

THE ACADEMY: HEART AND HOME

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History Conference
Congregations of Holy Cross
New Orleans, Louisiana
June, 1990

We honor you, our voices blending as we say, we all love
you, our Alma Mater, AHA. . . . Beloved Academy, to us so
near and dear, . . . Spirit of AHA, descend upon our
hearts, never from us will you part. . . ."
(AHA Alma Mater, Cole 1957)

These few phrases, taken from AHA's Alma Mater, express the sentiments of many Marianites of generations past and present. For several decades, the Marianites of Holy Cross staffed many academies throughout Southern Louisiana: St. Basil's in Plaquemine, Immaculate Conception in Opelousas, St. John in Franklin, St. Charles in Lake Charles, - but the Academy meant but one place: the Academy of the Holy Angels, heart and home of the Marianites of the Louisiana Province. Holy Angels embraced the Provincial House, the Novitiate, the college department, the place for summer breaks from the classroom for study and retreats, infirmary and retirement home. There was also the Chapel forming the backdrop for countless ceremonies: receptions, temporary and final professions, jubilees, and that final visit of repose before journeying to St. Vincent's Cemetery located in the shadow of the Academy walls.

Let's stroll back in time. From its inception, New Orleans throughout its history, was chronically plagued with countless natural disasters such as cholera and yellow fever epidemics, and the annual spring flooding of the Mississippi River. These events were part of life in the Crescent City. Besides these perennial tragedies of nature, in the decade just prior to the arrival of Holy Cross in

New Orleans, the threat of the War between the States clouded the national horizon. The war became a reality in the spring of 1861. Unfortunately, these combined afflictions left many boys of the area homeless orphans.

In 1835, in order to allieviate some of the sufferings of the orphan boys of the city, Reverend Adam Kindelon donated his personal property in the form of an asylum. Shortly after this, unfortunately, Father contracted a disease, as a result of his rescue of some of these boys from drowning. Within a few days he was dead. With Father's passing, the Asylum functioned very inefficiently for fourteen years with an inept lay administration (Haggerty 1948, 30).

From France to Indiana, to Louisiana, the road of Holy Cross to New Orleans was rather circuituous. In 1848, Fr. Francis Drouelle, the Holy Cross priest who placed the feet of Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors on the path to the Congregation, visited New Orleans before sailing on to Gaudeloupe to assume the duties of Prefect Apostolic (Annals 1951, 7). Father visited Archbishop Antoine Blanc, accepting for the Congregation the work of St. Mary's Orphan Boys' Asylum. Six Brothers of Holy Cross and three Marianites: Sisters Mary of the Nativity, Mary of the Five Wounds, and Mary of Calvary were freed for this undertaking because of a failed venture at a college in Lebanon, Kentucky. Though Sister Mary of the Crucifixion received the same obedience, she was too ill for the journey and eventually returned to Notre Dame du Lac. When the Holy Cross community arrived in New

Orleans May 1, 1849, they received the kind hospitality of Leyton Family (Catta 1959, 152).

If the young boys of New Orleans became homeless, parentless victims of epidemics, the unpredictability of the Mississippi, and the imminent threat of War, so did countless young girls find themselves in the same unfortunate circumstances. The Daughters of Charity cared for the orphan girls to the age of twelve, but beyond that there were no places for them. (Haggerty 1948, 133-4).

In 1851, [Father Moreau] sent, at the request of the Most Reverend Antoine Blanc, another band of Marianites, who arrived by riverboat, to assist in the founding of an orphanage and industrial school for girls. This institution became known as the Immaculate Conception Industrial School for Girls. (Haggerty, 1948 p.8)

By the beginning of August 1851, nine little girls had been accepted as apprentices and the Immaculate Conception Industrial School had begun. This first orphanage marked the beginning of the Marianites' career of religious education in boarding and day schools in Louisiana (Hill 1960, 11).

This venture held within it the seed of the Academy of the Holy Angels, for in September, 1853 a [boarding] school opened on the premises of the orphanage. When, between the years of 1911 and 1912, the Immaculate Conception Orphanage, having served its purpose, closed its doors. But the Academy's work flourished and prospered.

Let us pause for just a moment in an attempt to form a picture of a very important individual in the early history of our Louisiana Province. Unfortunately, there is scant information about her. She was

the Marianite pioneer educator and organizer here in New Orleans: Sister Mary of the Five Wounds (Paillon). She presents a picture of a woman tremendously endowed with many many gifts: energy, organization, resourcefulness, foresight, and most important of all, a great love of God and deep faith in His Divine Providence. She was the force behind what eventually blossomed into the Academy of the Holy Angels. It was Sisterr. Mary of the Five Wounds, who in 1851, recognized a desperate need for educating orphan girls and so petitioned the authorities of the Congregation to establish Immaculate Conception Industrial School. In 1852 she was named superioress of the School by Father Sorin (Haggerty 1948, 135). In a brief sketch from the Insider, a sesquicentennial publication in honor of the Jubilee celebration, there is the following bit: In August of 1853, Sister received the obedience to go to New York to organize a school for orphan girls similar to Immaculate Conception Industrial School which she had spearheaded here in New Orleans. She apparently returned to New Orleans, because in 1854, Sister was commissioned by Father Founder to establish a novitiate in Louisiana, with Sister Mary of the Passion as its first Mistress of Novices. She then left the Congregation and disappeared for a short period. However, in 1861, she petitioned the General Administration for re-admittance to the Congregation and this permission was granted, but she left permanently in 1862 (May 1989, vol. 1, Issue 1 3-4). We must deduce from the bits of information gleaned here and there from the

Chronicles and other community records, that she spent a turbulent community history. With seemingly unbounded energy and much prophetic vision, there was little doubt that she was definitely a woman eons ahead of her time.

In 1855, with the increasing needs of the Industrial School, it was necessary to expand the school. Again it was through the leadership and foresight of Sister Mary of the Five Wounds and with the permission and authority of Father Patrick Shiel, CSC, then the Provincial, that the purchase of present site of the Academy, was accomplished. It was bought from Celeste Powell, a free woman of color. The price: a grand total of \$275. This property formed part of the Barthelemy Macarty plantation. The present structure, located on the corner of North Rampart and Gallier Streets, was constructed at this time. The gray building, as it is traditionally known, provided ample living quarters for twenty boarders as well as ample classroom space for these boarders and the orphans (Hill 1960, 13).

Conditions in New Orleans during the decades of the fifties and sixties of the past century were grim indeed. Only the faith and fortitude of the pioneers, working in such deplorable conditions, sustained them. Their faith in and love of God and the Congregation bore fruit, because the ministries of Holy Cross in the Crescent City and throughout Louisiana expanded very rapidly.

In Congregation of the Marianites of Holy Cross: History of the Provinces there is the following observation:

With the success of the Industrial School came the realization that young ladies of middle class families of downtown New Orleans could profit from the teaching ability of the Marianites. [Enthusiastically] the Marianites sought to advance the cause of learning and . . . to establish their own validity of purpose. [Again] with the help of Fr. Patrick Sheil, C.S.C., the Provincial of the Louisiana Province, [they] had the Congregation incorporated in March 1857, under the laws of Louisiana, to found schools and asylums, and to promote religion and education. A small school, the Academy, was opened for . . . boarders. In the early years, the classes were taught in both French and English. . . . This school was the beginning of the first high school of the Marianites in Louisiana, known today as the Academy of the Holy Angels (Hebert nd. 4).

In January 1861, Louisiana seceded from the Union and on April 12, with the attack on Fort Sumpter, the Civil War became a reality. On April 19, President Lincoln imposed a blockade against all Southern ports. For New Orleans, this was devastating, because the city received its life and sustenance from waterways surrounding it. The city was faced with many disasters, not the least of which was starvation (Hill 1960, 17). Somehow, in God's mysterious designs and true to the charism of the Cross, the Marianite ministry of education and the care of the orphan girls, flowered in the soil and among the spoils of war. Was Holy Cross possibly the only safe haven for these young women amid the horrors of war? Who can judge?

In order to provide for the necessities of the student boarders, the orphans and themselves, the Sisters went from one charity market to another which soon became futile. With the imposition of the blockades, nothing was entering or leaving the city, except a few black market commodities that the blockade runners were able to manage, but all prices became prohibitive (Hill 1960, 19).

On April 24, 1862 Admiral David Farragut's fleet captured the city. In this same year General Benjamin Franklin Butler was appointed military Governor of New Orleans. The situation of the students and the Sisters was becoming desperate. Supplies were becoming scarcer and scarcer. The Sisters were making superhuman efforts, but to no avail. Finally, as provisions dwindled even further, and then became virtually non-existent, Sisters Mary Alphonsus and Mary of Calvary appealed directly to General Butler, "the most hated man in all Louisiana history". There must have dwelt within this man some quality of decency, because the plight of the Marianites and their charges struck a sympathetic cord. Initially, the General thought of having the Sisters swear allegiance to the union before promising the provisions. Treason for food? For some inexplicable reason, he changed his mind. On this first visit, he gave them \$500 and assurance of provisions from the army. This unexplainable generosity continued for three consecutive years (Hill 1960, 20).

There is an incident related from the pages of the history of the times which aptly demonstrates the paucity of the era. The orphans

and the Sisters were required by the army to make knapsacks and army clothing. They, very often, worked throughout the night, but lamp oil and candles, like everything else, were becoming very scarce. It seems that a horse, belonging to the army, dropped dead, practically on the doorstep of the convent. The Sisters lost no time whatsoever in appropriating the carcass. They skinned it for the tallow that could be salvaged for candles and soap, and in much much likelihood, for the meat also (Hill 1960, 21). We never know from where God's Providence supplies our needs!!!

Although New Orleans fell to the Union forces in April, 1862, this did not daunt these pioneer Marianites in their quest for educating and forming young Christian women for the Church of the South. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, Mother Mary of the Holy Cross (Haggerty) submitted to the General Administration in France, plans for a new Academy building. Since, at this time the Province was free of all debt, a designated sum of money would be set aside annually for this purpose. The Administration approved, so in the midst of Civil War, with New Orleans in the hands of the enemy, facing starvation, because of the blockade imposed forcing separation from the rest of the nation and the world, the Sisters of Louisiana assumed a gigantic responsibility: construction of the present brick building which now stands at the corner of North Rampart and Congress Streets. This is the main building on the Academy campus. Demolition of the existing wooden structures on the property was begun on March 19, 1862. The cornerstone of the Academy was laid on May 3, 1862,

traditionally the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross. That risk took faith and guts!!! Shortly after the War ended this Academy building was completed, and on October 2, 1866, the feast of the Holy Angels, forty-seven students with the Sisters witnessed the solemn blessing and dedication of the new building (Hill 1960, 22).

Under the state laws of education in Louisiana, the Academy, receiving its incorporation on February 2, 1866, became empowered to confer diplomas. The curriculum reflected the standards established for the education of well-bred young ladies of the deep South and in accordance with the traditions of French culture. Tapestry, music, and art remained as extracurricular subjects. In addition to the \$20 per trimester for regular classes, training in the art of fancy work was an additional \$1.00 per month, while lessons in making artificial flowers and in Music and the use of the piano could be had at an additional \$4.00 per month.

To attest to the fine quality of education received by the young ladies of the downtown area of the city, there are two articles of history extant in the Archives of the Province: The Academy Record 1869 - 1872, reports the first graduation exercises being held on July 24, 1867. The MORNING STAR, a daily newspaper, carried an article on the morning of July 27, part of which read:

The Academy, having been empowered to issue high school diplomas, held its first graduation exercises . . . All branches taught in the ladies' Academy formed the subject of the examinations. . . . the exhibition proves the extraordinary care bestowed on their intellectual and esthetic education, and the genuine talent and marked proficiency of the pupils. Drama and music were executed at closing exercises.

Unfortunately, no detailed account of this first ceremony has been preserved, but it is a matter of record that Miss Annie Taaffe was its first graduate. The Chronicles, however, take note of distribution of premiums, in 1859, a ceremony broadly compared to the Commencement Exercises of the present day. The Academy has continued this educational tradition in unbroken succession to the present day (Hill 1960, 24-25).

The second accolade is a brief note from a Colonel Points, to Colonel Douglas White, dated March 2, 1872:

As a school for young ladies it cannot be excelled if equalled, as every attention is bestowed on their moral as well as their scholastic training. When the pupil graduates, she has no superficial knowledge of various branches. It is thorough and she comes out of the Convent with all the accomplishments of a refined young lady (Hill 1960, 27).

These are glowing testimonials for satisfactory evaluation of Marianite education in this period.

The plight of the city during the period of Reconstruction in the 1870's was difficult to say the least. It was no longer "the city that care forgot". The fortunes or misfortunes of the Marianites, as one would wish to label them, ran parallel to the citizenry of the city. Epidemics of yellow fever and cholera continued. These tragedies, along with successive crop failures, completed the demolition of the South initiated by the ravages of the war. Louisiana planters went into bankruptcy. Nor did the "Carpetbag" rule

alleviate anyone's burdens to any great extent. Despite all this, the family spirit of Holy Cross shone through these dismal days. The Sisters did what they could, particularly by making allowances in tuition payments, to compensate for the slender fortunes of the New Orleans residents (Hill 1960, 26).

It was in the spring months of 1870 that Mother Mary of the Seven Dolours visited New Orleans, to discover everything meeting with her approval. The Sisters were developing a thriving ministry. It is likewise of note, that it was here at Holy Angels during this visit, that the photograph of Mother Foundress, so familiar to all of us, was taken. The account of the occasion is reported in her own words, dated April 6, 1870:

'My dear daughters,'

It was on the table and the armchair, or rather a little bench, that they sat me down in order to provide you with my picture. Yes, certainly, it was [only] to please my dear ones that I agreed to undergo an operation like that. . . . '

"This is the photograph which has been consistently copied, mostly in portrait format, and which is found in the houses of the Marianites, along with the picture of Father Moreau on each side of the crucifix" (Catta 1959, 488).

The ministry of education was progressing very satisfactorily and enrollments increased. In the school term of 1875 the orphans were admitted to academic classes with the regular student body. In 1880, there came a request to the Marianites from Archbishop Napoleon

J. Perche, to begin a day school. This was to accommodate parents of young ladies of downtown New Orleans who could no longer afford to educate their daughters in out of town institutions. The Sisters acquiesced and with the beginning of the fall semester, the first day school students were welcomed to the Academy (Hill 1960, 27).

The first steps in vocational guidance were initiated at this time also: teachers, seamstresses, housewives, domestic servants received training for their life's work. It was through the powerful example of the lives of dedication and sacrifice of the Sisters that Holy Angels' students began to enter the ranks of the Marianites. The first young lady to follow the example of her teachers was Cecilia Budge, known in religion as Sister Mary of St. John.

The trials of nature continued. In February, 1882 New Orleans experienced its severest winter in thirty years. Violent southeast winds blew the waters of Lake Ponchartrain into nearby swamps. The Sisters placed their trust in prayer to God's Providence. Miraculously, the garden fence acted as a barrier. After two days the waters receded without causing any serious damage (Hill 1960, 27).

The year 1885 brought the planting of the the giant sycamore trees, now lining the walk which leads to the Academy. In this year, which marked the definitive approval of the Marianite Constitutions by Rome, another most important undertaking was begun: the erection of the Chapel of Our Lady of Seven Dolors (Haggerty 1948, 139). In 1973, to commemorate the centenary of Father Founder's death, the Chapel was remodeled to serve as the school library and was rededicated under the

name of Moreau Library. For generations of past Marianites, however, it was the heart of the Holy Angels' complex.

During the decade of the 1890's some dreaded visitors returned to New Orleans. The yellow fever epidemics once again appeared in terrible force. The Commencement exercises of the Academy in 1890 were conducted in private because of return of the "yellow Jack" and in 1897 regular classes were delayed because of another yellow fever epidemic (Hill 1960, 28).

To attempt to separate the Academy's history from the development of any other phase of the development of the Marianites of the Louisiana Province is indeed, for the research student, an exercise in futility. As teachers, they were constantly and consistently striving for better pedagogical methods to instruct their students. By the teens of the twentieth century, along with fulfilling the role of Provincialate, Novitiate, infirmary, educational institution for boarders, day scholars and orphans, the Academy housed the Normal School for the Province, as it grappled to solve the problem of having fully certified teachers, able to impart Christian education to the young women of the area.

From 1901-1912, during her term as Provincial, Mother Mary of St. Raphael (O'Donovan), inaugurated special normal classes in the practice of teaching and educational courses which ultimately met with the requirements of present day standards (Hill 1960, 40). Prior to 1916 and later, priest professors came to the Academy to assist in this task. However, "[in] 1916 the State Department at Baton Rouge,

Louisiana empowered the Normal of Holy Angels in its 'College Department' which operated exclusively for its own faculty of Sisters, to confer Bachelor of Arts Degrees. Unfortunately, at this particular time, the Academy was unprepared to take advantage of this privilege." So the Sisters attended Loyola University where the first degrees were conferred on the Marianites in 1922.

Here again let us digress to join past and present with the accomplishment of another milestone for the Marianites of Louisiana. In this year of the Sesquicentennial of the Marianite Congregation, we also celebrate the the Diamond Jubilee of Our Lady of Holy Cross College.

Like many other areas of American life, the curriculum of the Academy was undergoing adjustments in order to accommodate the nation in the wake of the Great War.

Although up to this time the curriculum was [greatly] academic in trend, . . . the Academy offered opportunities for many of the students to equip themselves for office work. Commercial and academic [areas] began to take on sharper lines of [division]. In the . . . World War I [era] when phonography ceased to be looked down upon and [was] classified as a 'fine art'. . . women began to release men in the offices for duty overseas in the American Expeditionary forces (Haggerty 1948, 145).

By 1925, the Academy had another accomplishment to its credit. It had acquired the necessary faculty and equipment for certification from the State Department of Education (Haggerty 1948, 140). The crowning achievement of this certification came in 1982 when Membership in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools was

granted to the Academy.

Struggling once more to meet the need for expansion to serve its students, the Administration again found it necessary to launch yet another building campaign. Therefore, in 1923, with the guidance and leadership of Mother Mary John Berchmanns (Quilter), construction of the present Concert Hall, which served as combination gymnasium - auditorium - cafeteria, was begun. In 1987, to honor her outstanding work in Music Education, not only here at Holy Angels but throughout the city and the state for more than half a century, the Concert Hall was dedicated in loving memory of Sister Mary Bartholomew (Durand). Today it still functions as cafeteria, occasionally as classroom, lecture hall and drama department.

The original purpose for the foundation of the Academy was beginning to shift course. Holy Angels had begun to change its direction in the selection of its clientele, but not the original purpose of its mission in Christian education. In the second half of the 1920's, there appeared on the Academy's horizon a driving force with a love of God so deep and a personality so strong that her indelible mark remains up to this present time. Even though she died almost a quarter of a century ago in 1965, at the age of ninety-one, her abiding spirit remains. Mother Mary Xavier (Haggerty) and the Academy, in her time, were almost synonymous. There were no avenues, for the good of Holy Angels and the Marianites of Louisiana, that Mother did not explore.

When, in 1927 Mother Mary Ligouri (Mazarat) was elected to the position of Provincial of Louisiana, Sister Mary Xavier was summoned from St. John Academy in Franklin to assume the triple task of Assistant Provincial, Local Superior of the Community, and Principal of Holy Angels. Mother Xavier's quarter century (1927 - 1952) gave a luster to its buildings and its reputation that, at the time, may have been equalled but was unsurpassed. Her touch was felt everywhere: the higher education of the Sisters she recognized as vitally important to the field of education if the Marianites were to be the best educators that they could be; her recruitment programs for vocations for the Province; her pageants; her promotion of music education; the refurbishing of the parlors in the Academy building; the redecorating of the boarders dormitories; construction of the Sisters' residence dedicated to St. Joseph in 1936. The living space provided for the Sisters by the completion of this building catered to the ever growing need for expansion of classes in the Academy building.

Mother came from a very politically prominent and affluent family. She was equally at ease with the socially powerful along with the youngest little boarder admitted to the Academy. She knew how to use her influence in order to further the Academy's interests and her connections aided to place Holy Angels in the forefront of education in Louisiana. God had given her tremendous gifts and she used them unstintingly for His honor. She remained the power behind the Academy's success from 1927 through mid-1952 first as its

Principal and then as Provincial of Louisiana. Her vast accomplishments have been lovingly and expertly cataloged for a previous History Conference by Sister Vivian Coulon in a paper titled Mother Mary Xavier: The Lady and Her Legacy.

During the mid 1930's, prominent and wealthy families of Central America and the islands of the Carribbean sought for their daughters an education with a strong background in the English language. It was in the school session of 1934 - 35 that Holy Angels took on the flavor of internationality when the first young ladies from South of the border gained entrance to the Academy. (Haggerty 1948, 162) The last boarders departed at the close of the school session of 1958. These ties with these Central American girls were re-kindled for a short time this past school year when four young ladies from Costa Rica, accompanied by one of their teachers, came to spend a month here at Holy Angels.

There remained a crying need for expansion at the Academy in the years immediately preceding, during, and following World War II. In order to accommodate this need, in 1939, it was necessary to send the younger boarders, those through the fifth grade, to St. Cecilia's, a parochial school seven blocks away. Unfortunately, this solution alleviated the problem only temporarily, so a large home across the street, on the corner of St. Claude and Congress, was purchased to house the seventh and eighth graders in the school term 1947-1948. Again, this arrangement, proved unsatisfactory, so it was abandoned soon after.

Let us pause to gather some randomly selected statistical information: The numbers of graduates from the first half of the century up to 1947: Forty-first Commencement - 1905 - 5 graduates; 1908 - 2 graduates; 1914 - 6 graduates; 1931 - 61 graduates; 1947 - 86 graduates. Holy Angels adopted the general philosophy and trend of Catholic education prevalent in middle class America in the mid-twentieth century. In the decades of forties, fifties, and the first half of sixties, as was true of Catholic education throughout America, Holy Angels rode the crest of the wave with the rest of Catholicism. There were 86 graduates when the 1947 Commencement Exercises were held but by 1960, 155 graduates left the halls of AHA, with an anticipated enrollment totaling 600 for the fall semester. There must have been a sigh of relief from Sister Mary Theresa (MacDonald), then the Principal when the movement of the Provincial House to Our Lady of Holy Cross was accomplished in the spring of that same year and Holy Angels then became strictly an educational institution for high school girls. In the fall of 1962, on the patronal feast of the Academy, the last building, the new gymnasium was dedicated, and once more other areas were freed for much needed classroom space.

The decade of the seventies witnessed some major changes in the physical plant. The Academy was in dire need of classroom space and major renovation. In the mid-seventies, between 1973 and 1976, Holy Angels was awarded two grants totaling \$150,000, from the Libby-Dufour Foundation, for much needed capital improvements

throughout the entire complex. Much of its interior physical appearance took on a new look. These renovations were accomplished during the administration of Sister Michel. Enclosing the porches of the gray building, adding a Home Economics Department, installing wall to wall carpet to absorb the noise of young feet, did much to enhance the Academy. It was likewise in 1976, in honor of the two hundredth anniversary of the country, that the main Academy building was placed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks.

The mission and destiny of Holy Angels have ebbed and flowed with the development and disasters visited upon New Orleans. Holy Angels was born of a need to serve the poorest of the poor - teenaged orphaned girls. In these past two decades there were myriad economic and sociological changes which once again redefined the Academy's mission. To remark upon but a few of these trends: There was the movement of middle classed white families to suburbia, with the construction of Catholic schools by the Archdiocese to accommodate this movement leaving the inner city, along with its schools, to its own fate. The demise of plants like Kaiser Aluminum with cutbacks at NASA, deprived large numbers of blue collar workers of their livelihood. This sector of society is traditionally the backbone of Catholic education. The drop in birthrates in the early seventies, leaves Catholic high schools feeling the crunch at this present time. There was, however, nothing which so drastically and so deeply affected the population of New Orleans and much of the deep South, as the oil crash of the mid-eighties. Comeaux 1990 interview)

Yet the Academy continues to serve. Holy Angels boasts a tradition very unique in this age of diminishing religious vocations. The 1989-1990 faculty enjoyed the privilege of having fifteen Holy Cross family members, serving the Academy, with the spirit of collaboration in the person of a Sister of Holy Cross of Indiana, Sister Eileen Malloy, CSC. The dynamic leadership and boundless energy of its present Principal, Sister Marie Noel, provides strong impetus in many many areas. There always was and still is a tremendous emphasis on curriculum development, the secret of successful secondary education. In addition to its strong core curriculum, it contains a number of electives which assist students in making a smooth transition into college life. On-campus courses for college credit in American History, Physics, and Writing Composition aid the more able students. Half-credit courses such as economics, sociology, and ethics along with computer science are likewise offered. There has been a renewed emphasis on the teaching of religion by the re-introduction of daily classes theology courses. If education is truly the "way out" of indigence then as committed educators we must provide the poor with the best education at our disposal. (Noel 1990, interview)

Our General Chapter of 1985 placed a strong emphasis on a preferential option for the poor in our ministry of service to the mission. Ironically, it seems, that we who minister at Holy Angels have not chosen the poor - the poor have chosen us!!! Many girls who attend Holy Angels come from families who are struggling with the economic and financial setbacks which have unwittingly been placed

upon their shoulders as a result of the combined circumstances mentioned before. If we are to provide a viable presence to them, then we must, of necessity, make adjustments accordingly, particularly in our demand for tuition payments. And there have been allowances made just as there were a century before with crop failures, bankruptcy, and Carpetbag Government. In some circumstances, demands for tuition have been delayed even after graduation - only two weeks ago a mother completed her debt for an 1989 graduate. In other cases, there are the "widows' mites" accepted from grandmothers who have assumed responsibility for granddaughters, are accepted. There are work scholarships for partial payment of tuition available at minimum wage rates which are computed every quarter and goes toward tuition. At present there are five girls participating in this work scholarship program. The lunch program provides free or reduced lunch for the volunteers who work in that particular area. Likewise there are also free bus tokens provided for needy students who must ride public transportation to school.

The individual student has always been at the center of the education provided by the Marianites, and this remains true today. AHA has instituted a program, whereby students who may need five years to complete their high school education are afforded this opportunity. At present we have three students who feel this necessity. In fact, we had a graduate of the 1990 class who needed seven years to complete her education, and she was permitted this time rather than being encouraged to seek a Graduate Equivalency Diploma.

We likewise deal with students who are slow learners, those suffer from other handicaps, such as eplipse, learning disabilities, blindness and deafness. Yet they feel equally at home among us.

The money awarded in scholarships to Students with outstanding intellectual abilities since the Commencement of 1985 totals \$3,141,304. Percentages from classes of students awarded these scholarships within the last three years are as follows: '88 - 36%, '89 - 39% and '90 - 33%. Full scholarships awarded by the School of Engineering of Tulane University have gone to Holy Angels' graduates for three consecutive years. God is blessing Holy Angles now as He has in the past. On May 24, 1990 Sister Noel received word from the State Department of Education that Holy Angels was the recipient of a grant, entitled 8q, worth more than \$100,000. This is for a writing lab to be used beginning with this fall semester of 1990. (Noel 1990, interview)

Those of us who are around the young, particularly teenagers, know the havoc they can create, the wear and tear they produce on buildings through the process of attempting to train them in respect for and care of property. The Academy has fallen happy victim to such treatment. There are no more forbidden or sacrosanct areas within these walls. Gone from the parlors, now classrooms, are the magnificent crystal chandeliers along with the baby grand piano and the highly polished parquet floors, with their beautiful rugs. The inlaid marble fire places remain, but as often as not, they have

become receptacles for high school text books and gym clothing. The halls and other areas are becoming a bit frayed and tattered around the edges, and are beginning to show the worst for wear. The work force necessary to keep the 'spit and polish' brightness of yesteryear is no longer available. Yet, as the old red bricks burn hot against the blue of the southern sky, there aren't as many students to be found, yet they are here using any excuse "to stay after class", reluctant to depart for home, if in many cases their living quarters deserve the name. There remains a safety and a haven here at AHA, which is a time honored tradition, that though the young cannot define it, they can feel it. For as we strive to inculcate our youngsters with the life lesson of becoming the best that they can be, we, their teachers and their mentors labor to exemplify the maxim that "By heritage and charism, we Marianites of Holy Cross are apostolic women of prayer and compassion. Our Mission is to incarnate the love and compassion of Jesus Christ through a responsible presence in an everchanging world." (Constitutions: Mission Statement 1983, 7). Our heart and our home still provide that responsible presence for our teenagers in an ever changing world.

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