

The Marianite

Spring 2023

A publication from
The Marianites of Holy Cross



HOMELESSNESS

IS A

HUMANITY

ISSUE

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The Marianite, a publication
of the Marianites of Holy
Cross, is published quarterly.
For additional information
please go online:
www.marianites.org

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Greetings during this Eastertide!

There are fifty days from Easter until Pentecost in which we are challenged in a special way to continue the work of evangelization. When he leaves his disciples, Jesus encourages them to be about the work that He had begun. We, too, are called to be zealous in joyfully calling others to experience the Gospel message.

"Hurry then, take up this work of resurrection, never forgetting that the special end of your institute is, before all, to sanctify youth." –Basil Moreau, *Christian Education*, 1856

There is a certain worldview that caused our Blessed founder, Basil Moreau, to insist that education is "*the work of resurrection*." For Fr. Moreau, and the entire Christian tradition, the world is good (Gen 1:31) and loved by God (Jn 3:16).

I believe that for the Family of Holy Cross that same work continues today. One might ask, "How can I be about resurrection?" The Answer is simple! In a world starving for love, we become the face of Jesus. In the simple ways in which we invite others to know Jesus we take up the work of resurrection.

The Marianite Mission Statement invites us:

United with Mary standing at the foot of the cross, we, Marianites of Holy Cross, are apostolic religious, women of prayer and compassion. Our mission, energized by our life in community, is to incarnate the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. Called to be a prophetic presence in an ever-changing world, we resolutely stand with those who are excluded.

Yes, our world has changed since 1856 but the work goes on:

... *praying daily for the needs of our world.*
... *being the face of compassion as we address injustice.*
... *choosing that our words and deeds become prophetic presence.*
... *being sensitive to the changing needs of today.*
... *being intentional in our reaching out to those who are excluded.*

On Sunday, May 28, when the Spirit of the Living God descends on each of us at Pentecost, may we be ready to stand with Fr. Moreau and all who have gone before us in a circle of HOPE that continues the work of resurrection!

With faith and hope,

Sr. Ann Lacour, MSC
Congregational Leader



HOLY ANGELS ALL CLASS REUNION

November 4, 2023

Brunch from 11:00 - 2:00

Details to follow...



Homelessness in New Orleans – Will it ever end?

By Vicki Judice



When I tell new friends that I spent much of my career in homeless services and advocacy, they usually ask one of two questions: “Is it okay to give something to those panhandling at traffic stops?” or “What can we do about all the tent camps under the overpass?”

Two very good questions! The first one is easier to answer. If you want to share some coins with someone asking for it, I say, sure, go for it! Some prefer to give a granola bar or bottle of water instead of money. Even Pope Francis condones the activity as he said it gives him an opportunity to show mercy to people in need. By rolling down the window, looking someone in the eye, and dropping 50 cents into their outstretched hand, I am hoping my meager offering helps them feel more loved and valued. And I usually get a blessing from them in return! I don’t worry about what they will do with my 50 cents. I have met enough people who need actual cash to pay for items that food stamps won’t cover such as household supplies, hot prepared meals and pet food.

The tent camp issue is a bit more complex. Current estimates are that about 1,200 people experience homelessness on the street or in shelters at any given time in the New Orleans area. That number includes about 500 people who sleep in tents or outside in parks, cars or other places not meant for human habitation. Although it appears as if the tent camps are increasing in numbers, it is important to remember that the majority of people experiencing homelessness (75%) only are in that situation for up to 3 months, until they can find work and affordable housing or beds in long-stay shelters or treatment programs. That means many of them are rotating in and out of the tent camps. However, there is a smaller number (25%) who are there longer and have serious disabilities such as mental illness, substance addiction or physical disabilities. In order for them to evade death (the average age of mortality for those living on the streets long-term is 50 years old), they need permanent supportive housing which provides housing and services.

There is actually a robust and comprehensive effort already underway to offer this type of help to those who need it. Led by UNITY of Greater New Orleans in concert with city officials, help is being offered to those living in the tent camps. UNITY got its start in 1992 when Sr. Anthony Barczykowski of Catholic Charities envi-

sioned a new entity – a coalition of housing and service providers – which would work cooperatively to access federal grants and strive to reduce homelessness. Now, over 30 years later, UNITY and its collaborative partners have housed over 10,000 people experiencing homelessness. Without them, the number we see today under the bridges and in tent camps would be much higher.

I started working with UNITY in 2000 and was privileged to work with Sr. Clarita Bourque and other dedicated women who adopted national best practices aimed at ending the homelessness of individuals. Emergency shelters were still needed but the focus was shifted to “housing first” - a new approach focused on housing vulnerable individuals first and then working on treatment options second. Additionally, families, veterans and youth were given priority for housing. This approach is still in place and the strategy is working, with a majority (85%) still residing in their housing units.

The problem is that we are doing very little to prevent homelessness. Continued high rates of poverty, coupled with an extreme lack of affordable housing, make it virtually impossible to eradicate homelessness. Until we address lack of a living wage; lack of affordable rentals; lack of adequate supports for youth; and the scarcity of treatment resources for those with addiction or mental illness, then we’ll continue to see numerous tent camps in our midst.

In 2013, I left UNITY to work at the Harry Thompson Center, a day shelter providing an array of services to the unhoused community – showers, phone services, medical clinic, housing navigation, laundry, and much more. It is part of the collaborative St. Joseph’s Rebuild Center.

While there, I learned so much and met so many persons who challenged my perception of what it meant to be homeless. One such person was Robert, a New Orleanian who had a job but had not yet saved up enough money to find an apartment. He told me “People might assume that I am lazy. They don’t know my struggle. I use Frederick Douglas’ quote as my motivation ‘without struggle there is no progress.’” Until I spoke with Robert and learned his story, I had no idea about what was really going on in his life. He inspired me to listen more deeply and question my assumptions.

Upon my retirement in 2020, I compiled 45 inspirational stories of volunteers, guests and staff in a book entitled *I Need Your Hello: Stories of Hope and Compassion at the Rebuild Center in New Orleans*. It is available from www.lulu.com for \$22.50 or from the Harry Thompson Center for \$20. Contact www.harrythompsoncenter.org to order a copy. Proceeds benefit the center.



Mary our model

"Whenever Mary enters, she obtains the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, for it is through her hands that all graces come to us from the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

By Janelle S. Tate



These words of St. Maximilian Kolbe touch me deeply as I seek to share my reflections on Mary as Mother, my Mother, for my very birth occurred on a Marian feast. My parents were strong Catholics who professed a deep love for Mary and taught me to pray the rosary at an early age. I was fascinated by the

Seven Sorrows rosary that was part of the habit worn by the Marianite Sisters who educated me, and I would often stand as close as I could to one of the sisters as we prayed the Angelus in the school yard.

My love for Mary deepened in my adult life when I became a mother myself. I turned to Mary daily asking her to help me know what to do to form my children so they would love and follow Jesus. Every morning I would pray to "Mama Mary" with my children before they went to school. My own mother died when I was but 35, and the loss of her presence and advice as I raised my children deeply saddened me. That sadness made me more acutely aware of Jesus' gift in giving Mary to me from the cross to be my mother. It is Mary who became my teacher and role model and her rosary became my constant companion. One of the greatest treasures I own is a Seven Sorrows rosary that one of the older Marianites once wore as part of her habit.

Several years ago, I was asked to give a day of reflection on Mary and as I sought the help of the Holy Spirit, I was led to entitle the day: "Mary: The Woman with Beautiful Feet and Pretty Toes." In the prophet Isaiah, I read these words: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings Good News!" There is not another human being who brought greater news to humanity than did Mary. Her "yes" to the Father's invitation to become the mother of His only Son resulted in the incarnation of Jesus Christ as fully man and fully God. It is Mary who nourished



and nurtured Jesus, and through her loving care, Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace. What an extraordinary woman God chose for His Son!

"TOES" is an acronym for the 4 significant virtues she embodies: **TRUST**, **OBEDIENCE**, **EMPTINESS** and **SURRENDER**. Mary as my mother daily teaches me about her Son, how worthy of **TRUST** He is. She learned this by trusting that the plan of the Father in her life was for her good even when it involved intense suffering. How often Mary has encouraged me to hold on, to trust, in the darkest hours!

Mary models for me a life of **OBEDIENCE** for she accepted the letting go of her plans for her life and embraced whatever the Father offered her. What God needed most of all was her **EMPTY** womb accompanied by her sense of radical openness to God which then was filled by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit so that Christ could be born. Mary held her plans loosely and allowed the Holy Spirit to set her agenda and fill her "calendar." Her **SURRENDER** to God was complete and yet, her surrender had to be renewed daily as the plan of God unfolded moment by moment. She is a remarkable woman of faith and docility. Thus, she is a perfect model for me to follow in my desire for holiness.

Perhaps the month of May which is devoted to Mary and to the celebration of mothers could be an opportunity to ponder as Mary did the call of God in our own lives. Let us be encouraged by her example to live a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit so that our "beautiful feet" can spread the good news of Jesus' love for all and His desire for us to give Him our trust, our obedience, our emptiness and our daily surrender.

OUR OWN RENAISSANCE WOMAN, Sr. Mary Marcella LeBlanc

A Renaissance man or woman is recognized to be a person with many talents or areas of knowledge.

The 23-year-old from Port Arthur, LA, entered the Marianite Congregation in 1938. She pronounced her final vows as Sr. Mary Marcella on August 11, 1943. Sr. Marcella taught elementary school at St. Cecilia in New Orleans, LA. Then for almost 40 years she served in the Marianite infirmaries at Holy Angels Convent in the Ninth Ward and later at Our Lady of Holy Cross Convent in Algiers, LA.

Stories abound about her unlimited compassion and ingenious methods for caring for the sick and dying. Sr. Marlene Ste. Marie recalls, "Long before we heard about the importance of physical therapy, Marcella was exercising limbs and walking patients back to health."

Herself an MD, Sr. M. Madonna Baudier, related, "When a certain hospital wanted to keep an ailing Marianite, Dr. Scardino said, 'Send her back to the convent, Sr. Mary Marcella gives better care at home.'"

Sr. Jane Kidder, a now retired pre-school teacher, volunteered to work in the infirmery during her summers off. She speaks glowingly of Sr. Marcella's "know-how". "Amazingly, she could devise and create practical items to aid our patients with balance, flexibility, and strength. Long before PT catalogues were available, she always put safety first – for sisters in or out of bed." Sr. Jane chuckled, "On the other hand, Marcella, didn't always play it safe for herself. She was well up in years still climbing the fig trees to get the plump and juicy fruit. When I convinced her ENOUGH, she super-

vised me on a ladder."

Frequently, Sr. Marlene drove Sr. M. Marcella on some of her favorite outings. "She delighted to be at Nunez's in Barataria getting seafood for planning tasty and balanced infirmery meals or with sickle in hand heading out to cut palmetto leaves for the Christmas crèche or creating the thin branches into individual little crosses for Lenten memorabilia."

Sr. Marcella was also gifted as a seamstress, creating her own patterns and often making postulant habits for young women prior to their arrival. Sr. Judy Gomila recalled the mid-1960s: three days before leaving in September for graduate studies in Canada, the Provincial, Mother Hilary, decided that Sr. Mary Ellen Gomila should be sent off wearing the new contemporary habit that all the Sisters would begin wearing at Christmas. "Within 24 hours, Sr. M. Marcella had me measured, pinned and sewn together from shin-length skirt to skull cap and veil on top."

"Amazingly, she could devise and create practical items to aid our patients with balance, flexibility, and strength."

In the 1970's when Christopher Homes (Archdiocese of New Orleans) opened St. Martin Manor, older Marianites were among the original staff: Sr. M. Hilary Bodin, Sr. Clare Schaffhausen, Sr. June Sutherland and Sr. Marcella who was the Activity Director keeping residents engaged. Female and male residents were proud of their works of art: sea shells on note cards, unique drift wood creations, corn husk crib scenes, re-cycled Mardi Gras bead items, stuffed and

framed fabric pieces, and such.

In her later years, she was involved in community service at Holy Cross Convent and St. Joseph Convent in New Orleans. True to her Native-American heritage and her love of Mother Earth, she delighted everyone with gardens of beautiful flowers and edible veggies. Sr. Marcella continued using her creative talents and never

stopped dressing dolls – to scale - in the original habit of the Marianites of Holy Cross (See Editors, pg. 11). "Sister" always came complete with hand sewn hems, fluted bonnet, heart, and cincture.

In 2005, Marcella became a resident of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home where she is fondly remembered for her enduring kindness, warm smile and genuine gratitude to each person who cared for her. Sr. M. Marcella died on March 30, 2010 at 94 years of age. "Her indomitable spirit as a Renaissance Woman is a part of our Marianite Legacy", said Sr. Ann Martinez, who gave us the title for this article.



In Memoriam

Sr. Mary Consuelo Champagne

May 14, 1927 – August 4, 2022



Gertrude Champagne was born in New Orleans, LA. She died at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in 2022. She entered the Congregation of the Marianites of Holy Cross on January 13, 1945 and pronounced her perpetual vows as Sr. Mary Consuelo on August 12, 1950. She received her college education

at Holy Angels Normal School and Loyola University in New Orleans. She also received a Master's Degree in Science Education from Incarnate Word University in San Antonio, Texas.

From 1947-1973, she was involved in education in various places including St. Mary of the Angels, St. Cecilia, and St. Rita schools and Academy of the Holy Angels high school in New Orleans; and at Archbishop Blenk High School in Gretna. She also taught in the St. Bernard Public School System at Chalmette Senior High.

Sr. Connie served in Marianite leadership as a member of the provincial administration and as Executive Director of the Office of Women Religious in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Following special training in retreat ministry and spiritual direction, she was instrumental in bringing the Jesuit form of directed retreats to the Marianite Community and to others. She served at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville for four years and then in Grand Coteau at the Jesuit Spirituality Center from 1988-2011.

Due to declining health, she was admitted to Prompt Succor Nursing Home in July of 2015. A friend wrote in a note to her in her final days: "Sr. Connie, I will never forget you. By your teaching and example, you taught me to pray to Mary, our Mother, to proclaim the greatness of the Lord, to rejoice always in God my Savior." Sr. M. Consuelo donated her body to the LSU Medical Center.

Sr. Brenda Comeaux

May 7, 1951 – December 7, 2022



Sr. Brenda Marie Comeaux was born in Arnaudville, LA. She died at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in 2022.

Inspired by the Marianites of Holy Cross in Arnaudville, Sr. Brenda desired to be a Marianite since she was in elementary school. Her wish was joyfully fulfilled when she entered the

Congregation on August 31, 1969. During her early years in the Congregation, she received her degree in education from Our Lady of Holy Cross College (University of Holy Cross) and her master's degree in Education from Loyola University.

Early in ministry, she enjoyed teaching and was involved in elementary education at several schools in the New Orleans area. She later served as director of religious education at three parishes across the South.

Sr. Brenda continued to share her gifts serving in pastoral care for eight years at Wynhoven Health Center in Marrero, LA. In 1998, she moved to Opelousas and coordinated pastoral care at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home. She remained in that ministry for ten years dedicated to the preparation of all liturgical services, visiting the residents and participating in activities. She rendered devoted service to the staff, the residents and their families.

Due to declining health from Parkinson's disease, she was admitted to Prompt Succor Nursing Home in June 2009. However, even as her physical abilities declined, she continued to be a pastoral presence to others.

At the end of her mortal life and beginning of her eternal life, Sr. Brenda offers us the spiritual treasures of her fidelity to prayer, devotion to family and friends, dedication to her religious vocation, and her steadfast faith in the midst of pain.

*We loved them in life;
we revere them in their passing*

Sr. Jane Francis Dardenne September 10, 1925 – March 8, 2023



Sr. Mary Jane Frances was born Lila Anne Dardenne in Plaquemine, Louisiana. She died at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in Opelousas, Louisiana in 2023.

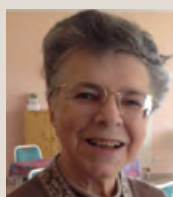
Inspired by the Marianites of Holy Cross in Plaquemine, she joyfully joined their ranks at 16 years of age. She entered the Congregation on August 30, 1942 and then pronounced her perpetual vows on August 12, 1947. She received a B.S. degree in education from Loyola University in New Orleans; and a Master's Degree in Education from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, Texas.

Her ministries included education as teacher and principal in various schools in New Orleans including St. Agnes, Holy Name of Mary, St. Christopher, St. Rita, St. Mary of the Angels and St. Cecilia. She ministered as well in education in Houma and in Franklin, Louisiana. She was also involved in religious education and served as Office Coordinator for Christ the Healer Medical Missionary Program in New Orleans.

Sr. Jane was well known in St. Rita Parish in New Orleans having served in various ministries from 1986-1995 as principal and administrator of St. Rita School. She educated and mentored many youth who grew to be business, political, and religious leaders in New Orleans and beyond. Her love and devotion to her students knew no bounds. Beyond the classroom, she was present in their extra-curricular activities, engaged with them in their sports, and lovingly supported their families.

When she could no longer physically walk due to declining health, her life journey continued at Our Lady of Wisdom Nursing Facility in 2007 in New Orleans and later at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home, Opelousas.

Sr. François Régis Lière May 24, 1937 – March 6, 2023



Sr. François Régis said "I had the privilege of being born into a Christian family where we loved each other very much." She was born in Rosendaël in northern France. Everyone knew how how attached she was to her family roots and her native land.

Throughout her childhood and adolescence her faith grew thanks to her parents, her religious education in private schools and the practice of scouting (guidism).

When she was 17 years old, during a summer

camp, she was offered the opportunity to work for a year with sick children while she awaited her 18th birthday to enter nursing school. Arriving in Précigné, she discovered the Marianite sisters. She was happy to serve in the middle of a joyful, welcoming community that supported her with their prayers. This was a starting point for her call to religious life.

She still needed her parents' permission since she was not of age! Her father's sudden death was a new ordeal and her mother questioned her decision. Finally in September 1956 she entered the postulate of the Marianites in Le Mans at the Solitude.

She was sent to Château du Loir at the St Jean boarding school. Sr. François was a teacher there until 1964 and then became director of the St Joseph School in Précigné.

For almost 30 years, she was director of the Ste. Marthe school in Le Mans until she retired.

Following a life devoted to Catholic education, she became more engaged in parish life, whether in Les Sablons or in the Ste. Croix parish. Her arrival at the Solitude in 2005 did not prevent her from remaining open and active while her health allowed.

Her memory sometimes played bad tricks on her; we keep the memory of a smiling, praying, pleasant companion.

Sr. Laura Melancon December 7, 1934 – April 26, 2022



Mary Ann Melancon, Sr. Mary Laura, was born on the West Bank of New Orleans in Algiers, LA. She died peacefully at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in 2022.

She had entered in 1952 and pronounced her perpetual vows on August 13, 1957. She received her college education at Holy Angels Normal School, New Orleans and a Master of Arts in French from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. She did additional studies in French at the Université de Clermont Ferrand in France in 1967 and the Université Catholique de l'Ouest in France in 1972.

Until 1960, she was involved in elementary education in New Orleans and in Lake Charles. She also taught French in those parochial schools in those dioceses. Then from 1972-1981, Sr. Laura served as the Academic Dean of Our Lady of Holy Cross College (now University of Holy Cross). Elected to general administration for the Marianites, she served from 1981-1985. Sr. Raymonde Marsollier, Sr. Joyce Hanks, and Sr. Laura in 1982 began the International Sessions in Holy Cross Spirituality in LeMans. These summer sessions were to deepen the appreciation of the history

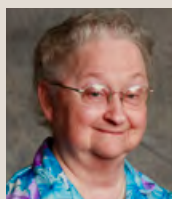
and charism of the Holy Cross Family and their partners in ministry.

From 1985-2009, she ministered in multiple roles at Our Lady of Holy Cross College including Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and as Vice President for Mission and Planning. An extremely cheerful person, Sr. Laura had a wonderful way of laughing at herself. She loved to learn and was an avid reader. What a teacher! If you asked her a question, be prepared to have a class on the subject!

Due to declining health, Sister Laura was admitted to Our Lady of Wisdom Health Care Center in 2009 and then transferred to Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in April, 2021.

Sr. Barbara Richter

February 20, 1935 – December 10, 2022



Sr. Barbara was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey. She died peacefully at Trinity Trace Community Care Center on December, 2022.

Sr. Barbara entered the Marianites in Princeton, NJ on September 15, 1950.

After serving three years as sacristan for French Hospital in New York City while still a student, she spent five years teaching and directing school choirs in the New York/New Jersey area. She then served many years in Bangladesh, teaching and training teachers, before returning home to care for her mother.

In 1975 Sr. Barbara transferred to the Louisiana Province where she became a reading specialist and served mainly in that capacity until 1997. From 1997 – 2018 Sr. Barbara taught from the home she shared with MSC Associate, Joyce Nixon, in Ponchatoula, LA.

She worked miracles with students with visual perception issues and dyslexia. Every student with whom she worked was eventually able to become confident and read on grade level. When teachers in Tangipahoa Parish Schools (and beyond) were not able to teach a student to read, their parents were advised to take their child to "the reading nun in Ponchatoula."

Barbara loved to cook and bake and was delighted to share her specialties with people in her neighborhood. She enjoyed gardening and crocheting and kept herself very busy. She was a lover of animals and made sure that everyone she encountered knew that!

Sr. Mary Kay Viellion

October 18, 1937 – July 16, 2022



On Saturday morning, July 16, 2022, in Lakeview Hospital, Sr. Kay called the nurse to let her know she was dying! Asked if she needed anything, Kay stated she was fine, and her final words were: "I am going to be with Jesus."

Kay was born in New Orleans and graduated from St. Louis Cathedral Grammar School and the Academy of Holy Angels. She entered the Congregation in 1955.

As Sr. Dominic Savio and later Sr. Kay she was a respected and beloved educator teaching at Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Christopher and Holy Angels in the New Orleans area. She also taught at St. John in Plaquemine, St. Francis in Houma, Academy of Immaculate Conception, Opelousas, and Holy Cross in Morgan City.

Kay earned her Ph.D. in Botany from the University of Nebraska in 1973. She served as assistant professor of Biology at Our Lady of Holy Cross (now UHC). She was a member of the Provincial Administration for the Louisiana province in the late 1970s and was Assistant Continental Superior in France in the 1980s. Kay's years in France were very special to her, as she bonded deeply with the French sisters and with her mother's French relatives. During the 1990s she served as Archivist for the Alexandria/Shreveport Diocese and worked closely with Sr. Madeline Sophie Hebert updating the archives of the Marianite Congregation.

Due to physical limitations related to her Multiple Sclerosis, she spent the past thirteen years in nursing homes, where she remained a viable presence. In the last sixteen months at Trinity Trace Community Care Center, Covington, she was a faithful local community member with Sisters Owen Quintana and Barbara Richter.

Sr. Kay's love for her God is witnessed in her final words.



msc|associates rise UP



By Pattie Harris



Long before the phrase, "Resurrection People" became popularized, Blessed Fr. Basil Moreau, CSC, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, said this to his educators, "Make haste and take up the work of resurrection..." Through His Paschal Mystery, Jesus first called us all to the work of resurrection.

One of the last things that Jesus did on the cross was to forgive. He, the Lamb of God, took away the sins of the world. Our Savior took all sins, for all times upon Himself and forgave them. He brought the joy of heaven down to earth by forgiveness. Our work of resurrection includes forgiveness – of self and others – to bring joy into our lives and into the world.

REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING:

"Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23:34).

"There is no love without forgiveness and no forgiveness without love." (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

With great love, we celebrate that Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and rose from the dead. This life sequence repeats itself over and over in each of our daily lives. We all *suffer* – emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We experience the agony of heartache, disappointment, and betrayal. Life can seem unbearable at times and we actually *die* to self. We can find ourselves *buried* in sin, guilt, shame, loneliness, hurriedness, or rejection. We ache with the pain of our world and yet as MSC Associates in Holy Cross we find our hope.

Like Jesus, our own suffering, death, and entombment will be followed by our resurrection. Each resurrection is a means of shedding what keeps us buried or hidden away from the His light – hidden from the joy of forgiveness. Resurrection teaches us that we can begin again and be set free from affliction. This is our God's desire and gift to us – the gift of second chances. How readily do I offer forgiveness and second chances to people in my life?

Our opportunity to experience resurrection on this earth is a grace-filled and renewable commodity following our trials and tribulations. Ultimately, we are preparing for our final resurrection into eternal life with a loving God who knows us as "holy and beloved".



MSC Associates from Franklin (back row, center) Charlene Blanchard, Betty Jo Champagne, and Margaret Hoy visit the Marianites in Opelousas and embrace resurrection as a "grace-filled and renewal commodity."

Jesus promised He would be with us always, until the end of time. With confidence, we know the promise and want to share that with others. Because He lives, we, too, can triumph tomorrow. It was St. Pope John Paul II who stated, "We are a

resurrection people and alleluia is our song. This is the joyful message of Easter!"

All Christians, and as Marianite Associates, we are called to embrace resurrection; to "make haste and go about the work of resurrection" not just during the Easter Season but through all the seasons of our souls.

LOOK WHO'S GOT NEW WHEELS!

When 90 year old Sr. Owen Quintana talks about her ministry over the years, you'll hear schools, labs, Lake Providence Hospital, NOAH, etc. Today, she scratches her head, an array of gray hairs, she talks about her ministry to the sick and dying at Trinity Trace. She also leads prayer once a week for the administrative team, participates in Bible study, takes part in weekly communion services, runs nightly Pokino games in Lodge D. During Holy Week, she and Sr. Rosemary Wessel (also a resident) organized the Stations of the Cross.



The following is an excerpt from a Thank You card Sr. Owen received after tending to the broken-hearted. "I want to thank you for sharing the love of God, praying and singing hymns. It was such a great comfort to us...you continue your vocation right where you are!"

Festivals – Festivals – Festivals

There are only three great cities in America – New York City, San Francisco and New Orleans. Everything else is Cleveland. –Mark Twain

By Sr. Clarita Bourque

My apologies to all the great cities in America, especially Cleveland! I have no idea why Mark Twain would make this statement but I certainly don't think it's true. However, I firmly believe that New Orleans is one of the great cities. I know we have our problems but every city does.

There is one thing that's certain. Nobody outdoes us in festivals and other fun-loving activities. Just to prove it to you, I've made a list of just some of them ...

First, there's *Mardi Gras*. Would you believe there are 56 parades in the New Orleans area! And ... in the last few years, there has been a proliferation of marching groups. There are the Rolling Elvi and the 610 Stompers among the men; the women have created the Bearded Oysters, the Amelia EarHawts, the Muffalatas, just to name a few.

There's *Jazzfest*. Its attended by thousands of locals and tourists at the New Orleans Fairgrounds. There is always great entertainment with world-class artists and our own very talented locals. (The food is great, too.)

If you like to eat, there are crawfish festivals everywhere during the season. There's also *Hogs for a Cause*, a fundraiser for pediatric brain cancer. (Last year they raised \$2.6 million.) There are delicious versions of the "hog" to be consumed during the day.

Just so you'll know that it's not all "fun and games", we have a Tennessee Williams Literary Festival. Of course, we had to add a little fun to this. There is a "Stella" contest where the contestant who can yell "Stella" the loudest is the winner. (You remember Stella from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.)

Let's not forget the *Tremé Creole Gumbo and Congo Square Rhythms Festival*. The slaves of New Orleans used to gather in Congo Square to dance and play their congo drums. The gumbo would be enough to bring in a crowd, even if you didn't like the dancing and drums.

Let's not forget the month of March with *St. Patrick's parades, St. Joseph altars, and the many tribes of the Mardi Gras Indians gathering*.

And, if you're strolling through the French Quarter, at any time, you might just come across a *Second Line*.

And, we can be very athletic! Every year thousands take part in the Crescent City Classic, a ten kilometer race. (If you can't run, you can walk!)

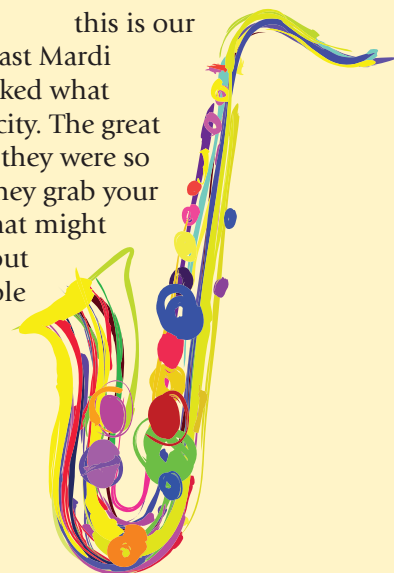
During Lent it continues with Catholic Church parishes throughout the city and suburbs providing great Friday seafood meals for a reasonable price. (After all, we have to eat, even during Lent!)

What's so great about all of this is our

citizen body! During the past Mardi Gras many tourists were asked what they liked most about the city. The great majority said the people – they were so hospitable. (Of course, if they grab your carnival beads off a float, that might not be true!) We are, without doubt, a very friendly people who happen to like to celebrate. Let's hope and pray that never changes...



Sisters Kateri Battaglia and Renée Daigle brought French Marianite, Sr. Marie-Andrée Rousseau to the French Quarter Festival. Sr. Renée commented, "It's free and showcases Louisiana music and food in such a fun way!"



"This is what the Pasch of the Lord accomplishes: it motivates us to move forward, to leave behind our sense of defeat, to roll away the stone of the tombs in which we often imprison our hope, and to look with confidence to the future, for Christ is risen and has changed the direction of history. Yet, to do this, the Pasch of the Lord takes us back to the grace of our own past; it brings us back to Galilee, where our love story with Jesus began, where the first call took place. In other words, it asks us to relive that moment, that situation, that experience in which we met the Lord, experienced his love and received a radiantly new way of seeing ourselves, the world around us and the mystery of life itself."

– Pope Francis
Homily April 8th, 2023



EDITOR'S NOTE:



MARIANITE DOLLS — two made by God and one by Sr. Marcella LeBlanc.

Did you know the infamous Barbie doll was "born"
in March 1956 at age 19 making her 86 years old now.

Our prayerful and playful Editors embrace their 80's and 90's day by day.

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"Summertime, and the livin' is easy..."*

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *"Gaudete et Exultate"* (Rejoice and Be Glad) reminds us that the call to holiness is for everyone since Baptism. Furthermore, the Pope seems to indicate that the call to holiness applies wherever we are and any time of year.

Children will soon be getting out of school (be careful driving), the weather is already warming up, and families are planning their vacations. Perhaps the destination is to visit Mickey and Minnie and their animated friends in Disney World, or seek out the last bit of snow on mountaintops, or maybe just throw a colorful terrycloth blanket on the sand of a familiar beach. Whatever your "livin' is easy" plans, we ought not take a vacation from the celebration of Eucharist. It can be a safe and sacred time to reacquaint ourselves with Mass, which Vatican II called aptly "the source and summit of our lives". While checking road maps or booking airline or train tickets, hotel reservations, restaurants, tours, museums and such, do check out where Catholic Churches are located and the times Mass is celebrated. Why not download the app to your phone: catholicmasstimes.app? (Catholic Mass Times provides a free service for Catholics worldwide. The app supports finding churches in more than 160 countries and has been downloaded more than 1.3 million times.)

Participation in liturgy in a different area, language, or culture is an opportunity to experience what it means to be catholic/universal (small "c" intended). Summertime's R & R – whether close to the place we call home or on the other side of the world – is not an excuse to take a vacation from expressions of our life of faith.

So the call to holiness is a 24/7, 365 days a year reminder. It's not just for those who can withdraw from the ups and downs of everyday life and spend tedious hours in prayer. We are called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do. Whether on the rambunctious rides at an amusement park, in line at the latest block-buster movies, or just foolin' with the pool noodles in the water, how can I bring the love of Christ into this day?

Wisdom from Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, "When your life is filled with the desire to see the holiness in everyday life, something magical happens: Ordinary life becomes extraordinary, and the very process of life begins to nourish your soul." Full, conscious, and active participation in Mass and our call to holiness is the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives summer, fall, winter or spring.

**The song was composed in 1933-34 by George Gershwin for the opera "Porgy & Bess." Over the years it has been sung by artists as diverse as Janis Joplin, Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and Willie Nelson.*