

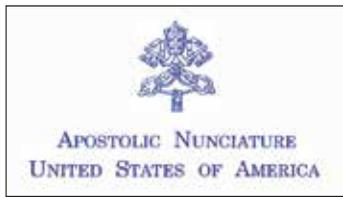
Abp. Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to U.S., offers papal greetings

Prot. N. 3906/17

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans
7878 Walmsley Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125-3496

Your Excellency,

Pleased to learn that the City of New Orleans will be celebrating the Tricentennial of its founding, as the personal representative of the Holy Father in this country, I wish to express His Holiness' personal closeness, heartfelt congratulations, and prayers for you and for the entire People of God in the City of New Orleans as you mark this historic and blessed occasion.



Even before New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, the Catholic Church was present through the fearless missionary work of the Jesuit and Franciscan priests to the native American people of the Mississippi Valley.

Saint Louis Church, established in 1718, has become the Cathedral-Basilica of Saint Louis, King of France, and serves as the spiritual icon of one of the world's greatest cities. In 1793, the Holy See established

the local Church in New Orleans. Only the Archdiocese of Baltimore (1789) is older as a diocese in the United States. The original Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, now composed of 49 dioceses in 17 states, covered more than 1.1 million square miles.

Over the centuries, the faith lives of true New Orleans saints – Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R., Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, the Venerable Henriette Delille and countless other priests, men and women religious, and lay people, not to mention your own venerable predecessors, who have heroically lived their faith – have advanced the Kingdom of God and built up the Church in this country, enriching a beautiful culture with the gift and witness of faith.

When Saint John Paul II visited New Orleans in 1987, he told priests and religious gathered inside the Cathedral: "Just as the Cathedral of Saint Louis is the focal point of the City of New Orleans, so, too, Christ is the very center of your lives. Christ is, for you, 'the beginning and the end' (Rev 21:6); he is for you 'the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn 14:6). ... Always remember that the supernatural effectiveness of your



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St. John Paul II made his historic visit to New Orleans in 1987, preaching to priests and religious at St. Louis Cathedral.

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service within the Church is linked to the witness of your life lived in union with Christ."

As you celebrate this joyous occasion and recall the glorious history of the city, I encourage you and all the faithful to also look forward in hope, keeping before your eyes the words of the Venerable Henriette Delille, "I believe in God. I hope in God. I love. I want to live and die for God."

Entrusting you and all the faithful to the intercession

of Saint Louis King of France and Our Lady of Prompt Succor, His Holiness cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing to you and to all in the City of New Orleans who are celebrating 300 years of church and state history.

Offering my heartfelt congratulations and the assurance of my prayers, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Christophe Pierre

+ Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nuncio

