

Volume Four: December 1, 2023

Father Moreau's last letter to the sisters in Louisiana thanked them for a cassock and a bag of American gold! He said their generosity was excessive and asked for prayers. Father Moreau was succeeded as Superior General by Bishop Pierre Duval in 1866 and then Father Edward Sorin in 1868. The Marianite Sisters cared for the founder in his retirement and the last years of his life. On January 20, 1873, Father Moreau, surrounded by the Marianite Sisters in France, was called to his eternal home. Though he died, his mission and educational philosophy lived on through the Priests, Brothers and Sisters and is still vibrant in our schools today.

CSC and MSC... A Leadership Role in Louisiana Catholic Education

As the Brothers were administering St. Mary's Orphan Boys Asylum, the Sisters became disturbed at the plight of the young girls who were homeless and destitute as a result of yellow fever. In 1851, the Sisters began to build the Immaculate Conception Industrial School to instruct these orphan girls. The site of this school was in the Ninth Ward. In 1866, this school evolved into the Academy of the Holy Angels, a high school for young girls and the parent school of the University of Holy Cross. During this same period, the Marianite Sisters were opening and administering several schools in New Orleans and south Louisiana and the Congregation of Holy Cross began its expansion into formal education.

The Initial site of Holy Cross School was purchased by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1871. The site chosen for the new foundation, named for St. Isidore, was located at Dauphine and Reynes Streets, a beautiful suburban estate to which the Brothers moved in the latter part of 1871. It was ideal for the purpose to which it was dedicated: that of training boys left homeless by the recurrent epidemics in the city. It was here that for eight years the Brothers cared for the boys Divine Providence entrusted to them.

Meanwhile, the orphanage operations of St. Mary's were soon after transferred across the Mississippi river to Marrero and was renamed Madonna Manor. Nearby was Hope Haven for older orphan boys directed by the sons of St. John Bosco.



Painting of the Reynes Plantation purchased in 1871... it is displayed at the Brother Vincent Pieau Residence in Austin.

College Established

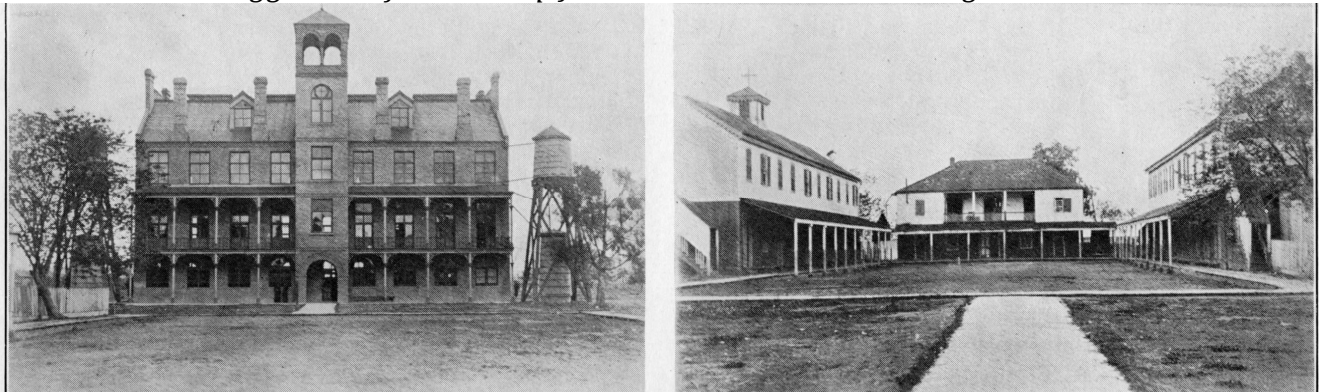
In addition to agricultural skills, the boys studied English, mathematics, music, and geography; the institution was gradually moving away from its emphasis on farming. In 1879 when the need for the work carried on by the Brothers at St. Isidore's decreased, the Congregation decided to create a "college" at St. Isidore's in the French style, including primary and secondary grades. Attracting young men from outside the area, the college soon took in boarders. It was the first such boarding school for boys in the state. When Father Joseph Scherer arrived in September, 1880, to

assume direction of the school, he found terrible conditions. Spirits were low, the cash-box was empty, and the mortgage stood at \$1141.60. The only teachers were one priest and Brother Ignatius. The school needed a strong prefect of discipline. Scherer begged Fr. Sorin for sisters to take over the kitchen. Total enrollment was fifteen boarders, three orphans, and two day students, an enrollment that Scherer thought would drop once he announced tuition increases for the boarders from nine dollars per month to ten, and for the day students from one dollar per month to two. Dwindling profits from the farm were going to pay the workers. By May, 1881, enrollment, however, had improved to such an extent that Scherer was planning to limit admissions. Personnel were still needed, and he was overworked. Besides being president, he was a teacher, prefect, steward, and infirmarian. Enrollment apparently didn't hold up. Father P.J. Franciscus in the fall of 1883 reported but fourteen boarders and ten day students. He attributed the decline to the reputation the school still had as an orphanage and industrial school. Insufficient school facilities also contributed to their woes.

Seven years later the school was chartered by the general assembly of the State of Louisiana and empowered to confer academic degrees. The majority of these were in the field of business although the college maintained an arts and letters department offering a classical course. A minim department was formally organized early in 1895 that provided for instruction in all of the primary and secondary grades.

Holy Cross School campus in 1895

The name of the school changed from St. Isidore's College to Holy Cross College at the suggestion of Archbishop Janssens when the new building was dedicated.



Holy Cross Mission Expands to Parish Work in New Orleans



Fr. Johannes wrote to Superior General Fr. Sorin in 1879: "I have some news which could interest you. The first and most important bit is the laying and blessing of the cornerstone of our church of the Sacred Heart. This ceremony took place on Sunday the 22nd of this month (June, 1879). Father Rouxel, vicar general and our sincere friend, wanted to do the ceremony, a crowd of people of every class being present. May God be praised! The difficulties, against which we have had struggle, finally disappeared, and the congregation is going to set down firm roots in New Orleans."