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1950-1975: New Leaders, New Facilities and Icons
Continuing the Mission and Legacy of the Founder

Holy Cross Grotto completed and dedicated in 1955



Holy Cross Campus in 1960; Upper School completed in 1954



Holy Cross Guided with Strong and Steady Leadership...

Brother Alfonso, Brother Reinald, and Brother Robert all had significant impact on the growth and success of Holy Cross as Headmasters of the school, each having gifts and talents, different leadership styles, and very different personalities. While a large majority of the faculty was formed by the Holy Cross Brothers to start the 1950's, the ensuing years and decades saw the Brothers joined by growing numbers of lay colleagues and the first women teachers hired in 1969. By 1975, less than 20 percent of the faculty were Holy Cross religious.

Several of the young Brothers who arrived in the 1940's became legends in the school during the 1950's and 1960's. Brother Melchior Polowy, Brother Vincent de Paul Hujar, and Brother Timothy Hickey all wore many hats, but are mostly remembered as the architect of the wrestling program, expanding the drama program and building the Grotto, and a legendary Prefect of Discipline, respectively. And the legends were not limited to the Brothers with the likes of John Kalbacher and Richard Crosby. While legends are strong in many memories, teachers and staff all made a difference in the school and in the formation of ***Holy Cross Men***.

1972 was a watershed year in the history of the school with three important decisions made. Though enjoying a new, modern residence, the population of boarders had been decreasing and it was decided to start phasing out the boarding program. A second decision was to add 5th and 6th grades which eventually helped to define Holy Cross Middle School. The addition of the younger grades also necessitated the creation of a private bus service to enable student transportation within the metropolitan area.



Completing the "Dauphine Street" Campus in the 1960's: The Student Center (1962); Brothers' Residence (1964); Junior Olympic Swimming Pool (1965); Student Residence Hall (1967, housed the Middle School beginning in 1972); Physical Plant Building (1967); the Grotto was removed for the new dorm and the Hurricane Betsy-damaged gym was demolished

School Leadership 1950-75

Holy Angels Principals

Mother Mary Xavier Haggerty
Sister Mary Martina Daly
Sister Mary Dorothy Miremont
Sister Mary Theresa MacDonald
Sister Mary Monica Stelly
Sister Joyce Michel

Holy Cross Headmasters

Brother Alfonso Comeau
Brother Reinald Duran
Brother Robert Hampton

Our Lady of Holy Cross College Presidents

Mother Mary Xavier Haggerty
Mother Mary Adrian Collins
Sister Mary Hillary Bodin
Sister Mary Carmel Murphy
Sister Edna Eileen Byrne

A Time of Change: AHA; the Catholic Church; the World

The decade of the 1950's found the Marianite schools bursting at the seams. An improving economy made it possible for families to afford tuition and they realized the quality of a Catholic school education. Until 1945, the Marianites were teaching young children as well as high school students at Holy Angels. In that year Grades 1 and 2 went to St. Cecilia to create room at the Academy for high school students. Between 1945 and 1952, elementary grades were eliminated so that by 1952 just the high school remained. Because of the growing number of students at Academy of Holy Angels and the increase in vocations in the Novitiate, it was necessary to consider an alternative housing program which eventually leads to the campus on the West Bank for the Mother House, Novitiate and College. With the exodus of the Novitiate, work began on AHA expansion and modernizing of classrooms. A new gym was also part of the campus changes and improvements.

Vatican II Impacts the Church and the Marianites

The Ecumenical Council in 1962 affected Catholics world-wide changing the way we pray, celebrate Liturgies, receive the Eucharist and the Sacraments. Religious orders were encouraged to give more focus and reflection to their founders. While the Marianites never lost focus on Father Moreau, a major change that did affect them was modification of their religious habit.

A Hiccup by Mother Nature

Growth and change encountered a hurdle from Hurricane Betsy in 1965, but it only strengthened mission and ministry by the Marianites. Four hundred sisters cared for 8000 refugees at the Naval Station alone in Algiers. The Sisters set up 25 refugee shelters on the base, staffed with a telephone system allowing calls from persons checking on relatives. What an example of service and dedication they were, and still are, to many young women they taught!

Teacher Education to Full Higher Education

In 1938 the Louisiana Department of education approved a program that would lead to the conferring of the Bachelor of Arts degree. The name was changed to the College Department of the Academy of Holy Angels. In the early 1950's, lay women who were teaching in schools administered by the Marianites were admitted to the College. In the spring of 1960, the College moved to new quarters on the West Bank of the Mississippi River on forty acres donated by the Ernest B. Norman family and designated for educational and religious purposes. The name was changed to Our Lady of Holy Cross College. In the early 1960's, women from public and Archdiocesan schools began to enroll, and in 1967, the first men were admitted. The College was on its way to growth and expansion with this step into coeducation. A governing board of lay trustees was organized in the late 1960's according to the requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Until 1969, the office of President of the University was held by the Provincial of the Marianites. In that year, the two positions were separated, and for the first time the Board of Regents elected the President. In the spring of 1971, the first status report was submitted and approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Aerial View of the Academy of the Holy Angels

