



Minute of Mercy

Mother Henriette Delille (1813 – 1862)

She was born into a life of privilege and “person of color” to Marie Josef Dias and Jean Baptiste Delille-Sarpy who never married. What they did have, that was common in those days, was a plaçage between wealthy white Creole men and free women of color. Henriette was considered a quadroon, meaning she was ¼ black. During the 1830 census, she chose not to register as white although she and all her family members were so light they could pass for Caucasian.

Henriette was a devout Catholic and in 1836 began preaching to slaves and non-whites and devoted herself solely to the service of God against her mother’s wishes.

In 1842, she established a home for elderly nonwhites and their education in religion.

In 1852, she founded the Sisters of the Holy Family and spent time in a white convent and also took her official vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to God.

In 1989, 127 years after her death, the Sisters of the Holy Family officially opened Henriette’s cause for canonization with the Catholic Church. In hopes of success, Henriette would be the first American born black saint.

Mother is now considered Venerable Henriette Delille. Mother’s prayer was “I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God.” May we make Mother’s prayer our own.

Mother Henriette Delille, pray for us!

Mercy in Action

*This week’s **Mercy in Action** is for all of St. Peter Parish to pray for the end of racism and violence. Invite someone of a different culture back to the church. Copies of the Archdiocesan prayer can be found in the back on the Year of Mercy table, along with a full bio of Mother Henriette Delille.*