

RELIGION

New Orleans Church Gets Reprieve

St. Augustine founded in 1841 by free blacks

(AP) — The ancient cypress doors were propped wide in the bright sunshine, palm fronds stacked high, pews filled and joyous music poured from St. Augustine as the historically black Catholic church celebrated Palm Sunday.

The service came two weeks after the church was closed amid protests over post-Hurricane Katrina budget cutbacks that would have merged it with a larger neighboring parish.

"What a historic morning for us to gather," said Archbishop Alfred Hughes, who originally ordered the church shut down, but returned to celebrate Mass on Sunday.

The church was full for the first service, but unless the support continues, the reprieve for the church will not last.

When Hughes re-consecrated St. Augustine on Saturday he said he would examine the parish's progress after 18 months to determine if it could avoid consolidation with a neighboring parish.

Hughes agreed to reopen St. Augustine after negotiating with parishioners who had protested the church's closing. St. Augustine, founded in 1841 by slaves and free people of color, is one of the nation's oldest black parishes. The archdiocese sought to consolidate



Father Jerome LeDoux holds a palm frond on Palm Sunday as he celebrates Mass at St. Augustine Church in New Orleans. (AP photo)

St. Augustine as it tries to deal with \$84 million in uninsured losses from Hurricane Katrina, which slammed into the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29.

"I intend to be a regular now and support the church here," said Gordon Cagnolitti, a New Orleans firefighter who described himself as multi-denominational. "I go to several churches, but my son and grandchildren go here and I will, too, from now on."

St. Augustine had failed to add many new members or carry on other pastoral functions required of a functioning parish, Hughes said when closing it. Under the plans announced earlier this year, the church building would still be used for services, but parish functions were to be consolidated with neighboring St. Peter Claver.

But the church had not reckoned with the deep feeling of the parishioners. Protest sprang up, and a small group of protesters shuttered themselves in the church rectory three weeks ago.

Demonstrators interrupted Mass on March 26 — a desecration, Hughes said the next day, when he announced that the church building would be closed.

The parishioners have set 12 goals to meet during the next 18 months, Hughes said. Among other things, they require the addition of from 300 to 400 families, the institution of religious education and a balanced budget by Oct. 1.

If the parish does not meet the goals, it will be closed, Hughes said.

But on Sunday the possible problems seemed far from anyone's mind. When a lay reader opened the service by welcoming those in attendance to St. Augustine Church, the crowd cheered and clapped, then people waved palm fronds and clapped to the hymn "Oh, Happy Day."

"It's a joyous day, a great celebration," said Leola Brown, 77. "It shows the Lord answers prayers. This is my church. I want to attend it while I'm living and be buried from it when I die."






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Obituary

In Loving Memory

Donna Frances Goodlow

A memorial service was held March 22 at Ross Hollywood Chapel for Donna Frances Goodlow who died March 16, 2006 at the age of 69.

She was born Sept. 30, 1936 in Galesburg, Ill. and attended Galesburg High School and Knox College. She moved to Portland in March 1971.

She loved basketball, particularly the Trail Blazers, and worked at Memorial Coliseum for several years to be able to watch the team play. She also came to be an avid Tiger Woods fan. She loved to talk, was opinionated and cooked soul food better than most people would believe.

She held many jobs in Portland, working for JC Penney, Multnomah County Social Services, US Bank, the former Walnut Park Fred Meyer and recently offered childcare services, watching up to six children at a time in her home. She was a member of the Vernon and Humboldt Elementary School PTAs, and volunteered with Peninsula Little League. She loved the Rose Festival, attending the Grand Floral parade for many years sitting in the same spot on the parade route.

Her parents Walter and Fern Dagen, sister Karen preceded her in death.

She is survived by her brothers Walter and Michael Dagen of Galesburg; sister Kay Johnson of Conway, Ark.; sons Jeffrey Heflin of Portland, Kevin Heflin of Santa Rosa, Calif. and Michael Goodlow of Sunrise, Fla.; daughters Brenda Elam of Villa Grove, Ill., and Leslie Goodlow-Baldwin and Lori Goodlow both of Portland; grandchildren, Ashley Goodlow, Raphael Goodlow, Andrew Heflin, Brianna Goodlow-Marshall, Ebony Foreman, Erica Baldwin and Angelina Goodlow; adopted grandchildren, Matthew and Michael Thrasher; Kiara, Marquis' and Chamaria Taylor; Arianna, Kevina and Kiara Davis; many nieces, nephews and friends.



TV Host Promotes Faith

(AP) — Star Jones Reynolds has urged members of a New Jersey church to realize the importance of faith in their lives.

"Beauty, wealth and success mean little if you have not developed a relationship with God," the 44-year-old co-host of ABC's daytime talk show "The View," said Sunday at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, N.J.

"I've learned that a relationship with God is achieved through



Star Jones Reynolds

solitude, meditation, prayer and soul-searching and - above all - patience."

Jones Reynolds also urged the congregation to "do some soul-searching and maximize their potential."

She signed copies of her book, "Shine: A Physical, Emotional & Spiritual Journey to Finding Love," for church members.

Jones Reynolds married banker Al Reynolds in a star-studded wedding in 2004.

Church Volunteer Honored

Area residents are invited to a retirement blessing and celebration for church volunteer and leader Maggie Gibson on Saturday, April 22 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the St Andrews Community Center, 806 N.E. Alberta St.

Gibson is retiring from OPS Blue Shield and Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield after 27 years of



Maggie Gibson

joyous, marvelous and productive work.

The special blessing will be officiated by Rev. Charles Lienert at 5 p.m.

For more information call 503-281-9936.



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