

# NONCO'S STORY

Mary Agnes Hardy Delahoussaye Belleau

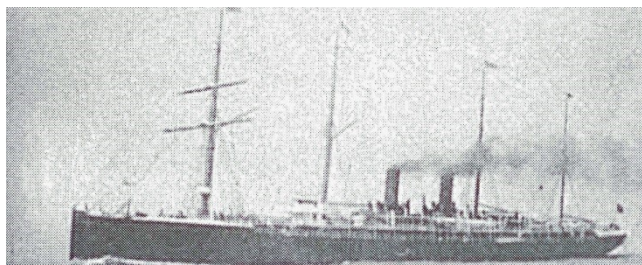
March 6, 2014



On January 10, 1888, Auguste Robert "Nonco" Pelafique was born in Beaucens, France, approximately twelve miles from Lourdes in the Haute (High) Pyrenees. His deep-rooted faith could be attributed to his parents' frequent Sunday pilgrimages to Lourdes. Later in life, Auguste was nicknamed "Nonco" which comes from two words: The French word for uncle which is "Nonc" and the first syllable of his name Auguste which is "O;" hence the nickname "Nonco." It was an appropriate name, too, because Nonco was considered everybody's uncle.

*"Nonco O"*

In 1889 Nonco was only one year old, when he and his family emigrated to the United States and moved to Arnaudville, LA, a French-speaking community founded by a Frenchman named Jacques Arnaud. Arnaudville is located in the Parish of St. Landry in Southwest Louisiana.



To prepare himself to become a teacher, in 1909, at the age of 21, Nonco moved to Natchitoches, a town in northwest Louisiana, to attend the State Normal School. According to the State Normal's 1909 yearbook, the *Potpourri*, Auguste Pelafigue was listed as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer League of the Sacred Heart.

#### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER.

The Apostleship of Prayer, a League of the Sacred Heart, is a universal Catholic organization. Its chief motives are to propagate the Catholic faith, to pray for the sinners and faithful departed, and to do charitable works.

A branch of this league was re-organized at the Normal in the Fall of 1906. Since then its membership has been continually increasing.

The regular meetings are held every Sunday evening, at which prayers are said, hymns sung, and religious topics discussed. This year the regular subjects selected were from "Faith of our Fathers" by Cardinal Gibbons. Bishop Van de Ven, of Natchitoches, attends the meetings about once a month and addresses the society on some religious question. This forms an important part of the Catholic students' life in the Normal School.

#### OFFICERS.

Leah Achee.....President.  
 Ella Morillon.....Vice-President.  
 Suzanne Dupaquier.....Sec. & Treas.

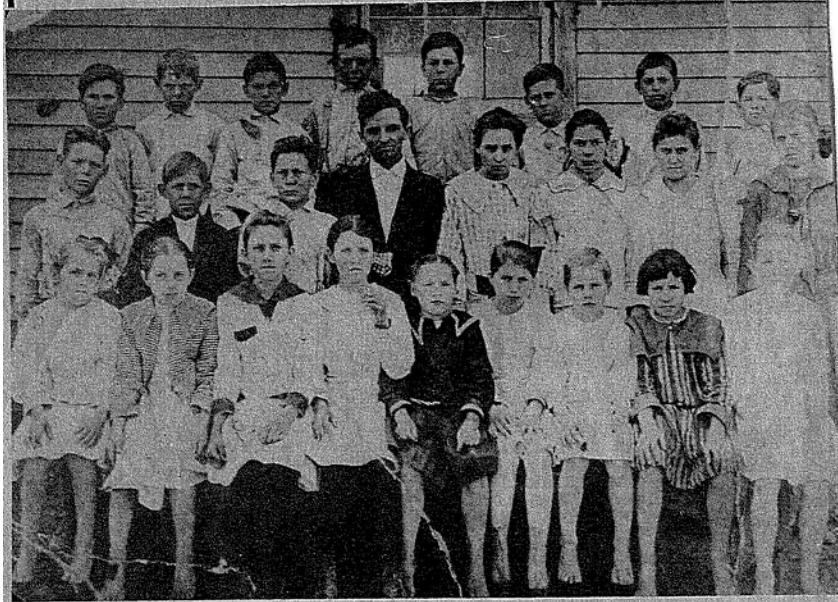
#### MEMBERS.

Allain, Georgine	Dossat, Hazel	Miller, Blanche
Austin, Clothilde	Durand, M. J.	Montagnet, Marie
Aycock, Lizzie	Ellender, Thomas	Morgan, Mary
Babin, Celanie	Estorge, Nita	Mougeot, Coralie
Babin, Lucy	Fied, Agnes	Neyland, Inez
Beau, Leonie	Folse, Pearl	Normand, C. V.
Blaggini, Corine	Pontenot, V. M.	Ollinde, Ruth
Bonicard, Nettie	Fortier, Edvidge	Pecquet, Kate
Bourque, G. G.	Halbe, Anne Joseph	Pecou, Myrtie
Brou, Amelie	Hiams, Ora	Pelefegue, August
Broussard, Charles	LeBlanc, Anna	Portie, Emma
Buvens, May	Lindsly, Laura	Portal, Marie
Chaze, Lewis	Major, Beatrice	Pourcian, A. L.
Cognevich, Blanche	Major, Philippine	Pourcian, Irene
Comeaux, A. O.	Major, Virginia	Reed, Lydia
Dardenne, Nonte	McCaffery, Winona	Renlet, Nathalie
Daspit, Maude	McHugh, Nettie	Shutzmann, Selma
Deciur, Letitia	Melancon, Myra	Smith, Margaret
Diassellias, Dorothy	Mestayer, B. L.	Wilbert, Lolita
		Williams, Grace



After his preparation as a teacher, Nonco taught at the State Normal School then Nonco came back to live in Arnaudville to teach in public schools. He travelled by train for about 30 miles to Krotz Springs, LA to teach school and later he taught at the Huron School at Coteau Rodaire, a rural area in St. Martin Parish just a few miles from Arnaudville.

### Picture from the Past



Going way back through the years, this week we feature the students who were attending the Coteau Rodaire Elementary School during the 1916 school year. On the front row from left were Lillian LeBlanc, Eugenie LeBlanc, Ella Degeyer, Sydona Degeyer, Edmae LeBlanc, Suzanne Olivier, Lelia LeBlanc, Yvonne Taylor and Beulah LeBlanc. Middle row from left, Dalex LeBlanc, Omay Guidroz,

Freddie Babineaux, August Pelafique (teacher), Lillian Knott, Laurence Babineaux, Laurence Mallet and Mary Louise Guidroz. Back row from left, Daniel Kidder, Paul Guidroz, Alfred Babineaux, Elias Arnaud, Louis Taylor, August Bernard, Ashton Knott and Lee LeBlanc. (Courtesy of Mrs. Wallace (Laurence) Robin)

**Nonco lived in a homely two-room house. He had no electricity or running water until much later in life. Nonco's house has survived the winds of time and remains a landmark. It was told to someone who built on property adjoining Nonco's that they were building on "Holy Land" because their neighbor, Nonco, was such a pious and devout man.**







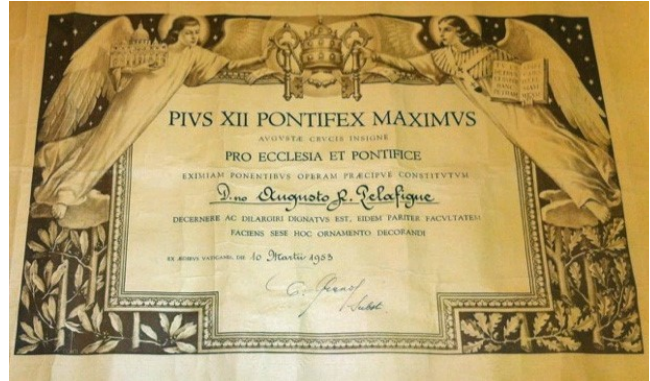
**In 1949, the then Reverend Daniel Bernard, pastor of St. John Francis Regis Catholic Church of Arnaudville, added Auguste Pelafigue to the faculty of the newly built Little Flower Catholic School. Nonco was the only man on the faculty composed of the Sisters of the Marianites of Holy Cross.**

There are not many living today who were not taught by Nonco every Saturday morning in Catechism classes. Nor are there many who have forgotten him as a substitute teacher at Little Flower Convent. A favorite story that always brought a smile to his face was about the student who raised his hand and said, "Sister Nonco, I have a question." His was a nurturing role -- as a teacher, a mentor and tutor to many. His smile mirrored the joy of his faith, his belief in God and his deep love for all of God's people.

**Many of his students, as well as his many nieces and nephews, recall being introduced to the stage at an early age by reciting poems, acting, or singing in pageants and plays written, produced, and directed by Nonco. Some had the privilege of being selected to carry in procession a velvet-covered platform that enthroned a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or The Blessed Mother. Nonco also promoted programs at Christmas, during Lent and for May devotions.**



**In 1953, Monsignor Daniel Bernard submitted Nonco as a candidate for Pontifical Honors and Auguste Robert Pelafigue was subsequently issued a Papal Degree presented to him by Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard, the Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana.**



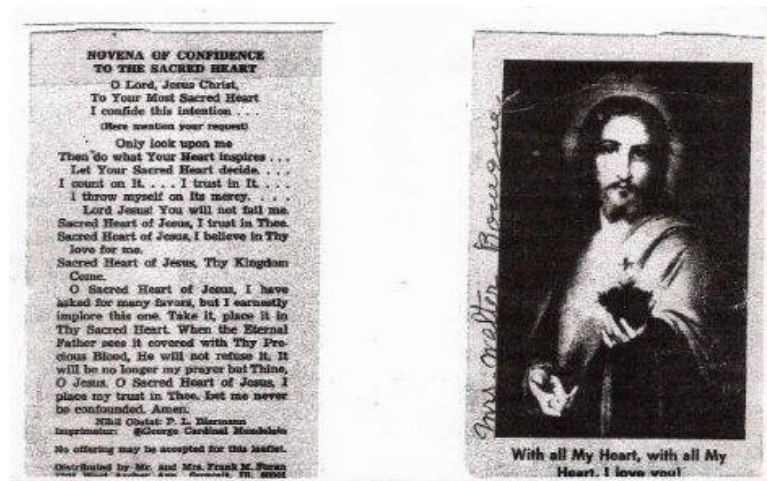
**The Papal Decree read as follows:**

**“Mr. Pelafigue has organized the League of the Sacred Heart with some 1,200 members and 101 promoters. He goes out on foot to visit the fallen away, invite them to prayer of the league. He teaches in the Catholic School, teaches catechism to the public school children – all out of the love of God – with no pay. He organizes religious programs for the encouragement of the weak, and edification of the strong. He has been in this parish, another priest. He is most humble. He attends Holy Mass and receives Holy Communion daily. He assists at all the Masses on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. In a word, he is a living example of a REAL CHRISTIAN.”**





As he travelled the country roads by foot delivering the Sacred Heart Leaflets each month, people have mentioned that when they offered Nonco a ride, even when it was raining, he politely refused. When asked “Why?” he would say that it was his way of doing penance for conversions and for the poor souls in purgatory.



On June 6, 1977, Nonco died on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Many believe that his death on the Feast of the Sacred Heart was not a coincidence, but instead, it was God’s way of saying “Well done, my good and faithful servant of my Sacred Heart!”





**MOSTLY FAIR** — During tonight, showers and thunderstorms will be expected over the New England area, while mostly fair weather is expected to dominate the remainder of the nation. — (UPI Telephoto)

## Storm-Related Accidents Kill Five, Nine Missing

By United Press International

Deadly thunderstorms roamed the Atlantic Coast Monday, producing tornadoes, hail and gale-force winds that flipped over a 42-foot fishing boat.

At least five persons were killed and nine others were missing in storm-related accidents. Numerous injuries also were reported.

The National Weather Service said today 30 severe thunderstorms and 17 tornadoes swept the Atlantic coast area Monday.

At least four persons drowned when the fishing boat Dixie Lee II, buffeted by high seas and gales force winds, overturned in Chesapeake Bay. Fourteen passengers were pulled to safety but rescue workers searched through the night with helicopters and ships for nine persons still missing.

One of the survivors, Jay Gallagher, 21, said "It was one big wave, maybe 15 feet" which flipped the craft.

The thunder squall, accompanied by golfball-sized hail and wind gusts of up to 98 miles per hour, also caused extensive damage throughout Tidewater, Virginia. The storm downed power lines, collapsed a 600-foot section of a fishing pier, uprooted trees and sent scaffolding crashing down at a shipbuilding dock.

One man who watched the storm from the 11th floor of the Norfolk City Hall said, "The wind was blowing the trees almost to the ground and elderly people were holding onto things to keep from falling down. Then it

## DEATH NOTICES

### August Pelafigue

ARNAUDVILLE — Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday in the St. Francis Regis Catholic Church for August (Nonco) Pelafigue, 89, of Arnaudville, who died Monday at 10 p.m. in the Amelia Manor Nursing Home in Lafayette.

Burial will be in the church cemetery directed by Pellerin Funeral Home of Arnaudville.

Survivors include numerous nieces and nephews.

He was the son of the late Jean Pelafigue and Melanie Pere, natives of France. He was a Lay Apostle of the St. Francis Regis Parish, general promoter of the Sacred Heart League, at one time having 100 promoters with 1,402 members. He was also a member of the Holy Name Society.

A rosary will be said at eight o'clock tonight in the funeral home.

### Linic Babineaux

CARENCRE — Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday in the St. Peter Catholic Church for Linic Babineaux, 73, who died at 9:30 p.m. Monday in the Acadia-St. Landry Hospital in Church Point.

Burial will be in the church cemetery directed by Melancon's Funeral Home of Carencro.

Survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Authurine Bourgeois of Vatican; a brother, Lessin Babineaux of Vatican; a sister, Mrs. Aleece Benoit of Vatican;

and three grandchildren.

A rosary will be said at seven o'clock tonight.

### Mrs. M.M. Kennison

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday in the Holy Ghost Catholic Church for Mrs. Marie M. Kennison, 95, of Opelousas, who died Monday at 5 a.m. at her residence.

Burial will be in the St. Leo Cemetery in Leonville directed by Williams Funeral Home of Opelousas.

Survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Orelia K. Thibodeaux of Opelousas; three sons, Norway, Joseph and Armogene Kennison, all of Opelousas; 35 grandchildren, 91 great-grandchildren and 12 great-great-grandchildren.

### Percy LeJeune

CHURCH POINT — Funeral services were to be held at 3 p.m. today in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church for Percy LeJeune, 49, who died at 7 p.m. Monday in a Lafayette hospital.

Burial was to follow in the new Sacred Heart Cemetery directed by Sibille's Funeral Home of Opelousas.

Survivors include a son, Rodney LeJeune of Lafayette; two brothers, Harland and Early LeJeune, both of Church Point; four sisters, Mrs. Leonce Guidry of Rayne, Mrs. Walter Comeaux and Mrs. Lloyd Matte, both of Church Point and Mrs. Oscar Burke of Chaneyville; his mother, Mrs. Doris M. LeJeune of Opelousas; and two grandchildren.

One of his great nieces tells the story that during Nonco's funeral one could hear the pelting of the rain on the roof of the church and wondered how the graveside service would be conducted in such weather. However, when the funeral ended and the procession walked out of the church, it was a beautiful sunny day and a magnificent rainbow filled the sky as people walked to the cemetery for Nonco's burial. She said, it was yet another sign of Nonco's holiness.



**Nonco is buried in Mausoleum 1, Crypt 8, in the St. Francis Regis Cemetery in Arnaudville, Louisiana. Above is a photograph of his crypt plaque which is located on the south wall in the bottom position. Below is a photograph of Mausoleum 1.**



So many admired Nonco as a "Real Christian," "a modern day apostle," "a living saint" of our time and because of that, on June 6, 2012, which was Auguste Robert "Nonco" Pelafigue's 35<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary, the Nonco Foundation was formed to begin the process for his canonization.

Click on the Articles of Incorporation link that follows.



"Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
We put our trust in You!"