

# Rededicated garden brings life to neighborhood

By Peter Finney Jr.  
Clarion Herald

A small pocket garden in the 3500 block of North Rampart Street behind the former Holy Angels Academy was dedicated in 2002 to Holy Cross Brother Blessed Andre Bessette, a revered doorkeeper at Notre Dame College of Quebec who became known internationally for his spiritual advice to pilgrims.

Parkway Partners offered to install the small community garden on the plot of land owned by the Marianites of Holy Cross. Architect Paul Chase designed the garden, and the heavy landscaping was completed by student volunteers from Archbishop Rummel High School, directed by counselor Bob Whitman, and Parkway Partners garden coordinator Macon Fry.

"Bob came with the boys from Rummel on Easter Mon-

day (in 2002), and that's why I like to call it a resurrection garden," Chase said. "When we put two palms in they were about our height nine years ago. Now they're maybe 40 feet tall."

The Rummel students reclaimed the garden after it was flooded and overgrown in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Then when Blessed Brother Andre was canonized on Oct. 17, 2010, Chase and representatives of Parkway Partners and the Marianites of Holy Cross decided to update the name.

Last month the garden was officially rededicated as Saint Brother Andre Garden, with a new sign that was unveiled by Chase. Plants have been donated over the years by Parkway Partners, American Aquatic Gardens, Harold's and fellow gardeners.

Sister Suellen Tennyson, superior general of the Marianne sisters, attended the canonization of Brother Andre last year.

"It was a very special moment," she said. "Out of the entire family of Holy Cross, he was the first to be canonized. He was a humble brother, a doorkeeper and receptionist at a school in Canada, and he had great devotion to St. Joseph. People would come to him and tell him their problems, and he would say, 'Pray to St. Joseph.' Then miracles started hap-

pening."

St. Andre's reputation for sanctity grew to the point where his congregation gave him a place across the street to meet with people, and then a small chapel was built. Finally a huge oratory was constructed, and thousands



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Marianite Sister Joyce Hanks, architect Paul Chase, Parkway Partners urban gardens coordinator Renee Allie and Archbishop Rummel's Bob Whitman stand in front of the Saint Brother Andre community garden off St. Claude Avenue in New Orleans. The garden opened in 2002.

of people visited each year.

St. Andre, a native of Quebec, was orphaned at 12. He grew up frail but intensely spiritual. He made his final vows as a Brother of Holy Cross in 1874 and became the doorman at Notre Dame College of Quebec, where he

remained for 40 years.

When he died in 1937, a million people filed past his coffin. A statue of St. Andre is situated in front of the door of the Marianites' convent on Rampart Street.

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