

I was recently preparing a July 2006 'Hurricane Ready Binders' (just in case!) for use by we the 'telephone operators' to be utilized in the Command Center at CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital in Lake Charles, LA. In that you are as near to me as breathing I was thinking of the ever-present threat of property and personal loss in a natural disaster and subsequent thoughts of what our words to you, for you, about you that have been written and how they may be secured in a way that we and others can enjoy as well wherever we find ourselves! Hence this ongoing electronic means of receiving and telling is in place! I haven't even begun my walk through your filing cabinet, photos and correspondence folders complete with all the good things from all the years to date! If you're still breathing, read on...!!!

I had *engraved* for your father on a piece of jewelry, '!ls Sont Partis!' (the charge for the start of a horse race at the Tracks in Louisiana!) We had become engaged and I thought it an appropriate *inscription* as I do today, "And, They're Off!!"

1) Let's begin with your name!! Héctor's maternal grandfather is 'Adolfo' and my paternal grandfather is 'Antoine' and we simply put the two together from each family and country and there you have it ~ our 'Antoine Adolfo!' These grandfathers were well-loved, hard-working, admired and respected gentlemen! This is also what we did in selecting our siblings for your two sets of Godparents at your baptism, Tio Cano and Tia Seffeyn in Puerto Rico where you were firstly baptized and Uncle Charles and Aunt Constance in South Louisiana where you were secondly baptized!!

Your Dad and I choose your name in 1977 while we were dating! Lieutenant Colonel Ponton, in his early 40's, was stationed at Fort Polk, LA in the capacity of Battalion Commander and I, Miss Bernadette Monlezun, in her late 20's, was Executive Director of the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Tourist Commission in Lake Charles, LA. (Hector had previously been stationed at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and I had been in Baton Rouge, LA working with the State Department of Education.) We met at Fort Polk, LA where I had been sent by Mayor Jim Sudduth who in his phone call to me stated, "Bernadette, Senator Russell Long has just appropriated ninety million dollars toward Ft. Polk for it to remain open for all times. I want you to gather representatives from the Louisiana Restaurant Association, Retail Association, KPLC television, Chamber of Commerce and whoever else you can think of and get to Polk and invite those officers and soldiers to Lake Charles. It is the largest payroll for this area and I want those men eating in our restaurants, sitting on our beaches and shopping in our stores...arrange the necessary military discounts. I said, "Yes sir throughout my orders!" Then in summary he asked if I had any questions and I said, "Yes sir! Where is Fort Polk?" He strongly suggested that I, "get a map and call me when you return with a report!" I wrote a wopping report, a courtship with your father ensued, I retired from career life and married your father 14 January 1978!!! Ft. Polk, LA was good to us!

Your Dad was forty-five and I thirty-four when you were born. We were single many years prior which we spent in experiencing life, education, careers, global travel, responsibilities, accountability and command. Your Dad moved every one to three years, twenty-four moves prior to retirement at age fifty-two in 1988. I moved twenty-seven times prior to our military retirement at age forty and you turned six and entered the first grade! We

shadowed your every step in the growing years, provided for you, protected you, raised you in the faith of our forefathers and foremothers, the Roman Catholic faith through twelve years in Catholic school and accompanied by your mentor and friend ‘Miss Renee’ made sure you traveled and experienced this wonderful North American continent! Then you drove away in your new SUV northeast to Monroe, LA for your college days and subsequent graduation May 20, 2006!!! And just last month you again drove away in your new SUV aiming due east!! My, my we love every minute of your days!

2) **Mama spent a little time thinking about you; writing and figuring circa 1998:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2032</b>
<b>HRP Age</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>BMP Age</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>AAP Age</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Antoine/School:</b>
1982	Born in Denver, Colorado!
1983-1984	Age one Springfield, VA
1984-1985	Age two Mother's Day Out, one morning a week, VA
1985-1986	Age three Pre-school, two days a week! Capitol Hill Child Development Center, Washington, D.C.
1986-1987	Age four Pre-school, three days a week! D.C.
1987-1988	Age five Kindergarten, four days a week! St. Peter's Inter-parish School/D.C.
1988-1989	Age six First Grade, Our Lady Queen Elementary School/Lake Charles, LA/Marcia Carlson
1989-1990	Age seven Second Grade, Angel Tartamella
1990-1991	Age eight Third Grade, Pye Brown
1991-1992	Age nine Fourth Grade, Mary Phelps
1992-1993	Age ten Fifth Grade, Molly Babineaux
1993-1994	Age eleven Sixth Grade, Linda Latour
1994-1995	Age twelve Seventh Grade, Jason Brost
1995-1996	Age thirteen Eighth Grade, Marquerite LeDoux
1996-1997	Age fourteen Ninth Grade, St Louis Catholic High School/LA
1997-1998	Age fifteen Tenth Grade
1998-1999	Age sixteen Eleventh Grade
1999-2000	Age seventeen Twelfth Grade
2000-2001	Age eighteen First Year, University of LA at Monroe
2006	Age twenty-three Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication

3) **While you were being raised-up, I always laid out three sets of clothes for your selection for Mass on Sundays or any special occasion. As you grew you had a hodgepodge selection of unique clothes to say the least! One day you said, “I don’t want to wear another shirt with palm trees on them; I am going to apply for work at Gap, Inc.!” I said, “*Muy bien*, press on!” I am very grateful to my Puerto Rican**

**mother-in-law who sent a monthly package for the three of us...clothes for Antoine, alcaparias, pina colado pops, seasonings, plantains... I was content that you had clothes to wear cognizant that you might grow out of the island threads but oh, how you love your Abuela and she you!! So off you trod, applied, was hired as a 'Sales Associate' and began work that very afternoon! I was so excited for you and ran to the computer to write words of wisdom for my son for his very first job! I recently found the sheet as the first page of your Gap, Inc. binder where I had placed it in your filing cabinet! (By the way, I never said a word but I found it ironic that one of your favorite stores was The Banana Republic; and, another thing, palm trees are back in style!!!)**

***WORDS OF WISDOM FROM YOUR MAMA! 16 April 1999***

- + Smile, listen and ask questions!**
- + Don't watch the clock!**
- + Go the extra mile!**
- + Do the right thing, always!**
- + Pray before you answer!**
- + Don't spend the money before you earn it!**
- + Remember the less fortunate always!**
- + Guard your language!**
- + You're selling hope not just clothing!**
- + Don't take it personally!**
- + Gargle!**
- + Sell one rightly, you sell the entire family!**
- + Manners and kindness matters!**
- + Take time to know, love and serve The Father!**
- + Always follow the chain of command and don't stop until it's resolved!**
- + 3-hole punch, date and document everything!**
- + No matter how you feel, smile!**
- + Never bring a problem without advancing a solution!**
- + WWJD!**
- + You're worth respect!**
- + If they can't afford it, don't push it!**
- + Treat the Mom with respect!**
- + Don't lie if it doesn't look good!**
- + Know when to stop talking and ask for the sale; learn to close the deal!**
- + Always, always be honest and do the right thing!**
- + Call home... and Ms. Renee!**
- + If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything!**
- + Pack a snack and drink plenty of water!**
- + Be grateful daily, pray often and encourage others to always take the high road!**
- + Ask the Blessed Mother to wrap you in her mantle when the going gets tough!**
- + As you advance, remember how it was when you first started with the Company; make it better for all!**
- + Always offer a hand up!**
- + Be patient and extra kind to Third-Agers!**
- + Reverence confidence!**

**+ God Knows!!!**

**4) 1) 1992-1993 while in the fifth grade you wrote a paper entitled, “What It Means To Me To Be A Christian.” I framed it and it hangs in your room on Spring Street! (You may have a copy for your ‘family wall’ in your condo if you’d like!!)**

**“It means to me to be a good and faithful Christian...I pray when I can for the poor and for people that cannot afford food and clothing. One Christmas, I gave presents for poor people and went to their home. It was not neat, very very plain, and there was one light bulb in the whole house, it was over the sink. The Christmas tree, just a Christmas just plain, no lights, no nothing. When I went in kids run and hide. My mom told me to go back in the van. I was so upset and disterbed. I said to myself I would try and do my very best in school and be a good examples for the other kids and for my kids if I ever have any. That is one way that I can be a Christian and that is what it means to me and here are some more. I feel good to be a Christian. No race is better than any other race of religion. Some people do not treat other people with respect, Christians do. Every person is or should be a Christian. Some people do not pray to God and even do not listen to God some do not like God some people love him. He is our creator and some people love rocks sticks and grass. Some people like Christians show God in them and do what ever he said. Christians help other people to pray and read the bible and somethimes gave them a bible. So that is what it means to me to be a Christian.”**

**5) Antoine won a first place ribbon in Mrs. Babineaux’s fifth grade class for his D.A.R.E. article. It’s also framed and hangs next to the ‘Christian’ article!!**

**“ Do you know what D.A.R.E. stands for, Drug Abuse Resistance Education. D.A.R.E. is very fun you get to do role playing and skits. You get lots of stickers and rulers, pins and bracelets. You learn about Drugs and what they are and what they can do to you, and the kinds of drugs there are. We have a person to teach D.A.R.E. to us, her name is Officer Ranecke.**

**Here are some of the things we learn in D.A.R.E., the eight ways to say no like saying no, cold shoulders, strength in numbers. There were Definitions, we did some that were peer pressure, stress and youth games. D.A.R.E. was fun but it was serious. Officer Ranecke made it look like fun and games but it was serious. People out there using drugs, killing themselves, that is not fun and games. God made us to love our selves not to abuse our selves. Kids my age start taking drugs because they don’t feel good about themselves. I myself pray for those kids to stop taking drugs and feel happy about themselves. When I grow up I want to help kids my age and teach them that drugs don’t do anything for you except kill you. Hopefully we won’t have drugs when we grow up because we will stop the people that kill people and stop the people that sell drugs to kids like us, even if they are kids because they are hurting other kids**

**by giving them drugs that they made and they will kill the kids that take them. So we will stop them and teach them not to take DRUGS!!!**

6) I love this Poem of Poems; it is framed and hangs on your PawPaw's Wall on Arthur Avenue!

Antoine A. Pontón  
English IV 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour  
March 2, 2000  
Poem

i call the grandfather

i call the grandfather  
come back to me  
they say you have tow  
but when I never knew one  
i lost the other too.

come back to me grandfather one  
i know so much about you through the eyes of others  
you were great you were loving  
show me the ways that you were so caring.

come back to me grandfather two  
i knew you better than one  
even though I never spoke to you in my tongue  
towards the end you said you did not know me  
but I knew you loved me.111111111111111111

grandfathers come back to me  
teach me your trades of love and wisdom  
play with me like you did when I do not remember  
come back to me.

### **7. for a paper...no date!!!**

The way I am today is a direct result of my upbringing. My parents have instilled in me the values and traits that have made me a productive part of society. Often the roles played by my parents may be totally different.

My mother has played the role of the caretaker which has made me strong, healthy and a wise young man! She has guided me in a direction that helped me to make wise choices in my life, while still supporting me when I chose to do the opposite.

My father on the other hand, I feel, has been the foundation for me to grow. He was the authority figure that put pressure on me when I did not do what was right and the unconditional giver of money when I was short and guidance to learn from life's obstacles!

My mother has been very nurturing and supportive throughout my life. She taught me to never limit myself to anything I do and even if I do not succeed, as long as I did my best that was all that mattered. While in school, my mom was at all my school functions supporting me every step of the way.

My father has played the role of keeping me in line and has turned me around when I began to walk down the wrong path. He gave me money for school supplies, and my recreation. My dad always pushed me to do the best because he knew my capabilities. He would not stop until I would be successful. When I had problems, my father always gave the best advice.

Working together, I feel my parents have done a wonderful job. I am a very ambitious, healthy young man who wants to reach the stars. Without all of the love, support and guidance, I do not think I would be where I am today.

**8. Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc wrote the following as Assistant Director, Family Life Bureau in Washington, D.C. many years ago. I wanted you to read and know...**

"The annual celebration of Love will again take place on St. Valentine's Day. It is no more coincidence that this feast precedes Lent. In that Season we recall the first "Valentine" sent to man: the Sacred Heart.

"Don't follow your reason, listen to your heart" is still the theme song of countless lovers. It is a deceptive, dangerous theme. Love is no mere emotion, no mere goose-pimple. Love at first sight is an oversight. "Falling in love" too often means "falling into physical attraction." So much of high school dating falls into this category.

As unromantic as it sounds, true love begins in the intellect, moves to the will then spills over into the emotions and the physical. Love is not two people gazing at one another, but two people together looking in the same direction.

Even more love is an inclination towards someone who completes me or whom I can complete or both. It has complementarity, as oxygen completes hydrogen and a key completes a lock.

Most lovers break up because the emotional and the physical are exaggerated, overemphasized.

Those of you who really understand St. Valentine and Lent should add to the top of the pierced heart a beautiful meaningful little Cross. True love means sacrifice, as fire means burning. Christian love means God as St. Valentine means martyrdom."

**9. Love this!** "You become happy by living a life that means something...I suspect that the happiest people you know are the ones who work at being kind, helpful and reliable, and happiness sneaks into their lives while they are busy doing those things. Happiness is always a by-product, never a primary goal." Rabbi Harold Kushner

**10. APRIL 2005...on a brass plate on the back of a very special painting...**

**This painting is a gift to Antoine A. Pontón, Great- Great- Great Grandson of**

**Dominique and Louisa Thomasine Peterson-Monlezun.**

**This is their original home place at Cypress Point, LA 1876-1923.**

**Painted from memory by their Granddaughter Mary Monlezun-Broussard, 1902-1977**

**Godmother of Lee Joseph Monlezun, Sr. 1917-1985**

*Dominique Monlezun*

**Born 1845 Lalanne, France-died June 29, 1928, Lake Arthur, Louisiana**

**This painting is the original home place in Cypress Point, LA**

*Son, Antoine Monlezun*

**March 31, 1882-March 29, 1971**

*Grandson, Lee Joseph Monlezun, Sr.*

**April 24, 1917-July 31, 1985**

*Daughter, Anna Bernadette Monlezun-Pontón*

**December 12, 1947**

*Son, Antoine Adolfo Pontón who receives this treasure as gift!*

**July 24, 1982**

**11)** While in college, our son worked as a Teacher Assistant for the Freshman Orientation Class! When it was time for the 'Time Management' lesson plan review, he shared with the Faculty Advisor that his Mom teaches-a-little-something-on- this-topic, subsequently, I was invited to share some could-it-be's!! (I am so sorry that I do not have the script of the introduction a son articulated of/for/about his mother!! You would have had to be there!!)

**Thoughts for Time Management with Anecdotes of Life!**

Whether you are a student, adult or third-ager, it is possible to rise before the sun rises to find yourself in the presence of your Creator. An interesting way to begin this topic however I am talking about time – your past, your present, your future here and beyond here. Why are you here and where are you going? What is time management about? It's hard to wrap your mind around it... isn't time to be used, period!!! Time is the conduit between your heart, mind, body and soul. It is by God's grace that we have it all time. ~Management infers that something is manageable and time is the topic as long as we add management. Time Management with a Spiritual Perspective is what I teach in a

little town in SWLA called Lake Arthur. I'm one of 10 children, the eldest daughter, and have been making order since I was small and had responsibilities for the younger ones and the ordering of the home. I have been teaching this topic for many years beginning in Costa Rica, Central America where my husband was a military officer assigned to the US Embassy and at subsequent assignment to include Bogota, Colombia, South America, Denver, CO, Springfield, VA and while stationed at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C.. Women came to my home for bible study and when they saw my office, desk, filing cabinet, books on theology and time management (I've moved 27 times!) they were fascinated for they wished simply to put hands and feet to scripture study like Mother Teresa and pursue their purpose in life! And that is how I began and, today, I'm grateful to have been invited to be with you and say...rise everyday of your life before the light of day, find a place of calm and quiet inside or out, sit quietly with meditative music, your prayer book and.... go inside of yourself very gradually, slowly and when you're the most at peace, you have found your center and there, He dwells. Tell him that you love Him and have shown up for your daily marching orders! If you wish, have **a journal, a notebook** there and begin to write of what you are discerning... not quite thinking, not quite understanding but wanting to. Tell Him of your hearts desire, your pain, disappointments, anger, betrayals, fatigue, fears and anxieties. He wants to hear it from you and this way you empty this human vessel and He fills it with all the best things for you just one day at a time!

As some point, you are invited to reach for your **scheduling book**, where it is written where you have to be, what you are to be prepared for and what you must have with you. **Go through the pages...**

So, to recap thus far...a prayer guide, a journal, a scheduling book...I will briskly walk through the workings of this type book. **Pause – Questions**

~Where you focus while you concentrate on the pursuit of information which becomes knowledge which becomes wisdom with the passing of time. What is in your study area, a desk, paper, pen, photos and electronics. Also, study aids, calendar for social, academic, organizations, family calendar, etc. Keep this in mind – life-long learning is a reality and a healthy one to embrace & the sooner the better! Therefore, two hours of study for every hour of classroom instruction. Repeat...! This means reading and, reading goes in better when the head voices are not as loud and that slowly comes from the centering, from the whisper of a short prayer to your Creator which sound something like this... 'help, clear me inside and out of distractions and show me the way. I trust in You.' Hopefully, you will embrace life-long learning forever therefore, learn the art of soaking in information and day by day it becomes knowledge like bees around the hive, buzzing for a reason...the golden honey of wisdom! The more you can begin to want to travel, to see and experience this wonderful large exciting world where wonder and awe is around every turn, you will come to know that, from your daily centering in prayer, you carry who you were created to be in His image and likeness and that it is revealed to you day by day in little ways. Peace comes unto you. **Pause –**

**Questions**

~It takes 21 days to set a habit doing it consistently. Binders of categories help. Activity Binder: How old will you be in the year 2032? I'll be 85, my husband will be 96 and my son will be 50! What will you be doing with your life? What profession will you be practicing? Where will you be living? Most of all, will you be happy? Will you

be fulfilled by having a purpose and meaning in life? What can you do today to begin one step, baby steps toward your middle adulthood? That could be the first page in your **Activity Binder**. Health, happiness, money enough to share especially with the less fortunate, an active faith and time to give back.

Second page, the year in **Semesters** and write under each month from your calendar and schedule of events that which you must do. Your present world is divided into categories because of involvement. This begins to form a way to seek balance in full view everyday. Please write down on a sheet of paper the activities, classes, organization or anything that you have responsibilities for on or off campus. Later, group under categories in the Activity Book ...Now, write what gifts, talents you possess that you would like to be asked to share?

### ***Core thought...***

Set aside two days of your week to begin thinking about Time and Management from rising, to centering prayer, stretching exercise, to dressing, ordering your space/picking up, breakfast, gathering what you need, thinking, planning, driving, parking, thinking, greeting, classes and notes, reading, wondering, contemplating, imagining the next step in life semester by semester eventually graduation, employment, a job &/or a career all those thoughts and voices that go round and round. Now, you have time to place them all the day long. The alternative is much less attractive! Stress is the undone work!

### ***Pause...Questions***

In closing, I invite you to think about your family lineage, the generations, where your people come from, the original towns and countries, the culture and their hardships; this forms character. Could-it-be, if you haven't already asked questions of the elders in your family...do inquire about their up-bringing, faith foundations, challenges, joys and sorrows and how they either survived, existed and/or thrived. It is all part of who you are today, your DNA and who you are in the process of becoming. Good, honest, wholesome work is not about a career of accumulation but an opportunity of service in the place in which you find the greatest satisfaction. Lead, Kindly Light, dear ones!

- I farewell-ed each student on the way out; many hugged back and a few were scratching their heads! I just smiled, wished them God speed and an assurance that 'all will be well'!!

**12)** MawMaw and PawPaw were two of the first Eucharistic Ministers commissioned many years ago at Our Lady of the Lake church parish in Lake Arthur, LA. Aunt Constance and Uncle Vic followed soon afterwards and were commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers and Cantors at Our Lady Queen of Heaven (OLQH) church parish in Lake Charles, LA. Mama was commissioned as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Cantor, Wake Service and Communion Service Facilitator in the chapel of the Chancery, Archdiocese of Washington, DC. and Aunt Tina was recently commissioned as Eucharistic Minister at Our Lady of the Lake in Lake Arthur, LA where it all began! I serve as a Minister of Holy Communion every Thursday at CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital as well as hold membership in the Catholic Daughters and Altar Society at OLQH. My sisters Constance Victoria and Ione Marie and I joined the Altar Society of St. Leo's Catholic Church, Roberts Cove, LA during their centennial celebration with MawMaw in attendance. Her mother (your great-great grandmother!) was a member of the Altar Society, Catholic Daughter and charter member of the church choir! PawPaw, Uncle Lee J., your father and cousin, Kade Joel, are members of the wonderful Knights of Columbus! Robert Joseph, Jr. attended a Cursillo! My six brothers were altar boys and in this next generation- Whitney Pierre, III, Branton Heath, Sye Joseph, Antoine Adolfo,

Joseph Wayne served as well as Dominique Joseph Jr., Christian Joseph and the 18<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Suzanne Louise serve as altar servers! **Also in this next generation, John David (Christ the King Parish in Lake Charles, LA), Katherine Anne while in Baton Rouge and Antoine Adolfo while a member of Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish in Monroe, LA are commissioned Eucharistic Ministers. Recently Antoine served the cup for the first time and as it was handed to him on the altar, he noted how very full it was but chose not to sip it. He nervously and very carefully processed to his place next to the choir and positioned himself to serve the precious wine. The first lady approached and he gently handed her the cup of which she took a little too swiftly and yes, it proceeded to spill down the front of her dress and onto the floor. He was mortified, his knees turned to rubber and his mouth dried up but choked out, "I'm sorry!" Clutching the purificator he began to dab the cup as she whispered, "It's OK!" She is a mother of six children that fill the first pew every Sunday, so what can surprise her?! He proceeded to drop to his knee and dab the floor and said to me, "I cleaned the best I could, then stood over Him to protect Him and continued serving!" I am taking this line to my grave and all the way up to my Mom and Dad!!! They probably gave him the courage and tenacity to stand firm, come to think of it!**

13) Hector and I are blessed and grateful to have many friends and family members in many places across many miles. Our paths have crisscrossed during the most wonderful of times. We have felt and heard of their thoughts and prayers over the years but especially this past hurricane season which hit particularly close to home! We have not been as faithful in our correspondence as we would like to have been and so this year we wrote a letter as well as enclosed a sheet of photos. (I pointed out that Antoine is the young one of the three exhibiting that definite Latin look!!!)

### *Dear Family, Amigas y Amigos! 2006*

In gratefulness, we write to you of our love and esteem even though distance and years have weaved their magic in the midst of us. We think of you this **New Year** with renewed wishes for your well being and that peace reigns in your hearts and home! Thank you for your correspondence, friendship and faithfulness to us over the years.

We re- fired to Southwest Louisiana seventeen years ago to raise our only child, Antoine and raised he is! He will be graduating this very year from the University of Louisiana Monroe in the Department of Mass Communications with a Minor in Psychology. He is muy 'guapo', has the personality of his father (!) and is a Sunday communicant/ Minister of Holy Communion which pleases his mother to no end! He is a sailor extraordinaire and has spent his summers at east coast sailing camps as a sailing instructor and counselor.

Hurricane Rita/September 2005 found Hector and I hunkered down on the fourth floor of CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital where I serve as a 'Pink Lady' and where I worked pre- and post-Rita up to eighteen hour days for twelve straight days and nights while Hector returned to our domicile three days after the storm. (I had occupied a side desk in Administration for three weeks post-Hurricane Katrina/August 2005 searching the missing-families-link on the internet for our patients from the New Orleans area and at that same

desk began answering the never-ending telephone calls in the command center during the evacuation for Rita and beyond)! Hector, The Protector began the clean-up around our home, and received a phone call from Antoine informing him that CNN was showing among more devastating footage, our sailboat and others on the railroad tracks?! Hector's two sailboats, two of some fifty-plus (the smaller 12-foot dinghy has recently been replaced!) were carried by the surge and deposited on the railroad track north of the Yacht Club! Hector retrieved MRE's, water and bags of ice from the wonderful National Guard and awaited the return of family and neighbors whom he helped in recovery. Our street is finally debris-free, damaged trees have been felled and I was so very happy to hear the street sweeper; blue tarp covered the damaged shingles on our roof which was in keeping with many as our little city resembles a blue patch work quilt from the air! My family fared well, however, we have extended family and friends from lower Cameron Parish who have only a slab and tumbled bricks left; there is no wood in sight. With such devastation, we sometimes journey to a little chapel the closest to their homes on The Ridge and cantor Sunday Mass singing the old songs with much gusto! I was requested to write a memory of the storm and it was printed in the hospital newsletter ~ "1:30 a.m. during the storm, I made my way from the Executive Offices to a darkened chapel on the 2nd floor. I clicked my flashlight to the Night Prayers in my Breviary and there were the ancient words..." "I am with you through storms and strife; I am the Light of the World." There was utter stillness inside of me, absolute peace and calm as the wind and rain made their havoc in the night. I envisioned the vortex of a hurricane with complete light and calm in the eye. That is the prayer I whispered for all God's people...true peace He gives no matter the category of intensity if we but keep our eye on Him. On my way to my room there were dear ones attempting to sleep on mattresses in the hallway so as to have moved away from the windows in their rooms. They were exhausted from days of evacuating patients and their loved ones whom they were now separated from in the diaspora. I found myself leaning over them and making the sign of the cross on their foreheads saying 'All will be well!' I felt such respect, love and protection toward them; later I learned how Sr. Frederick was blessing those sleeping with holy water before the storm came in. Ah, love incarnate!"

I humbly serve on a 'Long- Term Rebuilding Southwest Louisiana Task Force' for my hospital and the challenges are great but the spirit and will is intact – committed people going about the serious task of re-structuring civil parishes one family at a time!

Hector recently returned from Puerto Rico where he visited his 'Mami' who at age ninety-one continues to prepare his favorite dishes and gaze upon him; like I gaze upon Antoine! He and his siblings have begun the privileged work for her care and safety as she elders in her home and, as her condition dictates, the necessary steps. Antoine is watching and listening to the process...I wonder why?! His father will be seventy July 2006 and his mother is eleven years younger as his father had planned, marrying a younger woman! We are in excellent health to date and couldn't be more grateful!

Hector is a part-time Translator/Interpreter in the judicial system and if Antoine happens to call for his father I sometime have to tell him that he is in jail! He finds the work at civil, federal court and offices of attorneys interesting, as he would have upon retirement applied for Law School at our local university if it would have been available. He has homework

and with his trusty No. 2 and paper gets to work! Golf with dear friends takes precedence at least twice a week. O, the stories they tell as they walk the course! They are a wonderful group to behold, close and caring about each other. It is wonderful to see. He is a good friend to many and they reciprocate in their esteem and respect for him. He will sail again!

This is my sixteenth year with Catholic television and my segment entitled 'Lead, Kindly Light!' I facilitate a Silent Retreat Series teaching the Dailiness of Prayer, Ordering the Home and Time Management with a Christian Perspective. In 2001, I moved the Retreat day to our family home of origin forty-five minutes from here. We have kept the home intact in the family and as the caretaker; I journey there often to tah-tah, read, think and pull weeds! I gave my family a unique gift Christmas 2004 and would like to share it with you. It is my 'Web of Gratefulness ~a website honoring our parents and has expanded to include my other work. Mom died in 2000 and I began to write of their 'Sayings/Happenings/I've Been Thinking! It has grown into a web-book and there you will see what Hector's wife does with her time!! *Enjoy! Enjoy!* (You are especially invited to read 'Medical Resource Book' which is gift for you! I teach her through my hospital and this has been a very rewarding ministry!)

I must conclude this epistle but it has been awhile since we visited! I proposed to Hector a plan...returning to his military assignments in the order of his assignments which number seventeen! He asked how often and I said whenever we can commencing this Fall 2006 which, best I can calculate, he will be ninety-two when we finish!!! Who knows, you may be hearing from us in the future before ninety-two! We'll have to retire first!

Fond memories of golden time spent in your company are the best of memories. Thank you for your enduring friendship by post, prayer and calls! Know we pray for you daily.

**Lead, Kindly Light!**

**Hector Rafael, Anna Bernadette and Antoine Adolfo Ponton**

Website: [www.monlezun.com/bernadette](http://www.monlezun.com/bernadette)

Email: [leadkindlylight@bellsouth.net](mailto:leadkindlylight@bellsouth.net)

**14) 2006...Time for Antoine to receive his insurance binder; this is the binder cover!**

ANTOINE A. PONTÓN

THE BINDER FOR  
"THE WORLD OF INSURANCE"

LOVINGLY NURTURED AND TENDED BY MY FATHER FOR  
HIS FAVORITE SON!

NOW IT'S MY TURN AND  
FOR MY OWN ONE DAY!

15) I requested of 'Ms. Renee' my cousin and Antoine's best friend-of-old to write a compilation of thoughts of he for the graduation poem that was being discerned by Loretta Findley which follows...I love these words and the love and friendship that she exhibits for her special friend...this was off the top of her head!!!...

Having known Antoine for seventeen years, I have come to know him to be these things and more.

#### Antoine is Adventure:

One spring Saturday afternoon Antoine and I were riding around the lake front; he was about seven at the time. I didn't yet know that he was going to teach me about adventure that same afternoon. We had made the circle drive in front of the Civic Center as part of our route. As we entered the front entrance, there beckoning us to stop was Abraham Lincoln -dressed in full attire. "Stop, Stop, Ms. Renee, let's see what's going on." I would have been comfortable waving back and continuing on our merry way. But, of course, we stopped. There was a circus in town. This was before cell phones to ask permission from his parents. As I was new to knowing the Ponton family, I was not certain how they would take to me bringing their son to an unplanned circus event. I pondered the harmlessness of sitting quietly in the stands watching a circus and determined it would be safe. Before the adventure was over, Antoine had ridden an elephant and taken a tour behind stage of all the other circus animals. Antoine has been teaching me about adventure ever since!

#### Antoine is Joy:

He loves to fill people with laughter. Antoine can soothe a gloomy heart with one phrase. His outlook, needless to say, sways toward the sunny side. He knows what the word 'fun' means and that it is complete when all are invited. The potential, the hope, the positive is what he sees and shares.

#### Antoine is Curiosity:

In venturing into a store with Antoine when he was younger, I was constantly amazed at what I would learn. I didn't necessarily learn what was for sale in a particular store. I would learn, however, how the marketing display worked. His head was constantly in between cardboard cutouts determining what would make the display arm go up and down, just how long before the bubbles would come out, or how the colors would change at precise moments. He masters what he loves! His love of learning continues!

#### Antoine is a Leader:

The friends he makes will support him forever. He studies and sees the whole picture. He knows where he best fits and how to get everyone moving in the direction of accomplishment and success. His vision is rarely cloudy and doubt is overcome with intuition and confidence.

#### Antoine is Compassion:

Antoine loves people. During his college career discovery time, Antoine spent time working in a hospital. He shared with me some of his experiences working with those who were ill and afraid. Others may have found these patients 'difficult', Antoine found them in need of something he could offer...words of comfort, truth, and hope. And, people love Antoine!

#### Antoine is Family and Faith:

He proudly embraces his heritage. It is impossible to say who and what Antoine is without describing from where he comes. He embodies the guidance and support of his parents and grandparents. He has, I'm sure, questioned his walk at times, but continues to find his way back to the Source from where he comes. He gets it!

Ms. Renee  
May 2, 2006

**16-A)** Loretta Findley is my special friend from CHRISTUS St. Patrick Hospital. We hunkered down together in the Executive Offices before, during and after Hurricane Rita along with the other part of the ‘Trinity’, Lila Hicks spending many intense days and nights together answering the never ending phone calls and responding to all that was requested of us with resolve on our faces and concern in our hearts! Loretta is a published poet and I called her with a precious request. Would she compose a poem for our son in celebration of his college graduation day if I sent her verbiage about him? (I assured her I could give her some idea of who he is and where he comes from in addition to what she already knew of Antoine!!! See above from his Ms. Renee!) She writes of our exact heartfelt sentiments for our dear son, frames the poem as her pure gift and it will be read this very Saturday for his graduation reception! True friends are indeed God’s special treasure.

**Antoine Adolfo Pontón**  
**“Our Son”**

**Our God is an awesome God!**

**He hands to us the ability, humility and grace to carry out his job,  
But the most awesome experience he so graciously handed to us,  
Is the day he gave a small life in which to us he chose to entrust,  
So July 24, 1982 was our most awesome day,  
When this tiny small babe in our arms was laid,  
No greater blessing did our Lord place on our hearts,  
Than you our dear Antoine who in our lives created a spark.**

**And as you grew many heads stop to turn,  
And many lessons from you we had to learn!  
For there were many adventures like the Circus Ms. Renee will attest,  
And those are days that in our minds will forever rest,  
And it is the way you fill the air with laughter with all you meet,  
Your joy, your compassion, your curiosity is truly a treat,  
And the way you embrace your family and church,  
You were brought into this world to soothe and nurture.**

**Being from Spanish Basque, French Basque and German descent,  
You encompass in your life many wonderful and great accents,  
And with those attributes come your humor, your tenacity and your agility,  
But the most precious to us is your wonderful humility,  
And no prouder parents could we be than to have you for our son,  
You are our first, our last, “Our Number One”!  
And in heaven today, we know your grandparents hold their heads proud,  
Because of the person you are, they know you are under God’s awesome shroud.**

**So now Antoine, twenty-three years later as we stand here today,  
This, your special graduation day!**

No matter where your life leads or what avenues you take,  
Our love, our dedication, and devotion to you no one will ever shake,  
For we stand with our hearts bursting with pride,  
Thank you our Antoine, “for taking us on this absolutely wonderful ride”,  
For you have grown into an unbelievable remarkable man,  
Forever tucked away gently within God’s precious hands.

Mom & Dad

May 20, 2006

17) January 14, 2006 The 28<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of Antoine’s parents to which he wrote...

“OK, 28 years of marriage is pretty good I’ll admit. But what I like to think about on my parent’s anniversary is that it seems that it is not long enough! It seems that the number should be higher for the amount of love, understanding, care and compassion you two have for each other. I am proud to have such wonderful role models as parents and look forward to many more years of marriage between the two of you. How can I begin to thank each of you for the gifts of ‘up-bringing’ you have granted me with over the years. As I finally graduate from college and embark on my professional life, I know what I have learned by the hands of my parents will only guide me to certain success.”

Love, Antoine

(The letter is magneted-up on our refrigerator!!)

18) I recently read this and love it!

“The moment a child is born, the mother is born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but never the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new.”

Author, uh, didn’t write it down! Shoot!

19) The cover sheet of ‘MAMA’s Webbook!’

**ANTOINE ADOLFO PONTÓN**

**IN CELEBRATION OF YOUR  
GRAND BIRTHDAY!**

**24 YEARS OF AGE ON THE  
24<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 2006!!**

**Current Residence ~ Camp Sea Gull, North Carolina**

## **“We Love You More Than Life Itself!”**

### **DAD and MAMA**

**“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the workers to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”**  
**Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**

20) **Below is what Mama teaches adults and now, this is for YOU!**

#### **‘Master File Categories in filing cabinet for All That Paper in the Home!’**

##### **Personal: ...FRONT PAGE OF YOUR SCHEDULING BOOK FOR REFERENCE.**

Full name, Home Address, Telephone, Cell, Pager, email, Fax  
Social Security number  
Birth certificate number  
Blood type, allergy information  
Credit card numbers and for-theft-global number IN CODE!  
Savings account number  
Driver’s license number, license plate number & vehicle description  
Passport/visa numbers  
Insurance agent  
Family Doctor  
Priest  
Lawyer  
Children’s Guardians (common accident)  
An elderly parents’ above information for your book/medical numbers

##### **Articles/quotes**

##### **Automobile:**

Auto title; service and repair receipts; purchase documents; warranty info; owners manual

##### **Correspondence:**

Family  
General  
Special events: Birthdays, graduations, liturgical events

##### **Education/schools/enrichment:**

Personal  
A Family member  
Biographical sketch/vitae/resume

**Employment:**

Resumes; current pay and benefit information

**Faith/prayers/scripture studies/church outreach ministries**

**Family:**

Certificates – birth, death, marriage; social security cards; adoption, divorce and citizenship papers.

Each child’s personal file/color-coordinated

Journals/calendars

Family history

**Financial management/services:**

List of important people/bank- name, whom, numbers, hours of operation/departments  
Current budget; Personal financial statements; list of financial goals; contents of safety deposit boxes

Bank statements; cancelled checks; bank reconciliations; blank checks

**Estate planning and retirement:**

Will; power of attorney; pension plan info; social security documents

**Insurance:**

Policy number, type of insurance, name of insurance company, beneficiary, face value  
all policies (home, auto, life, health); Claim papers

**Investments/taxes:**

Broker and savings statements; investment documents (stocks, bonds, mutual funds); 401K and IRA documents

Prior tax returns; receipts for current year tax deductions; 1099 and W-2 forms

**Home:**

Mortgage Documents; deed; lease; property tax documents

Maintenance/home repair (receipts)/thoughts on home improvements

take an inventory with photos!

**Location of IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS:**

Full name; date of birth; certificate number and location of certificate

Wills, power of attorney, birth certificates, death certificate, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, social security records, real estate records, automobile records, life insurance policies, safety deposit boxes, church records, Military records, Papers in case of incapacitation &/or death & other important records.

**Medical resource book and prescription information**

**Military and VA:**

Enlistment and discharge papers; military award and training certificates; promotion and assignment orders.

**Photographs/digitals**

**Travel/maps**

**Warranties:**

For major purchases - Receipts (purchase, service, repair); Owner's manuals

**Lead, Kindly Light!**

**21) Child's Master list/filing cabinet in their room!**

**Personal file: (What MAMA TEACHES For Her SILENT RETREATS!)**

Parents full names, employment address/title, all numbers  
Home address, telephone, cell, fax, pager, email  
Social security number  
Birth date/birth certificate number  
Blood type & allergy information  
Credit card numbers and for-theft-global-number  
Savings account number  
Driver's license number/license plate # & description of vehicle  
Passport number

**Schools attended:**

Art/special papers  
Recognitions/certificates (for framing)  
Enrichments ...assessment, testing, options...

**Banking:** Fiscal Responsibility/Stewardship/Money management!

To invest  
To save  
To spend/ the less-fortunate!

**Computer/printer (any technology used) instructions**

**Correspondence:**

Parents and immediate family  
Events  
Extended family  
General

**Dreams...when I grow-up!**

Biographical sketch/highlights of educational experiences

**Employment/career planning**

**Enrichments:**

Camps/classes/institutes/organizations

**Church parish involvement**

**Medical resource book**

Photographs to categorize: paper & digital

Scheduling books/palm pilots/journals

Travel/OH, the places I wish to go!

Vehicle

Warranties of purchase

Lead, Kindly Light!

22.

**ANTOINE ADOLFO PONTÓN**

**UNIVERSITY OF MONROE, LOUISIANA  
GRADUATION DAY  
May 20, 2006**

**GRADUATIONS CARDS RECEIVED WITH  
LOVE, PRAYERS AND SUPPORT  
FROM  
FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF OLD!**

**LOVINGLY GATHERED BY MAMA AND DAD!**

**REMEMBER WHO LOVED YOU FROM THE FIRST BREATHS YOU TOOK TO THE  
MANY MORE ALONG YOUR JOURNEY AND THOSE WHO HAVE JOINED US.**

**THERE ARE MANY MORE TO COME ABOARD  
THIS DELIGHTFUL SAIL THROUGH THE UNCHARTED WATERS OF YOUR LIFE!  
BUT WHAT A TIME WE WILL SPEND IN THE COMPANY OF YOU,  
OUR TRUSTFUL and LOVIN LOVIN CAPTAIN,  
AND IN THE COMPANY OF LOVED ONES AND STRANGERS-NO-LONGER!  
Your crew stands-by for the Grand Sail! Enjoy the journey!**

## LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT!

### WE LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF!

23) In March 2007 while driving a U-Haul truck filled with the contents of your college apartment from Monroe, LA to Raleigh, NC...well, Ms. Renée and I recalled how your father is never far from our thoughts and hearts! So a few **“Sayings of My Dad”** were born!! And, you’ll have them always!! They keep on coming!

1. Yeh! Yeh! Yeh!
2. I live for my wife and son! They come first! Never mind me!
3. Careful! Careful!
4. R.T.P.!! (Read the problem!)
5. Read the instructions first!
6. Let’s gravitate!
7. DRAT!
8. Langsam gefahren! (Drive carefully!!)
9. A little less discerning and a little more cooking!!
10. Never mind my day, how was yours?!
11. I aim to please!
12. I do exercise every morning! I abruptly, strongly stand up, take three deep breaths and go for three laps around the coffee table in the living room!!
13. By the way...!
14. No! No! No! No!
15. Why would anyone jump out of a perfectly good airplane? But I did!
16. What is your jump sequence! (When planning an ‘operation’!)
17. I’ve worked and I’ve been retired! Retired is better!
18. That little car reminds me of my Austin Healy 3000!
19. How green was my valley!!!
20. It’s time for the news!
21. What is your pleasure?! (When offering a cocktail!!)
22. I’m calling home! I wonder what is happening there?! (Héctor calls Puerto Rico every Sunday... for 50 years to date!! His mother is 93!)
23. Duty calls!
24. All for the cause!
25. Duty! Honor! Country!
26. Turn it to the weather channel! Is there any wind?!!
27. Look at the moon baby!!
28. I went from being a bachelor to being a grandfather!!
29. When you were age 11 and I was age 22, I couldn’t have taken you to the Officer’s Club to meet the guys!!
30. I run things in this house; I ask 1. where are we going?! 2. what time do we leave?! Lastly, 3. what should I wear?!!!
31. They’re all over the landscape!
32. OK Manolo! Did you enjoy your coffee?!

33. Ridiculous! Ridiculous! Ridiculous!
34. All the hullabaloo!
35. This is my favorite son and my favorite first wife!!
36. He's the sole heir of the non-existent fortune!
37. Pace yourself!
38. Do your incantations! (When it is time for prayer before meals!)
39. Do you need any help lifting that? Bernadette, get over there and give him a hand!!
40. The thing about it is...!
41. Where has this month gone?!!
42. Drat! Where are my glasses?!
43. Goodnight sweetheart! Good morning sweetheart! How did you sleep?!
44. Where's our son! What's he doing? He doesn't need us anymore!!!
45. I just made your deposit! You did well this month!
46. Habemus boat in the water!!!
47. I'm going by Albertson's, what do we need?!
48. I have a palm pilot! (He opens his wallet and there is a little post-it with his list of to-dos!!)
49. Antoine, your father is not at home. He is in jail! I'll have him call you!!!  
(Héctor translates for the judicial system and this work often finds him with the attorney and his client meeting behind bars!)
50. Héctor! Sing 'Be My Love!' Sing, 'Viejo San Juan!' Sing any song in Spanish!
51. Punctuality! I hate being late, anywhere!
52. What is the standing operation procedure?!!
53. I've been married and I've been single! Married is better!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
54. Whose on first?!
55. I know you said no but try some!
56. I know it's your fault! No, it's probably Ms. Ray-na's fault!!
57. Victorio! Want to play some golf?!!
58. How about I fix you a Cubano? With a little cheese?!!
59. Just try it! Just try it once!! It's good for you!
60. This drink is called "El Contenido del Refrigerador!!" (It is whatever liquids are in the refrigerator and it's always delicious!)
61. You did not come to a complete stop at that stop sign!!
62. My wife the nun!
63. When I turned forty..."I'm going to trade you in for two twenty-year-olds" And my reply?  
"You're not wired for two twenty-year-olds!"
64. Do you love me? 'Of course, sweetheart! But then again, I've been known to fib before!!'
65. It's the singer not the song!
66. The pit was delicious! (Most mornings of the year, Héctor peels and slices a mango for me...I get the bulk of the fruit...he insist on munching the pit! So I let him!)
67. Get the dictionary and look it up!
68. It's not that I can't hear! You're mumbling!!
69. Clean as you go!
70. Yoh! My favorite son!
71. My coffee has been in the microwave since this morning! I forgot!
72. While I may not always be right, it's simply that I'm never wrong!
73. There was a lot more loss during the war!
74. Five years from now no one will remember!
75. You couldn't see it from an airplane anyway!
76. Grin and bear it!
77. Have I read the newspaper today?!! Did I read yesterdays?!
78. Trust but verify!

79. Our son! Where is our son?! What is he doing?! He doesn't need us anymore!!
80. It's not my midriff! It's the shirt!
81. When getting out of the car; "Prepare to dismount...dismount!"
82. Grab him by the scruff of the neck!
83. Upon my arriving at his office at North Fort Polk in 1975 and upon approaching the door said to his Sgt. Maj., "I don't know who she is but tell her I'm in!"
81. I'm a member of the Puerto Rican Olympic Downhill Ski Squad!!
82. Did I take my vitamins?!
83. A car is just a means of transportation!
84. Just a second! Just a second!
85. Eat s-l-o-w-l-y! Masticate well!
86. When I was your age...!!!
87. My grandfather, Adolfo Nieves, used to say, "Death is a trip that we all must take, some sooner, some later!"
88. Sweetheart! Where did you move my....?!!! It's not where I left it!!!
89. I've decided to rename my sailboat. I'm calling it 'Velero!' I said, 'What does 'Velero' mean to which he grinned and grinned and said 'Sailboat'!!! He now has a visor and polo shirt with 'Velero' proudly announced for the world/gringos to ask the inevitable question!! To which he will grin and grin and say...

24) We love the Meals on Wheels Video Promo for Mardi Gras in Raleigh, NC 2010! You are featured which makes us so very proud as you are serving these meals twice a month!!

- [http://www.wakemow.org/?page\\_id=89](http://www.wakemow.org/?page_id=89)