



## **DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG**

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# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG TO HONOR ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL FOUNDER**

**ST. PETERSBURG:** The Diocese of St. Petersburg will honor St. Anthony Interparochial Catholic School foundress Cecilia Morse in a ceremony on Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, as it unveils a historical marker at her recently discovered grave at St. Louis Cemetery in downtown Tampa.

The marker will acknowledge Mrs. Cecilia Morse as a pioneer of Catholic education in the five county Diocese of the Tampa Bay area. The 1:00 PM ceremony will take place at Oaklawn/ St. Louis Cemetery in downtown Tampa, located at 606 E. Harrison St. All are invited to attend this event. Area historians, Diocesan and School officials will all be present.

St. Anthony is the oldest Catholic parochial school on the west coast of Florida and is the oldest school of any kind in Pasco County. Arriving in San Antonio as a young widow with 6 children in 1883, Mrs. Morse recognized the immediate need for a school. She famously told the town of San Antonio's founder, who had balked at the notion, *"The minds of the children here now won't wait."*

Mrs. Morse's grave had been found by accident in September. Subsequent research using old newspaper obituaries, census and burial records finally answered the question that none of the town's living resident knew: *"Whatever became of Cecilia Morse?"* After the Benedictine Sisters took over administration of the school in 1889, it appears that she and her 6 children moved to a home in Tampa, slightly west of downtown. She lived out her years with her children by her side until her death on the feast day of St. Anthony, June 13, 1926. Even in death the children remain by her side, as 5 of them are buried around their mother. The sixth, a World War I veteran is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

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### **Resources:**

\*\* St. Anthony Interparochial Catholic School – [www.stanthonychoolfl.org](http://www.stanthonychoolfl.org)