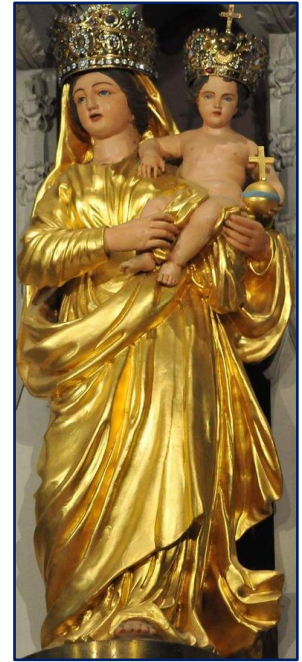


November 2024 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Arlington-our Golden Jubilee!! We are in Year 2 of preparation for our Jubilee. Theme for Year 2: "My soul rejoices in the Lord!"

## *Our Lady of Prompt Succor*

*Feast Day: January 8*

*Patroness of Louisiana*



The Feast of Our Lady of Prompt Succor commemorates the extraordinary help (succor) that Our Blessed Mother gave to the Ursuline nuns in New Orleans, Louisiana from 1803 through 1815.

The Ursuline nuns migrated to the New World from France and established a convent and school in 1727 in New Orleans, Louisiana. This American territory was owned by the French. During the French Revolution, priests, nuns and Catholic laity were being killed and persecuted in France. Fearing the same in America, the Ursuline nuns fled to Cuba. In 1803, the territory was purchased from France. The Ursulines wrote to the American president asking if they would be safe if they were to return. Thomas Jefferson passionately assured them of their liberty and safety (this document is still kept at the convent today.)

Few Ursuline nuns were left to run the convent and school in New Orleans. They appealed to the Ursuline Order in France to send help. Sister Michel Gensoul in France received their letter and asked her bishop if she could transfer to America to help the Ursuline Order in New Orleans. However, the bishop's reply was one of concern for the lack of religious in France due to the fact that many had fled or had been killed in the Revolution. He told Sr. Michel that she would have to ask the pope. This was problematic since the pope was imprisoned by Napoleon. Sr. Michel prayed to Our Lady that somehow she could get this request to the pope and that he would promptly reply. She promised to have the Blessed Mother honored in America for this favor. The opportunity to get a letter to the pope presented itself within a few days. In less than a month, Pope Pius VII granted permission. Sr. Michel had a statue of Our Lady of Prompt Succor made and brought to New Orleans. In the image, the Blessed Mother's robes are flowing to show that she moves swiftly to come to our aid.

A second time Our Lady of Prompt Succor helped the Ursuline nuns was in the great fire of in New Orleans in 1812. The sisters prayerfully turned to the Blessed Mother. The French Quarter was devastated except for the Ursuline convent and a few surrounding buildings.

The third event occurred in 1815 at the Battle of New Orleans. 15,000 British troops seemed invincible against Andrew Jackson's 5,000. There had been several skirmishes from December into January. On the eve of the final battle, New Orleans residents prayed with the nuns to implore Our Lady's intercession. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Father William Dubourg celebrated Mass while the battle could be heard in the background. The nuns made a vow to have Mass celebrated in thanksgiving annually to honor Our Lady of Prompt Succor if the Americans defeated the British. At the moment of Communion, a messenger related that the British soldiers, confused in the fog, wandered into a swamp and were utterly defeated. This battle put a decisive end to the War of 1812 and solidified the Treaty of Ghent. Andrew Jackson visited the chapel and personally thanked the Ursuline nuns for their prayers.

*"Love our Lady and she will obtain abundant grace to help you conquer in you daily struggle."*

*~ St. Josemaria Escriva*

This year, we focus on Mary, [the Mediatrix of All Graces](#), the model disciple, who shows us how to receive and bear the Word to the world. For more on Year 2 preparation, visit: [www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/)

-From the Office of Religious Education