



New Orleans' second Catholic bishop, who never arrived, was affected by La. Purchase

By Dr. Charles Nolan
Contributing writer

One result of the Louisiana Purchase was that Francisco Bartolomé Porró y Reinado, O.F.M., the second bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, never arrived in his diocese.

Bishop Porró was born on Oct. 15, 1739, in Gibraltar, entered the Franciscans and was stationed at the Convent of the Holy Apostles in Rome

when he was named the Louisiana colony's second bishop on July 20, 1801; he was ordained a bishop on Nov. 15, 1801, in Rome.

Bishop Porró set out for Louisiana via Spain, where he received news of the imminent transfer of the colony to France and the subsequent Louisiana Purchase.

Advised to stay in Spain

After consulting civil and religious authorities, he was

told to remain in Spain, uncertain of what reception awaited a Spanish bishop in the newly acquired American territory.

He was named Bishop of Terrazona on Jan. 17, 1803, a position he held until his death on Jan. 3, 1814. The third bishop of New Orleans – Louis W. DuBourg – was not appointed until 1815.

Dr. Charles Nolan is the former archivist of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.



Cathedral plaque lists New Orleans' bishops

A plaque near the inside front doors of St. Louis Cathedral lists the bishops who have served the Diocese and later the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Bishop Porró was New Orleans' second bishop but never came to the city.

Photo | COURTESY CHASE RODRIGUE, ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL

Bishop Joe S. Vásquez,
Auxiliary Bishop Daniel E. Garcia,
and all the faithful of
the Diocese of Austin
congratulate
Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond
and the city of New Orleans
on its tricentennial.

Diocese of Austin

1853: First St. Vincent de Paul Conference in the archdiocese founded at St. Patrick Church, June 20.

1853: "The Black Day," Aug. 20, sees 269 burials in New Orleans during the city's worst outbreak of yellow fever, with 8,000-9,000 deaths recorded during the epidemic. Also, Pope Pius IX establishes the Diocese of Natchitoches (transferred to Alexandria in 1910, redesignated as Alexandria-Shreveport in 1977 and after 1986 again as Alexandria), covering the northern civil parishes of the state.

1853: Sisters of St. Joseph arrive in New Orleans to care for aged widows and orphans, Dec. 1.

1856: Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Mary, arrive from Cabra, Ireland, Nov. 5.

1858: Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille open St. Joseph Academy, Oct. 31.

1860: Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard opens fire on Fort Sumter, igniting the Civil War, April 12.

1861: Pope Pius IX appoints newly named Archbishop Jean Marie Odin of New Orleans and Archbishop Hughes of New York as his personal intermediaries trying to bring reconciliation between North and South in the Civil War.