



*Volume Two: October 1, 2023*

## **In the Beginning...**

May 1, 1849, five Brothers and three Sisters arrived by river boat and then stagecoach; they immediately took charge of St. Mary's Orphan Asylum for boys. With the arrival of Holy Cross, order and economy were introduced and the general welfare improved.

The pioneer members of the Holy Cross Family in Louisiana included:

- Brother Vincent Pieau
- Brother Théodule Barbé
- Brother Basil O'Neil
- Brother Francis de Sales Berel
- Brother Louis Derouin
- Sister Mary of the Five Wounds Paillet
- Sister Mary Calvary Robineau
- Sister Mary of the Nativity Daly

Father François Gouësse was the first Holy Cross Priest to join the community of Brothers and Sisters in New Orleans. Upon his arrival in February, 1850, he replaced Brother Vincent Pieau as local Superior.

Every morning a Brother went out with a cart to beg from the hotels the leftovers of the day before. The collection was thrown pell-mell into large brown bags and often included bread, meat and vegetables. This food was then properly cleaned and presented and was their "first sizable resource."

From the forty boys that were at St. Mary's when the Brothers and Sisters arrived until December, 1851, the residence had grown to four hundred boys. However, the community experienced many difficulties in the early years.

Amid their many difficulties, Sister Mary Calvary was stricken with yellow fever. With the help of Archbishop Blanc, Sister was taken to the Ursuline convent. While there for three months, she received not only the best physical care but all of the delicate attention possible. The Ursuline Sisters consistently saw to the needs of the first Holy Cross Community as well as providing food and clothing for the orphans.

At the beginning of their duty, the New Orleans community had suffered many waves of diseases. Brother Vincent explained the climate of New Orleans as, "unhealthy, especially for strangers." In 1852 fifty boys and two Brothers died during the terrible cholera epidemic. Many brothers wanted to pull themselves from New Orleans, along with the General Council, but Father Moreau decided to stay because of his deep devotion to and affection for the city. He said, "This place has experienced various kinds of hardships...but that is proof that it will also become a place of great blessing." Father Moreau knew that Holy Cross would exceed expectations and become something like no other.

## The Holy Cross Family Expands the Ministry... An Early Timeline

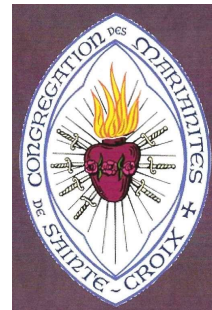
**1851...** In July, the sisters realized that poor orphaned girls aged 12-15 had no place to go. The Sisters acquired property for St. Mary's Girl Orphanage. Sister Mary of the Five Wounds was familiar with Industrial Schools. The sisters taught skills to the girls such as cooking, sewing, cleaning. The girls would one day have skills that could offer them a future. A small school was opened in August, 1851, which later became the Academy of the Holy Angels.

**1854...** The Marianites received permission from Father Moreau to begin a novitiate. The Sisters, concerned to not conflict with the Brothers' fundraising efforts, sought funds outside of New Orleans.

**1856...** Father Moreau learned from Pope Pius IX that the men and women could not be organized into one congregation. The Brothers and Priests are established as the Congregation of Holy Cross and the Sisters as the Marianites of Holy Cross.



*New symbols used for the religious orders  
after 1857*



### **1857...**

- Father Moreau, C.S.C. and M.S.C. founder and first Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, visited Canada and the United States. He did not visit New Orleans because a yellow fever epidemic was raging; the community felt it was too dangerous for him to visit. Before his departure Father Moreau sent a picture of the Holy Face to all houses of the Congregation with the recommendation that there be a daily prayer for his efforts in the New World. Devotion to the Holy Face was popular in France and, because it was an expression of the Cross (significant in Moreau's spirituality), Father Moreau wanted the devotion observed in every house.
- With a population of 2000 in Opelousas, the Marianites began a school with a promise from the pastor that it would become a boarding school.
- The Marianites established another ministry with a school in Plaquemine, LA.
- The Sisters moved into a house at the corner of Church and Court Streets.

The years between 1861 and 1865 were the most tumultuous five-year span in Louisiana history. During this period, Louisiana seceded from the United States, sent thousands of Confederate soldiers out of state, witnessed Union invasion and occupation, and saw the emancipation of more than 300,000 enslaved people. New World. The ever-growing Congregation knew hunger, fear and generosity! Divine Providence was alive within the hearts of the Brothers and Sisters as they cared for the many children entrusted to them. Their fearless efforts during these trying years gave testimony to the motto of the Congregation - Ave Crux Spes Unica - The Cross our only Hope.

**1866...** Father Moreau resigned as Superior General.

**1870...** Mother Mary of the Seven Dolours (Léocadie Gascoin), First Superior General of the Marianite Sisters, visited New Orleans.

**1871...** The Brothers purchased a working farm called the Reynes Plantation which they worked as St. Isidore's Farm. They raised food for the orphans and raised money for the orphanage by selling crops at the French Market. Holy Cross moved to its historic site on 4950 Dauphine Street.