

## St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

No. 15 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years

### Societies

1910 - 2010



The priest is the ordained minister of God, but he is not the only one to spread the Kingdom of God. Laymen and women also receive this obligation through the Sacrament of Confirmation. To help carry out this obligation, parishioners formed numerous societies and organizations that have played a role in furthering God's Kingdom during the parish's first hundred years.

The **St. Ann's Society**, the first society to be formed, was organized by the parish women about a month after the church's dedication on November 6, 1910. Its fifty-two charter members chose the mother of the Blessed Virgin as the society's patroness. A motion at the first meeting was to offer one Mass per month for the living and the deceased members of the society. The society's first officers were Mrs. Margaret Rein, president; Mrs. Louise Verhalen, vice president; Mrs. Amelia Zwiebel,



Statue of St. Ann and daughter Mary (left) stood near Blessed Virgin side altar for many years. Mother of Perpetual Help shrine at right.

secretary; and Mrs. Mary Christien, treasurer. During the society's early years, many fund-raising bazaars and socials were held. As a result of these events, St. Ann's was able to purchase many church decorations, articles for the altar, and school equipment. When the Wangerin pipe organ was installed in 1924, \$2,244 was donated by St. Ann's. In 1940 St. Ann's contributed over \$1,100 to help with parish expenses. After the bazaars were discontinued, the ladies of St. Ann's served dinners and banquets in the church hall for church as well as community events to raise funds. By 1935 membership had grown to 225 women.

The St. Ann's Christian Mother and Altar Society is now in its 100th year and is still involved in helping the parish and the school. Its activities over the past several decades included card parties, serving dinners and wedding meals, bakery sales during Burlington's Maxwell Street days, rummage sales, and the selling of pecans during the Christmas season. The society, now led by president Karen Middlecamp, has provided funds to help pay for kitchen equipment and to support other parish projects.

Organized on December 18, 1910, primarily for the religious advancement of its members, the **St. Agnes Young Ladies' Society** worked with the St. Ann's Society to help meet the parish's numerous financial obligations. Its first officers were Frances Reuschlein, Cecilia Prash, Hilda Rose, and Tessie Christien. In 1916 the society became affiliated with the Prima Primaria of Rome and became known as the **St. Agnes Sodality** with Our Lady of Guadalupe as patroness. As of 1935, the sodality had contributed \$1,470 toward the Wangerin organ; \$3,150 to the church, school, and rectory; and \$635 to the Sisters' home furnishings. Records also show that contributions to the needy amounted to \$280 and that \$442 had been expended in support of a catechist.

In 1929 the sodality established a parish library to provide books written "in a Catholic manner" on history, biography, religion, social life, and fiction. By 1935 the library contained 144 books, was housed in the Sisters' office in the school, and was open to the entire parish.

Through the sodality, personal holiness and active Catholicity were impressed upon its members. Devotion to Christ and to His Blessed Mother and Catholic action were emphasized. Monthly group communions, a twenty-four hour vigil in honor of the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday, and public recitation of the rosary were fostered by the sodality. In addition, the sodality collected clothing

and did sewing for the less fortunate and supplied altar linens and discarded religious articles for the missions. Wholesome movies, literature, and other entertainment were supported by the sodality.

According to the Silver Jubilee parish history, by 1935 there were 165 sodalists. Officers at that time were Assistant Pastor Rev. Raymond C. Miller, spiritual advisor; Eleanor Eckert, prefect; Mary Moe, vice prefect; Rosemary Forge, secretary and treasurer; and Ruth Wagner, Gloria Reynolds, Dorothy Eckert, Mary McCourt, and Viola Kortendick, chairwomen of the Eucharistic, Our Lady's, Apostolic, Catholic Truth, and Social Life committees, respectively.

The third society formed at St. Charles was the **St. Aloysius Society**, organized by the young men of the parish in January 1911. Its officers were Ed Beller, president; Louis Reuschlein, secretary; and Louis Zwiebel, treasurer. Not much was recorded or found on the activities or longevity of this organization.



Statues of St. Agnes (right) and St. Aloysius (left) stood on the main altar for many years. Statue of St. Charles above tabernacle.



Statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (left) stood near St. Joseph side altar for many years. Statue of St. Anthony at right. (1953 photo)

The first men's organization to be formed at St. Charles was the **Sacred Heart Society** whose name was changed to the **Holy Name Society** in 1923. Founded by Father Dreis on January 24, 1911, the society's first officers were Peter J. Verhalen, president; Louis Rein, vice president; Leo E. Kennedy, secretary; and Francis X. Klein, treasurer. The society formed a school board from among its members and supported St. Charles School both financially and by taking an active interest in the school's scholastic development.



Sacred Heart Society badge (above) and Holy Name Society emblem (below)

Under the protectorate of the Holy Name Society, the **Junior Holy Name Society** was established in 1915. However, it did not actually function as a separate society until 1934 when it became known as the **St.**

**Charles Young Men's Club.** Its purpose was to unite the young men of the parish by interesting them in educational, athletic, social, and spiritual activities. This club was open to boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Its first officers were William Rewald, president; Charles Rewald, vice president; George Weiler, Jr., secretary; and John Reynolds, treasurer. A club room was built in the northwest corner of the parish hall to accommodate the group's activities, which included pool, ping-pong, ski-ball, and other games. In a special service held at St. Charles Church on June 8, 1934, Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch received a large group of boys into the society and stated that the boys were "the first to be received into the Junior Holy Name Society by the Archbishop."



The Junior Holy Name Society / Young Men's Club gave rise to organized athletics as a parish activity. In the early spring of 1933, St. Charles and St. Mary's planned a joint program of summer athletics to be held at St. Mary's athletic field. This program included three indoor baseball leagues for high school boys, grade school boys, and young ladies, and a men's slow pitch league. Also on the program were horse shoe pitching, archery, and volleyball. As an outgrowth of the summer athletic program, the St. Charles' boys organized a kitten ball (now known as softball) team to

compete in the city league when the lighted softball diamond was opened in the summer of 1934. The St. Charles teams won the city championships in 1934 (team at right) and 1935 and were awarded the coveted trophy presented by C. Roy McCanna.



Standing (left to right): Richard Beix, William Rewald, Clarence Martin, Charles Ebbers, Alphonse Alby, Carroll Vos.  
 Sitting: Francis Dauben, Roy Muselik, Leroy Zabler (mascot), Ralph Schmaling, Robert Beix.  
 Not in Picture: John Weiler, John Reynolds, Walter Klein.

In the spring of 1926 the **Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi** received canonical approval for establishment of a local branch. The first officers were Mrs. Elizabeth Mangold, mistress of novices; Mrs. John

Rose, prefect; and James Mangold, secretary and treasurer. This organization, which is so little mentioned today, is an association of seculars who wear a distinctive habit, make a novitiate and a profession, and live according to a rule of the Church. That is, the members live according to an approved rule under the authority of ecclesiastical superiors much like the actual members of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi. However, these lay members do not bind themselves in any way as in the religious order, nor do they take the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

The purpose of the Third Order of St. Francis is personal sanctification by close observance of one's Christian duties and the duties of one's station in life. It is living one's life in a way that serves God "in a perfect manner." Its members live the spirit of brotherly love by working among the needy B collecting and repairing clothing, buying new clothing and food, and administering to the sick. In 1935 the officers of the Third Order of St. Francis were Mrs. Elizabeth Mangold, prefect; Mrs. Eulalia Wagner, vice prefect; Mrs. Anna Beix, promoter; Mrs. Elizabeth Spiegelhoff, secretary; and James Mangold, treasurer.

**The Confraternity of the Mother of Perpetual Help** was canonically erected during the month of the Rosary, October 1935, and formally inaugurated by a triduum held in honor of Our Blessed Lady October 13, 14, and 15. Its purpose was to stimulate devotion to the Mother of God and increase confidence in her powerful intercession. Devotions were held every Tuesday evening in the form of a perpetual novena by the confraternity. A special shrine, purchased by the congregation, was installed near the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

"**The Apostleship of Prayer**" or "**League of the Sacred Heart**" was established at St. Charles in 1912 under Father Dreis. This was an association of Catholics in all parts of the world who united in prayer daily for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. The St. Charles group had a membership at one time of more than 100, but as of 1935 it was no longer active.

A branch of the **Propagation of the Faith society** was organized at St. Charles in October 1931 under the leadership of Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand. This was an international association for the assistance of Catholic missionary priests, brothers, and nuns engaged in preaching the gospel in non-Catholic countries. These faithful assisted the missions with prayers and alms. The society, with headquarters in Rome, is under the direct supervision of our Holy Father, the Pope.

Peter Verhalen, Frank X. Klein, Louis Rein, and Ben Rothering established the first **Ushering Society** of St. Charles. Society rules were drawn up in August 1914 when Father Dreis submitted a set of resolutions at the meeting of the Sacred Heart Society. John McCourt was appointed president of the ushers. Ushers from the early years included Harold Cunningham, Louis Wagner, Henry Lang, Lawrence Mangold, Francis Reuschlein, Joseph Pihringer, Robert Cook, Frank Christien, Robert Rueter, Warner A. Zimmermann, Ed David, Anthony Rewald, Oswald Wagner, Leo Warren, and Ralph Spiegelhoff. Although the ushers no longer function as an organized “society,” they continue to provide an important contribution to the liturgy.

Ushers in the past several years included LeRoy Robers, Arthur DeGrave, Kenneth Solofra, Kenneth Pihringer, Leslie Eckert, William Zusan, Robert Uhen, Jerome Block, Mary and James Divan, Alvin Lois, James and Anthony Martin, Gerald Richter, Russell Reesman, Paul Spiegelhoff, Richard Zwiebel, Ralph Yopp, Thomas and James Aldrich, Laurence Cramer, Peter DeGrave, Mark Pieters, Connie and John Lutz, Kenneth Kumba, Chris Miller, Paul Naber, Thomas Pringle, Donald Vande Sand, John Block, John Coshun, Laurence Dornacher, David Heiligenthal, Daniel Weis, Edward Leuck, Robert Martin, Wealdon Sawall, Robert Swanson, Robert and Clayton Weis, and Stanley Epping.

Two young peoples’ societies, the **Association of the Holy Childhood** and the **Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade** were established during the early years of St. Charles; the former began in 1916 and the latter in 1922. In the Association of the Holy Childhood each young person contributed one penny per month to “save and educate ‘pagan’ children.” The Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade carried on spiritual, material, or educational activities for the missions and each student member was assessed twenty-five cents per year to support the missions. In 1923 the students sent \$19.32; in 1925, 1926, and 1927 they sent \$60 to the missions. The monies were sent to missions in Uganda, British East Africa, the Philippines, China, Japan, India, and to the Indian missions of the United States. According to St. Charles’ Silver Jubilee Souvenir booklet, “Such unselfish charity certainly redounds upon the Christian parents who have instilled solid virtue and solid principles into the hearts of their children. It merits a praise that reaches the very pinnacle of heaven.”

In the late 1930s the young people of each of Burlington’s parishes unified several organizations under the **Catholic Youth Organization**, or CYO. Sodalties, boys’ groups, and athletic clubs of St. Charles and St. Mary’s consolidated their activities under the leadership of their pastors and lay youth leaders. Among other activities, the CYOs held dances and other social gatherings. In 1943 St. Charles CYO, under the leadership of Father Hugh Wish, started publication of a monthly magazine called “The Beacon,” copies of which were mailed to St. Charles service men and women. In 1944, the CYO sponsored two basketball leagues, one for grade school children and the other for young ladies in their late teens and twenties.

Many of these societies, groups, and organizations have metamorphosed in the past one hundred years. Some no longer exist in any form; some have been ultimately replaced by their more modern versions. But a look back shows where we began at St. Charles and helps serve as a measuring stick for how far we have come as a parish since our beginnings in 1910.

*(to be continued)*