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A Commitment and Passion for New Orleans by the Founder...

The general administration of Holy Cross had great concerns about staying in New Orleans; too many had died and more would die as priests, brothers and sisters were still being assigned to the foundation. Consider this excerpt slightly adapted from the Annals of Holy Cross:

“During the 1850's and 1860's the foundation in Louisiana had suffered a long series of frightful setbacks: numerous religious and very many children cared for by the brothers and sisters were struck down by recurring epidemics of yellow fever, malaria, and other diseases. They all lived in poverty that bordered on destitution; they suffered from the delayed arrival, departure or death of successive administrators; and conflicts with the Holy Cross authorities in Indiana caused turmoil in the Louisiana community. The general council met to discuss whether the foundation should be suppressed. Each member spoke his opinion. At the end, Father Moreau put his head in his hands for a few minutes, then looked up and said that since God demanded so much from Holy Cross in Louisiana, this must surely be a sign that God planned great things for our future there. So, he said he thought we should stay. The general council adopted his view and voted to stay.”

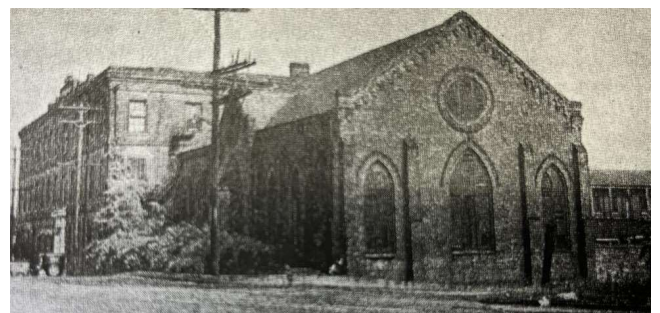
After his resignation as superior general in 1866, Father Moreau wrote to the community in New Orleans, in January of 1870. The letter expresses well an affection he had for a city that he never had the opportunity to visit, but which always remained close to his heart and in his prayers.

“You are not wrong in counting on my affectionate interest. I have followed you in mind and heart all along. And, if there is one place in which I am deeply interested and for which I have tender affection, it is assuredly New Orleans, especially because of the trials it has undergone ever since its foundation and because of its fidelity to the mother house. The cross has been your lot and we must thank heaven for the honor of offering us this grace, for this will become a place of great blessing. Be assured that I shall never forget you.”

From Orphan Care to Education

“By zeal is understood that flame of burning desire which one feels to make God known, loved and served and thus save souls. Apostolic activity is therefore the essential character of this virtue.” *(Christian Education – 1856)*

Blessed Basile Moreau wrote *Christian Education* to function as a handbook for the educators, both religious and their colleagues, working at the school he built in Sainte-Croix. Educators in Holy Cross and Marianite schools have always woven the *values* and *mission* of Father Moreau into the operation of their schools all over the world. Although the Family of Holy Cross may not have always communicated and taught the educational theory defined by the founder, they have done extraordinary jobs of living and modeling the mission to students and teaching colleagues.



St Mary's Orphanage on Chartres Street before the Buildings were dismantled in 1948

Without question, the priests, brothers and sisters exhibited zeal in their efforts, initially with the orphans and eventually with the students they served.

More and more the direction of the orphanage passed into the hands of the Marianite Sisters of Holy Cross, who, of course, were well suited to caring for the younger boys.

In 1871 a reorganization of the orphanage took place; the smaller boys remained at St. Mary's in the care of the Sisters; the Brothers took the older ones with them to what Archbishop Perché called a "large and beautiful farm" in the suburbs to be trained in gardening and farming. The new foundation bore the name of St. Isidore, patron of husbandry. The reorganization of St. Mary's in 1871 required that the Brothers find more spacious housing for the older boys who were to leave the orphanage with them, while younger boys were to remain in the care of the Marianite Sisters at the mother institution located on Chartres Street. The new institution was ideal for the purpose to which it was dedicated: that of training boys left homeless by the recurrent epidemics in the city. The property extended from the graceful bend in the Mississippi river beyond St. Claude to the Florida Avenue area. It was here the Brothers cared for the older orphans for eight years.

The site chosen for the new foundation was located at Dauphine and Reynes Streets to which the Brothers moved in the latter part of 1871.

Marianites Lead the Way into the Education Ministry in Louisiana...

Clearly, the Marianite Sisters did much more than caring for the young orphans in the New Orleans area.

1870... Begin administering Saints Peter and Paul Elementary School; when the sisters arrived there were 170 students. Within a week there were 250 students.

October 11, 1870... 5 Marianites travel to open a school in Houma which once functioned as a Methodist College.

1871... Marianites open a school in Franklin, LA, on the Bayou Teche! After 5 DAYS of intense preparation the school was ready for the dedication on November 5, 1871.

By the end of 1871, the Marianites had 8 schools in Louisiana,

1872... The golden jubilee of Father Founder! Fr. Moreau thanks the Marianites in France and America for joining him in ministry! "You have always devoted yourselves to the work of Holy Cross."

