

# Servant of the Poor

Vol. 17, No. 5

Friends of Venerable Henriette Delille

Winter 2016

## Henriette Delille: Her Response to the Holy

That Henriette Delille lived a life of holiness there is no doubt. At a very young age she and her friends formed a fraternity to bear witness to the love of God, to teach others to pray and spread the love of God.

By these actions Henriette and companions demonstrated a strong desire to deepen their own faith life. Her life illustrates that as a young woman she took seriously her vocation as a Christian person.

As Henriette went about doing works of charity, caring for the sick, educating the ignorant, caring for the elderly and serving as godparent, no one could question or doubt her sincerity. History also indicates that Henriette and companions served as witnesses to several clandestine marriages. They did this because of strong belief that living without the blessings of the Church (matrimony) was sinful.

When Henriette Delille received the inspiration, "I Believe in God. I hope in God. I love, I want to live and die for God" to found the Sisters of Holy Family, little did she realize she was the face of God for a Church that was part and parcel of a cruel system of slavery. The courage and witness of Henriette in the face of adversity paved the way for the many women who came after her to strive for a life of holiness.

Today many of the followers of Henriette believe in her power to intercede in their behalf. Many favors have been granted through prayers and intercession of this great woman of God.

## Year-long Jubilee begins with solemnity, thanks, praise, and joy !



The Sisters of the Holy Family opened its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a jubilant Mass, honoring Venerable Henriette Delille, held at the Motherhouse on Saturday, November 19, 2016 at 9:45 A.M.

Two Archbishops and two Auxiliary Bishops of New Orleans Archdiocese concelebrated: Archbishop Gregory Aymond, main celebrant and homilist, Bishop and Vicar General Fernand Cheri, III, O.F.M., and Retired Archbishop Alfred Hughes and Retired Bishop Dominic Carmon, S.V.D. Archbishop Aymond gave a very inspiring homily.

There were approximately 15 priests and six deacons who also concelebrated. We had a full chapel and wonderful music. Several attendees expressed how very moving it was

to see our Sisters process into the chapel, especially the elders of the Congregation. Several students from St. Mary's Academy also served at Mass and the St. Raymond/St. Leo the Great Choir led the singing with Connie and Dwight Fitch, and Sr. Lucia directing.

The Sisters of the Holy Family Associates turned out and participated in the mass, as well as many of our various Board members. The Ladies and Knights of St. Peter Claver, E.O. Moss Assembly #4, were also present and the Knights served as honor guards. The celebration was very uplifting and a most beautiful and appropriate way to open our year-long celebration of 175 years in God's service.

# Exhibit : “One Heart, One Soul” celebrates the life and Legacy of Ven. Henriette: Recognizes Sisters of Holy Family 175 Years of Service to the Church

On Oct. 15, 2016 the Sisters of Holy Family and some members of the lay faithful witnessed the formal opening of an exhibit honoring Venerable Henriette Delille, 1812-1862, and the Sisters of the Holy Family, the religious congregation of women she founded in 1842. The Old Ursuline Convent Museum on Charters Street is the venue for the exhibit. The exhibit, the creative work of Archdiocesan archivist, Emilie Leumas, highlights the life of the young Henriette and

her search for God; her courage to start a religious family during the nation's lived sin of slavery, and the growth of the congregation expanding a period of 175 years.

## Coloring book : The creative work of Sr. Judith Therese Barial, S.S.F.

It is never too early to introduce young people to models of holiness in our society.

It is with this idea in mind that Sr. Judith Therese Barial wrote a coloring book to tell the story of Venerable Henriette Delille for young people.

She manages to tell the story in a simple style yet maintains a high level of interest.

The drawings are vivid and demonstrative and narrates the story of a strong and courageous young Christian.

The coloring book: *The Story of Henriette Delille Activity Book* is recommended for ages 9 and up.

You may order this book and other titles about the life and legacy of Venerable Henriette Delille from the Commission Office, online: [www.sistersoftheholysfamily.com](http://www.sistersoftheholysfamily.com).

This is the cover of the coloring book



The cover of the coloring book is a photo of a banner made by Sister Joseph Ann Gillette, SSF for the sesquicentennial celebration.

Photo by Sister Laura Mercier



## A Legacy of Love Henriette Delille and the Sisters of the Holy Family

This is the title of a documentary film which gives a historical look at a congregation of African American nuns who have spent their lives serving the poor, elderly, and enslaved in New Orleans.

The documentary is beautifully done. Not only does it tell the story of Venerable Henriette Delille, but also the story of the Sisters of the Holy Family that she founded in 1842.

The Sisters are celebrating 175 years of service to the people of God, not only in New Orleans, but many other places in the United States, and also outside the United States in Belize, for over 100 years, and Nigeria, West Africa.

The documentary was premiered November 20th and repeated December 7th and 26th. DVDs are available from Wlae.com. It is a partnership of Louisiana Public Broadcasting and the Willwoods Community.

**Bishops and Priests during the Consecration of the Mass honoring Henriette Delille and the opening of our year-long jubilee celebration of the one hundred and seventy-five years.**



# Update on Venerable Henriette Delille's Cause

The most frequently asked questions about the canonization are "When will Henriette be declared a Saint in the Roman Catholic Church? Why is it taking such a long time? What can we do to help promote the Cause and to move it along at a faster pace? How much does the Cause cost? Where is the Cause today? The update follows:

**Twenty-eight years ago** Henriette was accepted as a candidate for sainthood by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. She became the first U. S. native born African American whose cause for canonization has been officially opened by the Catholic Church.

**Servant of God**, the first step to canonization, was the name given to her. At this time Henriette's life, virtues, and reputation of sanctity had to be researched, examined, and accepted by historians, theologians, and members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. An Archdiocesan Inquiry was also held. Our responsibility was to tell her story, promote devotion to her, and to accept and record favors.

**Seventeen years later**, over 1,000 pages of documents, boxed and sealed during a special Mass, were shipped to Rome.

**After five years** of examination and approval of these documents, Pope Benedict XVI on March 27, 2010, declared Henriette **Venerable**, the second stage of canonization. For six years we have been praying and waiting for an authenticated miracle since a miracle is needed for **Beatification**, the third stage of canonization.

We had a possible 13 alleged miracles to choose from. Our Roman postulator, Dr. Ambrosi, thought that the healing of a four-year-old girl, in the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese, whose major organs had shut down and doctors said

that there was nothing more they could do - healed rather quickly when family, friends, the Sisters, students, and many more joined in prayer through Henriette Delille's intercession. Not only did she get well, but continues in good health as a happy student in graduate school.

Unfortunately, not all the doctors in the Roman investigation saw this as an accepted alleged miracle. They are waiting for more evidence. The Postulator has not given up on this cure. However, there is a second alleged miracle that is being investigated now in Little Rock, Arkansas.

This one involves a college student who became seriously ill. Her major organs shut down and the doctors predicted her death. Prayers through the intercession of Henriette Delille were being offered by the family, Sisters and friends. Her Mother said that she prayed to Henriette constantly from the beginning to the end.

The young student was healed, graduated from college, and is doing very well.

As soon as the inquiry is completed, the doctors, in Rome, will study the medical records. This could be the authenticated miracle we need for **Beatification**.

We will need a second miracle for **Canonization**.

What are we doing now? We continue to pray as a congregation. We ask and encourage others to pray with us. We continue to spread devotion to Henriette by using the media, our speakers' bureau, and getting chapters of *Friends of Henriette Delille*, nationally and internationally. We hope, pray and wait for the day when we can say **Blessed Henriette** and then **Saint Henriette**.

The financial report will be in the next issue of *Servant of the Poor*.

## In Memory of Venerable Henriette Delille . . .

November is a special time of the year for the Sisters of the Holy Family, their Associates and friends. Several activities are held during the month of November in remembrance of their foundress, Venerable Henriette Delille. One of those activities is providing a meal to the homeless.

Living the commitment of their foundress is a daily part of the Sisters of the Holy Family's lives, in that they feed those in need daily. However, during the month of November, they offer a hot meal and a gift bag to a larger group of New Orleans people by feeding men, women and children at Ozanam Inn.

This year on November 12, the Sisters prepared food for 150 people, with the assistance of KLM Catering. The Sisters were happy to personally serve the food to the persons who came to Ozanam Inn on this Saturday. The menu consisted of baked chicken, red beans and rice, green salad with dressing, rolls and butter, sodas and cookies. Other sisters, along with Associates and friends, sang while their guests enjoyed the meal.

Gift bags which included socks, wash cloths, comb, toiletries, information about health and housing services available in the New Orleans area, through the generosity of Sidney and Marcia

St. Martin, and a Venerable Henriette Delille tee shirt and prayer card were given to each of the 136 persons who came to Ozanam Inn.

Their outreach to feed those in need continued at Ozanam Inn because the excess food remained at the shelter for future use.

Photo by Pearl Cantrelle



# Friends of Henriette tell her story, promote devotion to her

Friends of Delille New Jersey Chapter has been very busy. Under the guidance of Fr. Stephen Fichter, our wonderful Chaplain, Friends of Delille has continued to mirror the many works of Mercy demonstrated by Venerable Henriette Delille.

In September, Friends of Delille: NJ Chapter provided 30 public school children with school supplies to help them start off their academic year with basic start up supplies.

In November, senior citizens at a Senior Residence Center were presented with shopping gift cards to assist with Thanksgiving shopping.

**On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Friends of Delille held a Mass of Special Intention in honor of Venerable Henriette Delille at Saint Peter Claver Church in Montclair, New Jersey. Following the Mass, the Friends gathered for its Inaugural Luncheon since the Chapter's inception in April 2016. The luncheon was hosted at The Residence Inn at The Manor in West Orange, New Jersey. Both women and men Friends of Delille, were in attendance. Guests at the luncheon were given prayer cards to pray for Venerable Delille and a historical piece regarding Delille's life and her many corporal works of Mercy were presented. Friends at the luncheon also shared in other upcoming plans for the chapter.**

This month, the Friends of Delille partnered with the National Angel Tree Network/Prison Ministry. Approximately 25 children whose parents have been incarcerated will receive Christmas holiday gifts from Friends of Delille. This collaboration includes the collaboration of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, located in East Orange, New Jersey.

Fr. William G. Cook, Pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish and several parishioners have been instrumental in making the upcoming National Angel Tree Network a big success. Thank you to Holy Name of Jesus' Pastoral Council President, Donna Daniels, and their pastoral council.

Other parishioners from parishes involved in the Angel Tree project include members of Archdiocese of Newark's Af-

rican American, African and Caribbean Apostolate under the direction of Fr. Emeka Okwuosa.

Other Friends of Delille involved in the Angel Tree Ministry are parishioners from St. Theresa of Calcutta and St. Peter Claver Parishes, both located in Montclair, New Jersey.

On Saturday, March 11, 2017 Friends of Delille will participate in Archdiocese of Newark Women's Commission Day of Reflection entitled "Alive in Christ" at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. The NJ Chapter will exhibit, for the second year, a beautiful Delille banner while distributing tri-lingual prayer cards and biographical information about Venerable Henriette Delille.

This wonderful conference allows for spiritual renewal and fellowship among Christian women throughout the Archdiocese of Newark.

We are awaiting the decision from Archdiocese of Newark Men's Commission Day of Reflection regarding Friends of Delille participation in the men's conference to exhibit information/prayer cards while sharing the message of Delille. Our male Friends of Delille will represent the chapter pending approval.

Another initiative of the Friends of Delille will be a collaboration with Montclair Emergency Services for the Homeless (MESH).

During the spring of 2017, Friends of Delille will prepare and serve a full course meal to the homeless of the MESH Program. This meal will be hosted by Friends of Delille and will be served at St. Peter Claver Church in Montclair, New Jersey.

The Spring and summer months of 2017 will be reserved for Friends of Delille to visit various churches in the Archdiocese of Newark and throughout New Jersey to spread the message about Venerable Delille's works of Mercy and her Cause for canonization.

Dr. Susan Rich & Ms. Tina Schumacher.

*Thank you and congratulations on your work and your plans for the future. Mere Henriette must be very pleased with your Work for her Cause. We definitely are grateful!*

## New York Chapter honors Mother Delille, Sisters of the Holy Family

**The New York Chapter of the Friends of Mother Henriette Delille commemorated the 175th anniversary of the Sisters of the Holy Family and honor the congregation's Foundress, at a Mass at St. Joseph of the Holy Family Church, in Manhattan, on Sunday, Nov. 20, at 10 a.m.**

The principal celebrant and homilist was Father James Goode, O.F.M., pastoral director of Solid Ground Franciscan Ministry and founder and president of the National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life. He is the spiritual moderator of the New York Chapter of the Friends of Henriette Delille.

A reception with light refreshments followed the Mass.

*Faye Powell and Fr. Goode have been the leaders of the New York Chapter since its inception. We are grateful.*

## Henriette Honored in Houston, TX, Nov. 20

**Sister Greta Jupiter**, Congregational Leader, and **Sister Leona Bruner**, Assistant Congregational Leader, represented the Sisters of the Holy Family at **St. Nicholas Church** in **Houston, TX**, at the celebration honoring Mere Henriette and the Sisters' 175th anniversary.

**Most Rev. George A. Sheltz**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston was celebrant and homilist. Sister Greta gave a talk on Henriette.

A special gift: a song "*Henriette's Prayer*" by **C. Knighten** was presented for the first time at the Mass. **Mr. Knighten** presented the same song at the opening Mass at the Motherhouse.

A reception followed.



# Honoring Most Rev. Dominic Carmon, S.V.D., retired Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

Dominic Carmon, a quiet, humble, priestly man who takes seriously the vocation of Christian personhood was given a fitting honor.

On November 5th, the Office of Black Catholic Ministries Archdiocese of New Orleans, during its celebration of Black Saints month, honored Bishop Carmon by establishing a scholarship in his name. The scholarship recognizes a deserving person with an opportunity to study at the Institute of Black Catholic Studies. The Institute prepares students to minister professionally in the on going spiritual and pastoral development of participants.

The idea for this recognition of Bishop Carmon came from Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, Most Rev. Fernand J. Cheri, III, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans; and the African American Permanent Deacons Archdiocese of New Orleans.

In attendance at the prayer service and award ceremony for Bishop Carmon were members of the clergy, religious Sisters, Bishop Carmon's family and members of the lay faithful from throughout the Archdiocese.

We all join in extending heartfelt congratulations to Bishop Carmon.



**Celebrating with Bishop Carmon are left: Sisters Sylvia Thibodeaux, Greta Jupiter, Alicia Costa, and Charlotte Rubit.**



Members of the Holy Rosary Institute Class of '66 met to celebrate their 50th year reunion. They enjoyed social activities, dinner and attended Mass as a group at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

Pictured above are Father Chester Arceneaux, an HRI alumnus, Mass celebrant, and Rector of the Cathedral, along with members of the class.

HRI, in Lafayette Louisiana was staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Family from its founding in 1913 to its closure in 1993.

The class of 1966 is grateful to the Sisters for providing the highest quality education in a disciplined, religious environment.

## Sister Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Andry



Nee Annette (Cecilia) the eldest child and only daughter of the

St. Michael's wrote to the General Superior regarding Sr. de Pazzi, "I assure you that I consider having her here a very great grace. She reflects the religious image with dignity and meaning. She is deeply spiritual and shares that so needed dimension in a humble, quiet way. Do you have any more like her?"

Sister's additional degree in art aided her in teaching as well as in her ministry to the elderly at Lafon Nursing Home and the Sisters of the Holy Family Motherhouse in New Orleans. She also served her religious community as local leader and local treasurer.

When her health declined, she transitioned to Lafon Nursing Facility in November 2010, and it was there that she died.

Sr. de Pazzi will always be remembered for her ready and quick wit as well as her radiant and infectious smile. We all, of course, know of "those boys," Sister's brothers who have always been so faithful and supportive of her.

Sister was preceded in death by her parents and three brothers: Augusta Anthony, Francis Benedict, and Sabino Baltare Andry and two sisters-in-law Willard Breech Andry and Mary Pugh Andry. She is survived by three brothers: Robert Curtis (Lillie Mae), Milton Aloysius (Jessie Mae), and Harold Xavier Andry and Marietta Likely Andry (a sister-in-law) as well as a host of beloved nephews and nieces.

## Sr. Maria Goretti Iwu



**Sister Maria Goretti Iwu**

first member of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, died Nov. 16, 2016.

See **SISTER IWU** on page 7

## Sister Augustine McDaniel

Sister Augustine McDaniel (nee Augustine Leetra) daughter of the late Joseph McDaniel and Lillie Malveaux McDaniel entered eternal life on December 3, 2016. She was 80 years of age. Sister Augustine was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family September 8, 1955,



made First Vows March 19, 1958, and Perpetual Vows March 19, 1964.

Sister Augustine served in ministry to the people of God as an educator in Tulsa, Oklahoma at St. Monica and Holy Family schools; in Louisiana: New Orleans at St. Katherine and St. Raymond schools; in Lafayette at St. Paul School; in Opelousas at Opelousas Catholic; and in Houston, Texas at Our Mother of Mercy School. Sister Augustine was recognized for her leadership skills very early and was for many years the principal of the schools where she served.

It is no wonder that when she went to Nigeria, West Africa, she was the administrator of Presentation National High School. Sr. Augustine also served God's vulnerable ones in housing as administrator of Flint Goodridge and Malta Park Apartments in New Orleans. In addition, Sister was the administrator of Lafon Nursing Facility of the Holy Family for twenty years.

Sr. Augustine was recognized by civic leaders and organizations for her outstanding and untiring service. She received a Certificate of Merit from: Nursing Home Administrator 1982, American College of Health Care Administrators 1984, the City of New Orleans 1987, 1989, and 2001, the City Council District D 1987, Senate of the Louisiana Top Ladies of Distinction 2001, New Orleans City Council Top Ladies of Distinction 2001, and many others.

After having labored so long in the Lord's vineyard, Sister herself became ill and resided at her beloved Lafon Nursing Facility where she died.

Sr. Augustine Leetra McDaniel, as described by her good friend and former Congregational Leader, was "a woman of integrity and tenacity, unabashed and fearless. A person with a practical Christian faith and deep contemplative spirituality known to some cherished friends." Sister "had a keen mind and a willingness to use her talents to bear witness and serve her God wherever He called her.

She had an abiding love for her birth family from one generation to the next, but she also had great affection for an extended collection of faithful friends. With this select group of family and friends she often shared a prayer over a phone conversation. Behind the facade of a no nonsense nun was a gentle spirit, a faithful daughter of the Church who is now privileged to behold the gaze of God."

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, four sisters: Dorothy McDaniel Sanderson, Julia McDaniel Rodgers, Myra Charles, and Sarah Charles Clark; eight brothers: Joseph McDaniel, Joseph Charles, Edward Charles, Gilbert Charles, Robert Charles, Haywood Charles, Lester Charles, and Elridge Charles. She is survived by her step-brother, Joseph Victorian, and a host of beloved nieces and nephews.

late Robert E. Andry and Martha Collins, Sister entered eternal life on August 27, 2016 at the age of 93.

She was born and reared in Chastang, Alabama. Sister has the distinction of being the first child baptized by Fr. Sabino Grossi, SSJ, who served at St. Peter's Catholic Church for forty years. Sister M. Magdalen de Pazzi entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family on September, 1943. She professed First Vows, 1946 and Perpetual Vows, 1951.

Sister joyfully and compassionately ministered to the people of God. Before entering the convent at age twenty, Sister worked at St. Peter's School where she had attended from grades one through twelve and had graduated as a class of one.

As a Sister of the Holy Family, Sr. de Pazzi served throughout Louisiana as a teacher and/or administrator: in New Orleans briefly at St. Raymond Elementary School, St. Mary's Academy (where she also was assistant mistress of boarders), St. Michael School for Exceptional Children, and St. John Berchmans Child Development Center; in Baton Rouge at St. Francis Xavier Elementary School, and in Reserve at Our Lady of Grace Elementary School. Sister did venture to Compton, California where she served in ministry at St. Albert the Great Elementary School.

Sister did not forget her roots; for many years, she conducted Vacation Bible School during the summer for adults and children at her home parish.

Wherever Sister served, she was greatly loved and treasured. The principal at



## More trips to honor Henriette and promote the Cause

Since the last issue of *Servant of the Poor*, our Sisters from the Speakers' Bureau have made more visits.

Sisters Maria Gonzales and Geneva James to the Drexel Society Convention in New Iberia, LA and to St. Francis Xavier Church Senior Citizens in Metairie, LA.

Sisters Laura Mercier and Ann Michelle Mercier spent the weekend in Scott and Carencro, LA giving four talks at the four Masses.

The churches, pastored by Monsignor Ronald Broussard are St. Martin de Porres in Scott and Our Lady of the Assumption in Carencro, Louisiana.

The welcoming parishioners were happy to learn about Henriette and especially her status toward sainthood.

Sisters Geneva James and John Mary Jackson made sure that the parishioners of St. Peter Church in Covington would know Henriette's life, work, and legacy. The audience left knowing much more about Henriette.

They Sisters enjoyed gracious hospitality from the Pastor, Rev. Otis W. Young, Jr., Sister Theresa Berlin, Dianne and Ernie Herbert, and the parishioners.



Left., Sisters Marie Elizabeth, John Mary, and Geneva sing *Henriette's Song* before they begin to tell Henriette's story and give an update on the Cause at St. Peter Church in Covington, Louisiana.

Sisters Geneva James and Maria Gonzales visited St. David Church in New Orleans pastored by Very Rev. Oswald P. Pierre-Jules, Jr. SSJ to speak about Venerable Henriette and the Cause of Canonization.

This was a group that met monthly to learn more about the Church and they desired to know more about the process of canonization and the status of Venerable Henriette Delille.

Plans are to continue going wherever we can to tell Henriette's story and to promote devotion to her Cause.

## Sisters of the Sacred Heart firm up presence in Archdiocese of New Orleans

November 5, 2016 marked of the Sisters of the Holy the formal establishment of Family. the Sisters of the Sacred Heart's presence in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

This religious congregation was founded in Nigeria in 1975 with the assistance

of the Sisters of the Holy Family. Although the Sisters have been ministering in different apostolates, they have now opened their first convent in the United States.

The opening ceremony began with a prayer service witnessed by many priests, religious, and members of the lay faithful. We wish the Sisters a ministry which will bear much fruit as they spread the love of the Sacred Heart.



## Sr. Maria Goretti Iwu from page 5

at age circa 77. She was a professed religious for 41 years.

Memories of her will live on in the annals of the Sisters. She was a model religious and ever faithful in trying to help her young congregation to be committed to its mission.

Sr. Goretti had very little theological training, but when she prayed no one could question her genuine faith and deep love for God.

She leaves to mourn her death her growing religious family and members of her birth family

Rest in peace, faithful one.

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

Venerable Henriette Delille

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### *Servant of the Poor*

Published by the

Sisters of the Holy Family  
and

Friends of Henriette Delille

Imprinti Potest

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**Join the Sisters of the Holy Family praying the Novena to the Holy Family, December 21-29, to ask for blessings during our 175th year-long celebration, your intentions, and for the whole world.**

### *Novena to the Holy Family*

O most loving Jesus, who by Your awe-inspiring and beautiful virtues of humility, obedience, poverty, modesty, charity, patience and gentleness, did bless with peace and happiness the family You did choose on earth.

In Your mercy look down upon this household, humble in your presence and asking for Your mercy. Remember that this family belongs to You; for to You we have in a special way dedicated and devoted ourselves. Look upon us in your loving kindness; preserve us from danger; give us help in time of need, and grant us the grace to persevere to the end in the imitation of Your

Holy Family; that having revered You and loved You faithfully on earth, we may bless and praise You eternally in heaven.

O Mary, most sweet Mother, we turn to you to intercede for us, knowing that your Divine Son will hear your prayers.

And do you, o venerable Saint Joseph, be our mediator, and offer, by the hands of Mary, our prayers to Jesus. Amen.

Venerable Henriette Delille, pray for us that we may be a holy family.

*Here mention your petitions for this novena.*

1 Our Father ... 1 Hail Mary ...1 Glory Be