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Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

Stained-glass window of Mother Henriette Delille as a baptismal sponsor at St. Louis Cathedral.

One step closer

By Peter Finney Jr.
Clarion Herald

The Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints, composed of 15 cardinals and archbishops from around the world, voted unanimously March 2 to approve a declaration that Servant of God Henriette Delille practiced "heroic virtue" during her ministry to slaves and African Americans as foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family in pre-Civil War New Orleans.

The congregation's declaration has been sent to Pope Benedict XVI, and if he approves, Mother Henriette would be declared "venerable," another major step toward her possible beatification, said Sister of the Holy Family Doris Goudeaux, local coordinator of the cause.

"This is great news," Sister Doris said. "We're just on top of the world. We've really been praying for this. Hopefully,



File photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

In June 2005, Sister of the Holy Family Sylvia Thibodaux sealed with wax the official documents detailing Mother Henriette Delille's life. The box was sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

the Holy Father's decree that she be declared venerable will happen before Easter."

If that happens, the congregation's medical experts then would be asked to review the evidence of the recovery of a 4-year-old Houston girl from a serious pulmonary condition 12 years ago. The girl, Marilyn Groves, is now 16 and a junior in a Houston High School.

The Sisters of the Holy Family, students at St.

Mary's Academy and relatives and friends prayed for the intercession of Mother Henriette in healing the girl, who is Sister Doris' grand niece.

"The medical experts in Rome will examine her case," Sister Doris said. "They cannot say it is a miracle, but they can say whether her recovery was medically possible. Then the theologians would have to determine whether or not it is a

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'A Priest Forever'

Msgr. Francis Boeshans delivered the main reflection March 4 at a Lenten gathering of priests at St. Maria Goretti Church. Citing the new book by Father Alfred McBride, "A Priest Forever," Msgr. Boeshans said he drew inspiration from Mary at the wedding feast at Cana. "They are five words of the greatest spiritual direction you'll ever hear in your life: 'Do whatever he tells you!'"



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