SISTER RITA HARDY
DECEMBER 22, 1923 – JULY 21, 2011
Sr. Rita Hardy, MSC

Sr. Rita Hardy (AKA Sr. Mary Alfred) was born December 22, 1923 in Arnaudville, Louisiana. She died peacefully at 5:30 PM at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home on July 21, 2011.

The eleventh of twelve children, Sr. Rita was preceded in death by her father, Joseph Humene “Human” Hardy of Arnaudville and Adelaide Blaisia Pelafigue Hardy of Beaucens, France. She was also preceded in death by two sisters, Erminie Lormand and Marie Olivier; and eight brothers: Leon, Remi, Bruno, Samuel, Florent, Antoine, Remy and Abel Hardy.

She is survived by one sister Annie Calais and numerous nieces and nephews and their families.

She entered the Marianites of Holy Cross September 8, 1940, pronounced her first vows August 11, 1942 and her perpetual vows on August 11, 1945.

She was involved in elementary and high school education in New Orleans, Houma, Opelousas, Eunice, Arnaudville, Franklin, Ville Platte, and Lake Charles, Louisiana and in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. She rendered community service at Our Lady of Holy Cross Convent in New Orleans, Louisiana; at Notre Dame de la Solitude in Le Mans, France; at Our Lady of Princeton Convent in Princeton, New Jersey; and in pastoral ministry at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in Opelousas. Each of her ministries was marked by her generosity, thoughtfulness, and kindness.

Ever faithful in her dedication to the Marianites, to her family and friends, she is lovingly remembered for her gentleness, caring and compassion which endeared her to the many lives she touched and inspired through the years.

Wake service: Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home Chapel on Sunday, July 24, 2011, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM and Monday, July 25, 2011, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM followed by the Mass of the Resurrection at 10:30 AM in the chapel at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home. Burial will be in St. Landry Cemetery in Opelousas.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations in memory of Sr. Rita Hardy to the Marianites of Holy Cross, 1011 Gallier Street, New Orleans, LA., 70117.
Treasured Memories  
Compiled by: Genevieve Hardy Angelle  
12/22/03 – Sister Rita’s 80th Birthday

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
As we gather today to celebrate this happy occasion, Sr. Rita’s 80th birthday, we will reminisce on life experiences, shared memories savored, and the many blessings—so rich and varied—that life has given to the Hardy family.

Through the joys and tribulations of a large family, no matter what the reason, the Hardy’s were survivors.

Devoted to God, their family, church and community, both parents and children worked hard, to provide for their families temporal and spiritual welfare.

On the day Sr. Rita was born, her mother said it was a cold, wet, dark and dreary day. She was a joy to behold, but without the conveniences we enjoy today, her mother worried about the weather conditions and her newborn’s well-being. She claimed it was the cozy embrace of her arms, the warmth of rocking Rita near the fireplace and her love and tender care that kept her well, warm and safe. And of course, we all know, how devoutly she and Tante prayed.

Sr. Rita and Annie, being the last born children, had daily chores to perform at home, while the older children worked late into the night. They were assigned to carry water into the house from an outside water-hand pump, shuck and grain the corn by hand to feed the chickens and pigs, grind the coffee grains, and gather the chicken eggs daily. Helping Tante with the dishes was their least favorite chore. Annie tells the story that sometimes they threw the whole corn cob out the barn door—and let the chickens peck their own.

When Sr. Rita was 12 and Annie was 8 years old, they were kept in a dry, dark room because of measles. During this time, a hurricane struck. Kept in their bed in the “grande chamber” in the center of their home, the intensity of the storm brought howling wind, pouring rain and tore off the attic door. When the ceiling began to leak and their mother learned that the barn behind the house had dislodged and was rolling towards the house—the fear in her eyes increased.

Meanwhile, to distract everyone, Remy started to play his harmonica, while Abel helped his Mom collect all the blankets, coats and a tarpaulin to keep Rita and Annie dry as they moved them to the front bedroom.

At the same time, Florent and Blue were busy pushing furniture against the bedroom door that had flung open.

Concerned about her families safety, the boys were asked to go out to find an ambulance. Annie recalled she had never heard of or seen an ambulance before. It would have been a horse-drawn one because the roads were muddy and impassable.

Amid all this chaos, Remy played his harmonica faster and faster. However, their mother’s prayers were answered. The barn stopped rolling before it hit the house, and the boys did not have to go out.

Even in difficult times, they were a creative and happy family. They created their own games. A Y-shaped twig and a rubber band became a sling shot. A
pointed-sharp feather made a perfect dart. A painted paper bag and old material became a beautiful kite, etc. All creations contributed to hours of fun and play.

One of the countless hours of fun and entertainment was enjoyed on one window pane in the kitchen. The pane was rippled and wavy. When we looked to the outside through it—and moved a certain way-sideways or up and down, it was like magic.

If we saw a cat or dog walk by, a slight eye movement would curtail the animal in two, only one body part showing. Followed by a slight movement, the other missing part would reconnect.

With practice, we were able to see three chickens or three birds as they walked through the yard. Sometimes, the sun shining through caused a rainbow of vivid colors to appear, like a prism.

Not far from home was a railroad track. Brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews waited their turn to view the trucks and cars, seeming to jump over the track with just the right movement. A simple window-pane brought a “joie-de-vie” much to the enjoyment of our young and carefree lives. Annie and Genevieve still remember and treasures the memory.

Your mother was a great story teller. We remember sitting at her feet while she read stories from a Quebec magazine, Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. The readings and stories were a mixture of English and French words. She would point to the French words, emphasizing each pronunciation. Gradually, some of us learned to read the French words on our own. Little did we realize then, that it would be a great help to us—when we had to learn our catechism lessons and prayers in French.

When Rita was a novice at Holy Angels, one day she walked out of the chapel and found Remy and Abel sitting on a bench—each with a paper bag holding their clothes. They wanted directions to the bus station to go to New York on their way to Bermuda. Later in life they became so worldly.

We all have good memories of Holy Angels in New Orleans. Leon enjoyed visiting Sr. Rita with as many family members as his car could carry. The excitement of our first visit was filled with anticipation, because it was our first trip out of Arnaudville.

Having entered the Marianites of the Holy Cross in 1940, and making her final vows in 1945, the family always looked forward to visiting with her wherever she served. To us, every trip to visit Sr. Rita was a vacation.

During World War II, your four brothers, Blue, Bruno, Abel and Remy, served in active duty. Four stars were proudly displayed in the front window of your home. Your Mom was often found placing a blessed, lighted candle under the stars as she prayed for their safe return. Imagine the joy when they all came home. Your mother was so proud that they had taken part in liberating France, her homeland.

There was excitement throughout their lives as the brothers traveled. They brought home interesting stories that were informative and educational.

You played a good part in the lives of Annie and Genevieve, in the early 40’s, because they were boarders at A.I.C., a Catholic School, while you were missioned there. We have great memories of being together.
There are many people in Arnaudville, and some of your nieces and
nephews, who remember your expertise teaching at Little Flower Convent. It
was said they owe you a debt of gratitude. Today, they attribute their
grammar and good spelling habits to the methods you used in teaching them
English and other subjects.

The following are some of the most memorable memories that have left an
incredible imprint on our hearts...

There were many family gatherings. Sunday dinners with grandparents,
aunts, uncles, and cousins—was our favorite. What good times we had!

Walking in your mothers parterre with flowers so bright was enjoyable-
standing still as we watched the hummingbirds hovering over the honey-suckle
vines.

Sitting on the front porch swing-telling stories and singing hymns—watching
fireflies light up our surroundings and admiring the beauty of the moon and
stars on a clear bright night—was relaxing at the end of the day.

Remember the boucheris which lasted 2 to 3 days—with all family members
helping. Everyone went home with their share of red and white houndin, hog
cheese, cracklins, and sausage.

The church bells used to ring morning, noon, and night. At that time, we
prayed the Angelus together. During Lent, the school children would walk to
church to attend the Friday Way of the Cross with their parents.

Helping Tante place fresh flowers and clean cloths on our Church altar each
Saturday—and preparing the altar for Holy Thursday, adoration was something
we looked forward to. It was a joyful time for us.

Holy week was a busy time at the Hardy Fish Market. All family members
were involved in helping out. Marie who worked at the market regularly, was
grateful for everyone pitching in.

Mamom Hardy used to make a gallon jar of root beer which she kept cool in
the Ice-box. When we lost the recipe, we missed out on the best tasting root
beer in Louisiana.

Before we had electricity, we used hand fans for relief in hot weather,
candles and oil lamps were used for night lights, reading and during
homework. We were kept warm by a woodstove or fireplace. Somehow, we
tend to miss the coziness and closeness we experienced back then.

When Sam and Tat visited with family, they seemed to exude warmth and a
feeling of having all the time in the world for everyone. Whenever their
children visited them, it meant everything to Mamom and Pop Pop.

Some of the cousins remember Old Mose and Bye, the horse. Before
electricity, they delivered ice through the community. After finishing his route,
Old Mose would let us hitch a ride to our grandparents house. What a thrill
that was.

Most of us may never appear in a Broadway play, but at an early age, many
of us were exposed to the stage in Nonco's yearly labor of love—his Sacred Heart
programs that attracted the whole community. He presented programs during
the Lenten and Christmas season, as well. We remember Sr. Rita in one of his
plays.
Each night when we knelt together to recite our prayers and the Rosary, filled with peace and contentment, we praised and thanked God for blessings received.

With love and affection, we remember your extended family, the nuns. Through you, they became ours, too. So thankful are we-for their prayers and friendship throughout the years.

With the religious nuns and priests, who have enriched our lives and brought us closer to God, we are thankful.
Remember When...

We watched her depart
A young girl in her teens
High school years in a convent
Helped decide her vocation.

She accepted her ministry
In a manner of dignity
She became for us all
A model of inspiration.

Giving up home and family
Was the ultimate sacrifice
But the Christ she so loved
She completely trusted.

Through the seasons of fleeting years
Her life-work continued
She then followed the footsteps of her Lord
To a strange far-off land.

Twas not easy we know
To accept such a challenge
But choosing Christ as her bridegroom
Was her final decision.

What a blessing...this memory
To set foot on the soil
And visit relatives and places
Of Her beloved “Mother’s Birthplace.”

With warm feelings – we recall
A young bride of Christ
As she walked down the aisle
She silently whispered, “Thy Will Be Done”

Spiritually uplifting were her cards and letters
Because through her eyes
We, too, shared
In her journey of faith.

This happy moment she owed
To her father and mother
Bonded forever was the seed of faith
They had nurtured with love.

And when we were told
On the wings of prayers
She would journey back
To those who missed her so
...there was so much rejoicing

Her parents faces we still behold
With emotion and love
They gained strength from above
The proud parents of a nun.

How precious the moment we welcomed her home
Blest are we now...she’s just a few miles away
And we’re always so proud to say
We have a nun in our family-
Her name is “Sister Rita Hardy.”

She dedicated her life
In the vineyard of Christ
Her love, sacrifice and devotion
We proudly watched from afar.

All the joys and trials we’ve experienced and shared in our lifetime are intertwined.

“When those we love become a memory, memory becomes a treasure.”

Today, we remember those who are no longer with us. They were a part of those treasured memories and we remember them with love and admiration. We owe them our gratitude and our prayers.
Each in their own way steered us in the right direction. Their examples of faith, love, perseverance, courage and integrity have served us well. They left their footprints of love and inspiration that will influence and mark our lives forever.

There's much more we can say, but we can't list all memories. These are some of the many that remain close to our hearts-moments so precious...we remember with love.

May the warmth and love that surrounds you today fill your heart with joy and your soul with God's heavenly grace and peace.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SISTER RITA!!!

12/22/2003

The following article was written by Genevieve Hardy Angelle and was printed in the Acadiana Catholic.

THANKS, SISTER

Sister Rita Hardy of the Marianites of Holy Cross is one of the Marianite jubilarians this year. She is celebrating her 60th anniversary as a religious and this tribute came from family and friends.

Sister Rita, who received the name in religion of Sister Alfred, an Arnaudville native, is the eleventh child of twelve children.

"We would like to pay tribute to her shining qualities of mind and heart, which have endeared her to the many lives she has touched and inspired through the years.

"With random acts of thoughtfulness, encouragement and support, she inspires her nieces, nephews and cousins with joy and spiritual values. She has influenced their lives, and ours, in such positive ways.

"Her happiness comes from her dedication and devotion to God, her family and her selfless service to the needs of others – always the Good Samaritan. She lets her evidence and radiant love of God shine upon the people in her life with kindness and compassion. Her warm and winning smile captures the heart of all who know her.

"Her family says, 'Her presence in our life is as refreshing as the gentleness of a snowflake. Throughout the many years of separation, in every joyful reunion, we experience a newfound closeness. We wish to thank her for her loving ways, her prayers, and continued inspiration. She remains the wind beneath our wings.'"

(Sister Rita entered the Marianites in 1940, made final profession in 1945, and in her 60 years as a religious, ministered in New Orleans, Algiers, Arnaudville, Eunice, Franklin, Lake Charles, Opelousas, Princeton, N.J., and France (her mother's birthplace.) She is presently serving at Our Lady of Prompt Succor convent and nursing in Opelousas.)
A SPECIAL TRIBUTE:

4-15-11

Sister Alfred,

I often reflect on my early formative years and conclude that you at the Little Flower and Bro. Leo at St. Stanislaus were instrumental in grounding me in sound Christian values. Your unselfish dedication and service to community, church, and God are to be commended. I wish I had a medal to give you as one of my super heroes!

Take care, pray for us, and take comfort in knowing your reward is near at hand.

Bless you, -

Jerry and Charlotte (Darby)
Marianites of Holy Cross

United with Mary standing at the foot of the cross, we Marianites of Holy Cross, are apostolic religious, women of prayer and compassion. Our mission, energized by our life in community, is to incarnate the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. Called to be a prophetic presence in an ever-changing world, we resolutely stand with those who are excluded.

Unies à Marie debout au pied de la Croix, nous Marianites de Sainte-Croix, sommes des religieuses apostoliques, femmes de prière et de compassion. Notre mission, dynamisée par notre vie en communauté, est d’incarner l’amour et la compassion de Jésus Christ. Appelées à être une présence prophétique dans un monde en mutation, nous prenons partie pour les exclus.