort in the aftermath of a great personal loss. My world as an artist in portraying Mother Delille opened the door for my visit.

It was one of the most memorable and uplifting experiences of my adult life. The Sisters were the height of compassion, graciousness, and comfort. Mother Delille's legacy is so palpable in their midst that I feel as if I encountered her personally through her Sisters.

I felt embraced by their love immediately - not only for me, but also for wounded humanity. These Sisters have been the hallmark of an authentic spirituality that is expressed in their lifestyle of service. They are both survivors, and as St. Paul states,

"more than conquerors."

Mother Delille was a prophetic voice who cried out in the cultural wilderness of her period. Her cry was for social justice, interpersonal compassion, and solidarity in healing. This voice still resonates within the order she founded.

I will not forget shedding tears as I participated with Mother Eva, Sister Judith and Sister Sylvia Vallet in the jazz Mass at St. Augustine's Church. My tears were provoked by the soul-filled passion of the celebration, the harmony of racial diversity, and the sensational preaching of Father Moody.

Among other memorable incidents are: I delighted in Sister Doris' gift of joy; reminisced with 95 year old Sister Thecla, and appreciated the mystical folk art of Sister Bertha. And best of all, I was able to view and touch documents from Mother Delille and her time.

My intellect was stimulated by Father Victor and Sister Clare of Assisi. I basked in the humble servant leadership of Mother Eva, who drove me to and fro.

Also I felt privileged to have a special time of sharing with Sister Sylvia Thibodeaux.

In the Chapel, I prayed in the presence of the same Christ whose hem was touched by the

"gospel lady."

I invite you to look at the face of Mother Delille. Notice the strength of her jaw, the determination of her mouth, the serenity of her brow, and the compassion in her eyes. These features are reflected today in the living ministry which is her legacy.

I know that I experienced inner healing through touching and being touched by the flowing "hem" of this empowered community who continues to activate God's grace in our contemporary lives.

Blood Drive Successful

By Sr. Maria Consilia Saizan

On February 9, St. Mary's Academy held a blood drive to replace blood given to Sister Rebecca Carlos Castillo during her stay in the hospital.

Even though 15 pints were asked for, through the generosity of the students and faculty, we were able to give 23 pints of blood to the hospital.

The drive was organized and executed by Sister Maria Consilia Saizan. Gratitude was expressed to the principal, Sister Jennie Jones, the staff, and students of St. Mary's.



This picture shows Monsignor signing documents at the Tribunal

Msgr. Patrick Wells promotes devotion to Henriette

... I travel as a Cruise Ship Priest and as a part of my daily reflections I include my own biographical data and mention I was taught by The Sisters of the Holy Family, a Black order of nuns from New Orleans.

I tell them on the second day about Mother Henriette Delille and the founding of the order. The next day I tell them about the miracle in Houston and the role I played in the closing of the Tribunal and the signing of the papers as Vicar General.

Finally, I give an update on the beatification process. So, Mother Henriette and the Sisters are receiving international exposure. Let us continue to pray.

Msgr. Patrick Wells

The mausoleum at St. Augustine Church on Cane River will have an avenue dedicated to Mere Henriette Delille.

She is already honored in their special hall of important and saintly persons.

Sr. Bertha Pierre August, folk artist, primitive, visionary, cultural

For years Sister Bertha has expressed herself in art. And for each painting, she has a story to tell.

Recently, artist David Ciampichini referred to her as a "folk artist whose work consists of folk, primitive, visionary, and cultural art."

Here is a display of a few of her drawings.



A Thank You

2/24/2009

Thank you so much for sending me the quarterly newsletter from December, 08, and the prayer cards and other information to leave in my church in Los Angeles about the life and cause of Mother Henriette Delille. I was deeply touched when I saw a tribute to her work at the Cathedral of St. Louis in New Orleans in November, 08. I felt a deep need to be involved in some way to further the cause for her canonization.

I was taught as a child by the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, and I have always supported the works of the Oblates. I humbly send you this donation to be used to further the cause for Mother Henriette Delille.

Thank you. Beverly A. Bouligny Powell, CA



Gratitude to the Sisters of the Holy Family

Dear Sister Eva,
Wednesday, January 7, 2009

While praying and giving thanks to God for the many blessings in my life, I thought of the important role of the Sisters of the Holy Family in my life, and am writing to let you and other members of your community know of my gratitude and thanks.

My name is Ruby Buffin. My brother Bob and I were among those African-American children who were taught and evangelized by Sisters of the Holy Family at Holy Spirit School in Marshall, Texas from grades K through 5 during the 50's. Perhaps the following beloved sisters are no longer alive and may be unknown to you and your community; however, Sisters John Berchman, Petronilla, and Bartholomew were some of our teachers.

Thanks to the superior for this primary education and faith formation we received from your 3

Sisters. My brother and I were baptized Catholic shortly after moving to San Francisco, California; we have also achieved academic success.

Bob is now an attorney (Deputy Regional Attorney for the National Labor Relations Board) and I am a Certified Catholic Chaplain. I am currently employed as Pastoral Associate for St. Stephen Parish in San Francisco, CA.

I am also in my second year of training for spiritual direction of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos, CA.

We are tremendously thankful to the Sisters of the Holy Family, and wanted you to know of our gratitude.

Ruby C. Buffin, Ph.D.,
M. Div. Certified Catholic Chaplain



Newly ordained says Mass in Holy Family Chapel By Sister Frances Cabrini Turnbull

On Tuesday, January 20, 2009, the newly ordained, Father Peter Koi Doan of the Domus Dei Vietnamese community located in New Orleans East celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the Sisters of the Holy Family.

The Mass was celebrated in our newly reconsecrated Chapel at 6901 Chef Menteur at our 6:30 AM community Mass. After Mass, Father gave each Sister a special blessing and a special message.

Having been born, as older folks say, a cradle Catholic and having had the opportunity to attend the consecration of a bishop, the ordination of priests and deacons, I was deeply

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**He is risen
Alleluia!**

Message of Delille brought to Donaldsonville and Bertrandville, Louisiana

In her opening talk, Sister Judith said "being here is like coming home," because St. Catherine of Sienna High School was her very first mission.

The Sisters of the Holy Family ministered in Donaldsonville from 1885 - 1965.

As a part of the Fourth Annual Black History Program at St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church, March 1, Sr. Judith was invited to bring more than 20 students of St. Mary's Academy to enact a play, *Henriette Delille, Servant of Slaves* written and produced by her.

Not only was the play well done, but it was very well received by the full house in attendance.



Scenes from *Henriette Delille, Servant of Slaves*



Visit to Bertrandville

The Sisters were graciously welcomed by the Pastor and the parishioners at St. Benedict the Moor's Church on March 22.

After assisting at Mass, talks were given by Sisters Eva Regina, Doris and Laura. Sister Eva Regina spoke about the Congregation and where we are today; Sister Doris about Mere Henriette Delille and her Cause for beatification and canonization; and Sister Laura encouraged everyone with a moving talk on vocations.

There were joyous greetings at the reception after the Mass. The parish made a generous donation to the Cause.

The Sisters ministered in Bertrandville from 1923-1965.

Joseph A. Honegger, O.P., a Friend of Henriette Delille in New York shares:

1/27/09

A few years ago I was asked by a coworker to make a Display on Black Saints and be able to present about them for Black History Month, at work.

In doing my research, I came upon Sr. Doris, the Director of the Delille Office. On talking to Sr. Doris, I remembered a movie *The Courage to Love* and made the connection.

Over the years I have developed a devotion to Mere Henriette, a saint

who I described in a presentation as having the courage and tenacity of a bulldog and the grace and demeanor of a "True Lady," for the way she confronted any evil she came up against.

Oh, what a model for us today when very often we are alone in standing up for what is good and true.

Henriette Delille is also a great champion to have on your side as her intercession has helped a child find work, helped a family in finding a home and is helping to save a marriage.

In thanks to God for favors received through her intercession, I try to spread knowledge of her when ever possible. I have given a great number of brochures and prayer cards to my parish's Religious Education program; to a large parish in the city of Buffalo, who said they were going to pass them on to others and to many non-catholic friends and acquaintances to whom I point her out as a heroic Christian woman of faith.

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St. Joseph honored with special altar, food, celebration

By Barbara Duhe

If you live in a city like New Orleans with its penchant for festivals and celebratory events, St. Joseph's Feast Day ranks right up there among the likes of Mardi Gras, Jazz and Heritage Festival and French Quarter Festival. This day honoring St. Joseph, the compassionate, loyal and trusting figure in our Salvation history and patron of the Universal Church, workers, travelers,



the persecuted, the poor, the aged, the dying, has grown to be a grand event. Although the day's events include parades by the Italian American Community and the Mardi Gras Indians, central to the celebration is the St. Joseph Altar.

This tradition in New Orleans had its origins with the Sicilian immigrants at the end of the 19th century. In their native Sicily, the people were on the brink of starvation because of a drought.

They prayed to their patron St. Joseph and soon the rains came, crops grew and the people were saved. In thanksgiving to their patron they gave him back the gifts they were given in the form of a feast laid on an "altar".

Carrying on the tradition today, many people make their own altars because of special devotion to St. Joseph or in thanksgiving for favors granted. These altars are found in private homes, churches, Italian restaurants, halls and here at the Sisters of the Holy Family Convent.

St. Joseph, very prominent in the lives of the sisters was honored with a lovely



altar prepared by Sister M. Daniel Cooper, SSE

The altar featured St. Joseph on the top level surrounded by flowers, candles food, wine, breads, cookies, pastries and other dishes placed throughout, along with the famous "Fava Bean", which is the most well known custom associated with the altar.

During one of Sicily's severe famine, the fava bean thrived while other crops died. Legend says that a person who carries a "lucky bean" will never be without coins.

ORDINATION

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moved in spirit to be present for the ordination of Father Peter Koi Doan to the priesthood and Rev. Joseph Minh Nyguen to the diaconate. The sanctity and the humility of the priests and brothers of the Domus Dei Society was very evident and their actions edified me greatly. They are very holy men.

The atmosphere of the Church was filled with reverence, solemnity and great peace. By my witnessing the Holy Spirit's warmth and aroma as these two young men consecrated themselves to Jesus their spouse, the music rendered by the choir of Our Lady of Vietnam Church added to the great festivity of the celebration. This, I am sure, was felt by all present.

By special permission from Archbishop Hughes, the ordination took place at Resurrection of Our Lord Church in New Orleans East instead of St. Louis Cathedral.

HONEGGER

from p.4

Dominican Laity (formerly known as third order Dominican), I recently had the opportunity to make a presentation about Mere Henriette to our Chapter, almost a hundred members in attendance. Everyone was mesmerized by the story of this Champion of Our Lord.

I gave out a great many prayer cards (the Vietnamese, Spanish, and French went quickly) and also brochures to many people.

When I described my presentation to my chapter, to Sr. Doris, she asked me to write something about my experience of telling others about Henriette Delille.

I only hope it helps others to find this heavenly sponsor; for looking at her we find the inspiration to repeat, "I believe in God, I hope in God, I love, I want to live and die for God."

Presentations on Mere Henriette

April 18 - St. Martin of Tours
Church,

Washington, DC

May 6 - Maritime
Convention, Chateau de
Moine, New Orleans

May 7 - Holy Cross College,
New Orleans

Happy
Easter!



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

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Servant of the Poor
is published by
Sisters of the Holy Family
and
Friends of Henriette Delille

Imprinti Potest
Sister Eva Regina Martin

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about Henriette across the United States to create an awareness of Henriette Delille and to request prayers on behalf of her Cause.

We are witnesses to the power of prayer and know that it is through your prayers and others throughout the country that this process is moving smoothly. We feel so fortunate to have the prayers of so many.

We continue to pray even harder that this meeting of theologians on May 29th will be positive so that the process will proceed to the Cardinals, then to Pope Benedict XVI, so that her beatification and canonization will be imminent.

HENRIETTE from p. 1

I will continue to say this prayer because I believe that Henriette Delille is taking care of me and my family. I hope you can include these on her list of favors and for miracles. Thank you.

Fondly, LAWCA

Urgent prayer request

We want this issue of the newsletter to get to you before the May 29th date of the meeting of the theologians. We are asking for your prayers that all will go well with the findings of the theologians.

Please encourage others to pray as well. We are hoping that by the next publication of the newsletter we will have the much anticipated positive report to share.

Thank you in advance for your prayers.

VISIT US ON THE WEB

As of mid March we became a member of cyberspace. Please visit us on our new site created by Destiny Productions. We are so very pleased with Alethea Braggs' work.

The site is quite comprehensive and allows you to send us your intentions so that the Sisters may pray for you. Please visit us at www.sistersofthehollyfamily.com Let us hear from you and also remember to share with us interventions and intentions granted through the intercession of Mere Henriette.