



**Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home  
& Rehabilitation Center  
C'est la Vie Apartments  
*News-Notes ~ May 2010***



***Happy Mother's Day!***

Mother's Day is celebrated on various days in many parts of our world, most commonly during May. In the United States, Mother's Day was nationally recognized as a holiday in 1914 after a campaign by Anna Jarvis, the daughter of Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis.

On May 12, 1907, two years after her mother's death, Anna held a memorial to her mother and thereafter embarked upon a campaign to make "Mother's Day" a nationally recognized holiday. She succeeded in 1914 and incorporated herself as the "Mother's Day International Association" and trademarked the phrases "Second Sunday in May" and "Mother's Day." While Anna Jarvis disagreed with the commercialization of the holiday, we are grateful for her efforts to make this a day of remembrance for all mothers. *Thank you, Anna!*

***A Mother for All Seasons***

*"The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom."* Henry Ward Beecher

Some are mothers by giving physical birth; some by giving spiritual birth; some by adoption; some by generous service to children in need. Regardless of the manner of motherhood, a mother is called to make love visible to the children entrusted to her care by encouraging, challenging, consoling, teaching, and modeling faith and Christian values.

As we celebrate Mother's Day at Prompt Succor, we want to pause and recognize a woman who has been a wealth of "motherly" inspiration to countless people for over 97 years. Sr. Madeleine Sophie Hebert, MSC was born Fay Wilhelmina on August 29, 1912 in Morgan City, Louisiana to Katherine Beatrice Vinson and Julius Peter Hebert.

Her mother was a profound inspiration to Sr. Madeleine. Following the unexpected death of her father, her mother successfully raised four children on very meager resources and astutely learned how to manage and increase these resources to meet the growing needs of her family.

Sr. Madeleine attended Sacred Heart Catholic School in Morgan City and was taught by the Marianites of Holy Cross. Early on, she was impressed by the dedication of the Sisters and felt a call to become a Marianite. Although the call to enter religious life faded for a while, it returned and grew in its sincerity and intensity. Under the direction of one of the Sisters, she taught the kindergarten class the year following high school graduation. At 18 years of age, she entered the Marianites on September 8, 1930 and embarked on what would become a lifetime of remarkable experiences.

While completing a degree in education at Loyola University in New Orleans, her early years were spent in elementary education as teacher and principal in several Catholic schools in New Orleans. What she describes as very surprising was the call from the Marianite Provincial in early 1955 to begin studying hospital administration at St. Louis University. After successfully completing the course of studies, she became the first administrator of Opelousas General Hospital. Sister Madeleine remained for seven years in that role, guiding the hospital from its earliest beginnings and initial struggles to becoming a growing and developing major health care institution in this region.

In 1964, yet another surprising call came from her religious congregation when she was elected Superior General or Mother Superior of the Marianites to lead the world-wide Congregation. From the Mother House of the Congregation in Le Mans, France, she served in this position for 13 years, learning to converse and carry out business affairs in French while overseeing the implementation of the changes demanded by the Second Vatican Council for all religious congregations.

In 1977, she returned to New Orleans and was again called into leadership service by the Marianites. This time she was named to a two-fold role of provincial councillor for the Louisiana Province and as the President of Our Lady of Holy Cross College. It seems that one of these positions would have been challenge enough for one person yet she was able to faithfully fulfill both, due to her generosity of service and dedication to the Congregation.

Always ready and eager to serve, she left New Orleans and journeyed to the Diocese of Alexandria-Shreveport in 1982. There she ministered as co-director of the Permanent Diaconate Program and also assisted with the archives of the Diocese and rendered service at Maryhill Retreat Center in Pineville, LA in the Book Store.

Being well aware of her many gifts, the Marianite leadership asked her to use these skills between 1991-1994, to write the Annals of the Congregation. She spent time between Louisiana and France to organize and write this history. Following the completion of the Marianite Annals in 1994, she assisted in the Development Office for the Congregation and in 1996, she began to work as Congregational Historian and Assistant Archivist.



**Some notable firsts in her life include:**

*-First Marianite to serve as principal at St. Mary of the Angels Elementary School, New Orleans.*

*-First Marianite to earn a masters degree in Theology from St. Mary's College in Indiana. -First Marianite to give a presentation at the convention of the National Catholic Education Association.*

*-First Marianite to study and earn a degree in Hospital Administration.*

*-First administrator of Opelousas General Hospital.*

*-First religious elected President of the Louisiana Hospital Association.*

*-First Marianite to be re-elected to three terms as Superior General since Mother Mary of the Seven Dolours, first Superior General of the Marianites in the 1800s.*

While these facts are remarkable, what is exceptional is the heart permeating these experiences. Sr. Madeleine's heart has been the classroom for countless students, parents, Marianites, family members and friends who have listened to her instruction and have been molded by her example. This year as she celebrates 80 years as a Marianite, we are privileged to have Sr. Madeleine as a resident at Prompt Succor Nursing Home.

As she reflects on her life, Sister Madeleine explains that she wakes up each day with gratitude in her heart because in each step along her journey she has held fast to trust in God's Divine Providence. While she remains in awe at the responsibilities entrusted to her over the years, she recalls that she "never doubted that good would result" because of her devotion to the Sacred Heart stemming from her earliest years at Sacred Heart School. She states: **"He has always been and continues to be there with outstretched arms listening to me, waiting to assist me."** Through very keen and wise blue eyes, she explains that now she is praying to let go more completely into those waiting arms.

With deep gratitude in our own hearts, we say:  
***Thank you, Sr. Madeleine!***

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*A Ministry of the Marianites of Holy Cross*  
954 East Prudhomme St. Opelousas, LA 70570  
Phone: 337-948-3634  
[www.promptsuccor.com](http://www.promptsuccor.com)  
[www.marianites.org](http://www.marianites.org)

