

Mr. Auguste Robert Pelafigue

Charles Hardy, a representative of the Auguste "Nonco" Pelafigue Foundation bows to the altar, approaches the pulpit and reads the following abbreviated petition (libellus) during the Opening of the Cause for Canonization, 1-11-2020.

Your Excellency, Bishop Deshotel:

Mr. Auguste "Nonco" Pelafigue, a layman, was born January 10, 1888 in France near Lourdes. His family emigrated to the United States and settled in French speaking Louisiana in the town of Arnaudville. In keeping with French custom, as Auguste grew older, he was given the nickname, "Nonco" meaning "uncle" for he indeed came to be considered like a good uncle to everyone who came into his ambit of influence.

He graduated from the Louisiana State Normal School in Natchitoches, Louisiana where he studied to become a teacher. It was during that time he became a member of the Apostleship of Prayer League of the Sacred Heart, an organization first founded in France in 1844 for the purpose of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and praying for the intentions of the pope.

He taught in public schools at Krotz Springs, at Coteau Rodaire, (a rural area in St. Martin Parish just a few miles from Arnaudville). In 1949, as the only layman, he joined the faculty of Arnaudville's newly built Little Flower Catholic School.

Nonco was known for his passionate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He devoutly attended daily Mass and served wherever he was needed. Perhaps most inspiringly, with rosary looped around his arm, Nonco traversed the highways and byways of his community spreading devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

On weekends, he taught religion to public school children. He also organized the League of the Sacred Heart with some 1,200 members and 100 promoters who helped distribute leaflets monthly in their communities. He, too, would travel the country roads of Arnaudville and the neighboring communities on foot to visit the sick and the grieving. Many people who recalled seeing him on this errand are said to have offered him a ride, but, even in the poorest of weather conditions, he always declined, saying that it was his way of doing penance for conversions and for the poor souls in purgatory. He was truly a door to door evangelist.

There was also a creative aspect to Nonco's life. Each summer and during the Christmas and Lenten seasons, he ingeniously introduced devotion to the Sacred

Heart, the stories of the Bible and the lives of the saints through dramatic performances. He personally wrote and directed these plays for 35 years which captured the attention of audience and performers. By the use of drama, he shared a passionate love of Christ with his students and the entire community. In this way, he opened not only the minds, but the hearts of his students. He was referred to by his pastor as another “priest” in his parish.

Through the efforts of Father Daniel Bernard, pastor in Arnaudville and Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard, first Bishop of the Diocese Lafayette, Pope Piux XII awarded Nonco with the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* Medal in recognition for his dedicated and humble service to the Catholic Church. This papal decoration is one of the highest honors awarded to members of the lay faithful. For twenty-four more years until his death in 1977 at age 89, Nonco continuously spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—for a total of sixty-eight years until the day he died on June 6, 1977, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

On behalf of the Auguste “Nonco” Pelafigue Foundation, we respectfully request, according to the norms of canon law, that you accept this petition to formally open and investigate the life of Auguste Pelafigue in the cause for beatification/sainthood.