

Instructions for *What's the Deal with DuBourg??*

(Read aloud or have the students read as a frontloading experience before listening to Msgr. Witt's podcast.)

Wow—his life could have been a soap opera! What's the saying? It has to be the truth because no one could make up this stuff! Yep—it was that kind of surreal challenge that DuBourg faced all his life. From narrowly escaping doom in both France and Spain and fleeing to the U.S. as a very young man, to becoming Bishop over an ENORMOUS expanse of land (ALL of the Louisiana territory PLUS what was called the Two Floridas). It was a ridiculously huge acreage that was largely uncivilized, and get this: He had only 14 priests in his diocese, of which half were sick or dying. Crazy!

Seem daunting enough? Add this into the mix: A zealous, well-liked but defiant priest in New Orleans named Fr. Antonio de Sedella had the backing of the New Orleans Catholic community. He could do no wrong in their eyes. Fr. Sedella was furious with DuBourg for stepping on his authority and Sedella rallied community support against him. He threatened DuBourg with losing diocesan church property and his good name. Sedella even set doubt in parishioners' minds whether or not DuBourg was really the newly appointed bishop or just a fake! All this, not to mention Sedella subtly suggested DuBourg was potentially risking his life if he didn't leave the area.

No surprise...DuBourg set about finding an alternate city other than the hostile environment in New Orleans to set up the diocesan See. St. Louis was the next largest city in the territory and DuBourg travelled (escaped??) there to establish the diocese.

In the midst of all of this turmoil...Rose Philippine Duchesne and her companions arrived in New Orleans. With little knowledge of this drama, the immigrants are literally sick and tired from their arduous journey and guess what? Their "fearless leader" that begged them to come to the New World, Bishop DuBourg, is nowhere to be found! As they waited for 6 weeks to hear word of their mission from DuBourg, it is not surprising that doubt and concerns arose in the immigrant missionaries' minds.

To gain further insight—PLEASE LISTEN to the entertaining and lively podcast interview of historian, Msgr. Michael Witt, as he describes with humor and detail the obstacles Bishop DuBourg faced. (Chapter 35 podcast, see Student Documents and Activities column)

Writing responses:

1. **Acrostic poem** with phrases describing a topic related to DuBourg's ordeal, tenacity, missionary zeal, hardship, character, etc.
 - An **acrostic poem** has a topic idea running down the left side of the **poem**. Each letter in the topic word (D-U-B-O-U-R-G) has a new thought that runs off the side from left to right and is relevant to the topic word. The topic word is typically the title as well.
2. **Journal responses:**
 - Do you think popularity (or lack thereof!) affected DuBourg's psyche and zeal to bring Catholicism? Argue for or against the "power" of popularity in achieving one's goals.
 - List obstacles that DuBourg and Philippine faced at this pivotal point in New Orleans. How did the personality trait of GRIT help each of them persevere? Did they "chose" to use grit or was it a "God-given" personality trait? Share your opinion, and then share how choosing grit can impact your decision making.
3. **Writing dialogue/short one-act scenes:**
 - Based on Msg. Witt's podcast have students create short dialogue exchanges that might have transpired between historic characters. Share/act out the dialogue for peers. Suggested names to choose for dialogue:
 - DuBourg, Fr. Antonio DeSedella, collective crowd voice of the New Orleans community, Philippine, Pope Pius VII, Archbishop Carroll, Fr. Rosati