

Sacred Heart Traditions at Grand Coteau

Academy of the Sacred Heart
Grand Coteau, Louisiana

A Note of Thanks

As I made plans to be here for our reunion, I was filled not just with anticipation, but also with gratitude.

I feel we all have much to be grateful for. By attending the Academy of the Sacred Heart, we received an outstanding academic education, as well as a good start on our spiritual paths through life.

By being here together, we were able to learn from and get along with each other and, in some cases, form bonds of friendship that have lasted for years. Father Thomas Keating, a guru I follow, has written “God will bring people and events into our lives and, whatever we may think about them, they are designed for the evolution of His life in us.” So we were all blessed to have each other here.

We practiced rituals that helped us establish habits of the heart that have stayed with us through the years. While donning our white gloves, we stood in a semi-circle every Monday morning while our conduct marks were read aloud to the assembly. We curtsied to the numerous nuns, whom we addressed as “mother,” as in “Mother Mouton,” “Mother Crump,” and “Mother Purtle.”

On conge days, we sang a French song in the morning asking for a fine day (Donnez nous un bon jour), and in the evening we sang a song giving thanks for the same (merci pour un bon jour). Before conge dinners, we sang grace in French. Despite having taken French for three years, I remember little and I’ve never been able to carry a tune, but I DO recall that the grace started with “pour ces repas et tout nous joies” – for this meal and all our joys.

In most cases, we spent years of our lives in this extraordinary physical environment, which – according to recent research on beauty, architecture and neuroscience – actually contributed to our wellbeing.

And I was a day student. I think the boarders had lots of other things going on that I can only imagine.

Partly because I attended school and received spiritual formation here, I believe it was by the grace of God that each of us was able to come here. But God was not working alone. Rather, He worked through other people. Our parents – and in many cases, including mine, other benefactors -- supported us in coming here.

And, so it is with our reunion today. Many of the parents and benefactors who helped us get here are no longer with us, but we continue to come together to reconnect and celebrate all that we experienced here.

So, I'm thankful to these parents and benefactors, as well as the nuns and teachers, as well as all of you, my classmates for being part of my life and formation in high school, and also for continuing to come together so we can all continue to contribute to the evolution of God's life in each other.

-- Buffy Gilfoil



This is a statue of *Mater Admirabilis* a depiction of the Virgin Mary that is held in high esteem in the Society of the Sacred Heart. Additional information about her can be found at <https://rscjinternational.org/news/mater-through-years-pauline-perdrau>. Alumnae Weekend at Grand Coteau is always held close to Mater's feast, which is on October 20.

Spirit Seeking Light and Beauty

By Janet Erskine Stuart, rscj

Spirit seeking light and beauty,
Heart that longest for thy rest,
Soul that asketh understanding,
Only thus can ye be blest.
Thro the vastness of creation,
Tho' your restless thought may roam,
God is all that you can long for,
God is all His creatures' home.

Taste and see Him, feel and ahear Him,
Hope and grasp His unseen hand;
Tho' the darkness seem to hide Him,
Faith and love can understand.
God Who lovest all Thy creatures
All our hearts are known to Thee;
Lead us thro' the land of shadows
To Thy best Eternity.

Coeur de Jesus



In case this document is available only in hard copy, here's one of many places on the web where Coeur de Jesus can be heard:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXmZqBVoiVc>

Blessing Before Meals, Sung In Rounds

Au nom du Pere et du Fils et du Saint Esprit.

Pour ce repas
Pour toute Joie
Nous te louons Seigneur.

Pour tes beinfaits
O Dieu de paix
Nous te louons Seigneur.

Au nom du Pere et du Fils et du Saint Esprit. Amen.

This is among the places the tune can be heard on the Internet:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saU76gZVGK0>

Donne-nous Un Bonjour

A tes pieds O Marie, nous venons en ce jour.
Mere tendre et cherie, donne-nous un bonjour.
Donne, donne nous un bonjour,
Donne, donne nous un bonjour,
Donne, donne nous un bonjour,
Donne, donne nous un bonjour!

Oui, Je Le Crois

(Refrain)
Oui, je le crois, elle est immaculée,
La Vierge d'Israel, Mère du Roi des rois;
Le Ciel a prononcé, notre attente est comblée:
Oui, je le crois, Oui, je le crois.
O jour trois fois heureux! appelé par la terre,
Tu ne brillais encor qu'au sein de l'avenir;
Voici que maintenant rayonne ta lumière;
Le monde entier veut toujours te bénir!
En te donnant déjà ce beau titre, ô Marie,
La terre accomplissait une secrète loi;
Mais Pierre a prononcé: dès lors, Mère chérie,
A notre amour vient s'unir notre foi.
Aux pieds de notre Reine, en ce jour d'allégresse,
Préludons par nos chants au cantique éternel;
Ah! répétons encor, pleins d'une sainte ivresse,
L'acte de foi filial, solennel.