



St. Roch's stations draw faithful closer to Jesus

By Beth Donze
Clarion Herald

New Orleans' Catholic cemeteries have a way of coaxing in the living, whether it's through their dazzling, above-ground tombs, serene prayer spots, genealogical and historical riches or walkable grid of lanes that have earned them the nickname "cities of the dead."

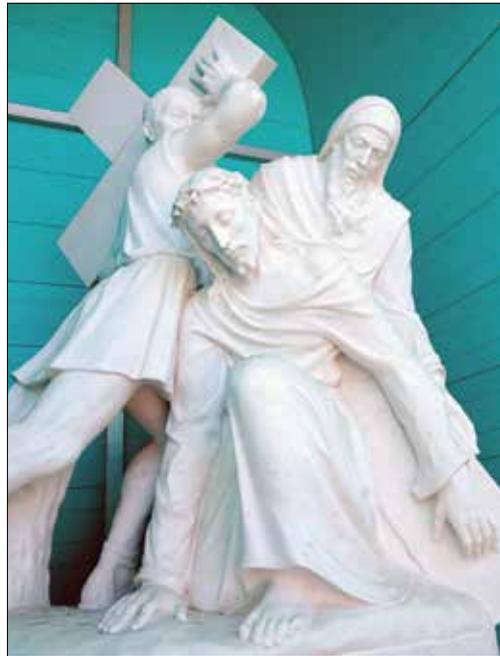
Because our historic cemeteries encourage the faithful to "use" their acreage for more than just burial, it is only fitting that space inside one of them was famously reserved for a special Catholic devotion: The Way of the Cross.

Sculptor stamps his work

Visitors to St. Roch Cemetery No. 1 can walk in the final footsteps of Jesus, helped along by the presence of 14 solid-marble, nearly life-size statues. Each station is ensconced in a house-like niche, giving visitors the feeling they are peering into each scene.

Artistic highlights of St. Roch's stations of the cross include:

- Station 1 (Jesus is Sentenced to Death): The sculptor casts children in the roles of the servants who

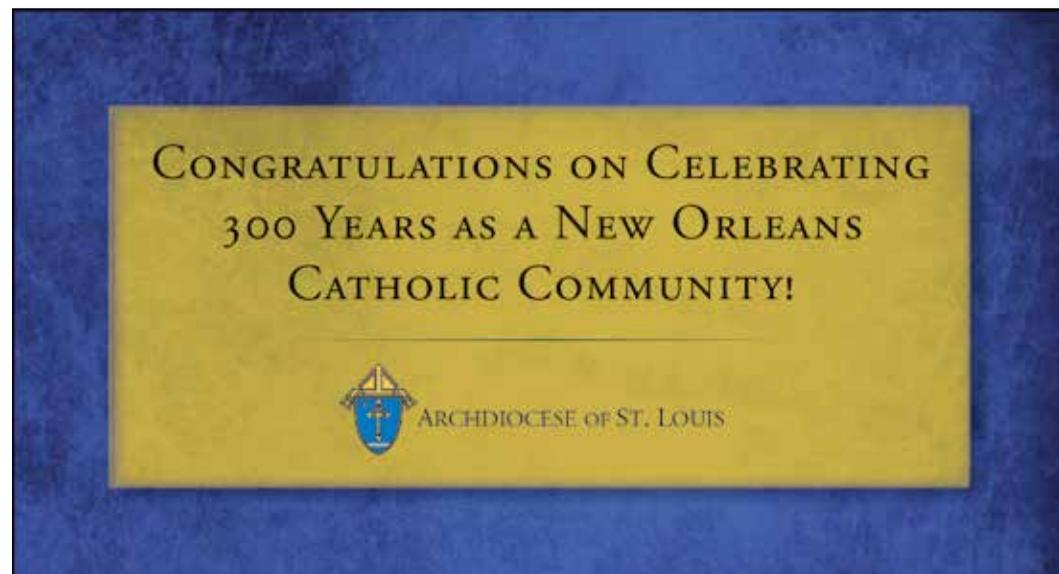


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The stunning, Italian-made stations of the cross at St. Roch Cemetery No. 1 in New Orleans have been enhancing the prayers of the faithful since 1948. Jesus' growing exhaustion is evident in the stations depicting Jesus' first fall (left) and third fall (above). At right, Jesus rests his head on the centurion who nails him to the cross.



Simon of Cyrene (left) and Veronica (above) give respite to the suffering Christ. At right, Jesus appears older than his years on Veronica's cloth.



present the bowl and pitcher of water to Pontius Pilate.

The laurel-crowned Pilate is shown dipping his hand in the basin, his face clearly wrestling with his complicity in the crucifixion of Jesus.

- Station 6 (Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus): Veronica's marble cloth shows the weathered face of an elderly man, an image in stark contrast to the man in his early 30s walking to Calvary.

- Station 8 (Jesus Speaks to the Holy Women): Children show up again in this grouping of figures.

- Station 9 (Jesus Falls

the Third Time): Could the rock embraced by Jesus in his final fall be the sculptor's foreshadowing of Christ's tomb and the slab on which he was laid to rest?

- Station 11 (Jesus is Nailed to the Cross): In yet another unique artistic take on Jesus' Passion, the sculptor depicts Jesus resting his head on the shoulders of the centurion as the centurion raises a hammer to pound in the first nail. This posture telegraphs Jesus' acceptance of his fate and love even for his captors. A second centurion awaits his turn with the

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