

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 20 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



At a January 14, 1920, meeting at St. Mary's, a move to establish a Catholic high school in Burlington was launched by St. Mary's pastor, Rev. Joseph A. Van Treeck. The meeting was well attended by members of both St. Mary's and St. Charles' congregations. The principal address of the evening was given by Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer, of Milwaukee, who spoke on the importance of Christian education and proper morals in the schools. He said the big item to be considered in starting a Catholic high school was the expense of erecting a suitable building and the expense of maintaining it.

The Archbishop said the congregations should give this careful consideration and, if they saw their way clear to finance the project, they should go ahead with it, but if they could not, to leave it alone. After a general discussion, it was voted to appoint a committee of ten, five from St. Mary's and five from St. Charles, to fully investigate the project and report to a meeting to be called later.

At St. Charles' annual meeting on February 1, which was largely attended, the proposed Catholic high school was thoroughly discussed and a committee composed of Rev. Philipp Dreis, John T. Prasch, William Hoppe, George Weiler and Leonard J. Smith was appointed to work with the committee from St. Mary's on the project. The parish officers' reports showed St. Charles to be in splendid financial shape, with the debt having been reduced some \$1,700 during the year. Father Dreis was authorized to appoint an advisory finance committee to plan for future needs of the congregation, including a new rectory which was being discussed.

In April Archbishop Messmer announced that, owing to the high cost of living, priests in the archdiocese would be getting a general salary increase. City pastors were to receive \$1,000 in addition to their share of the Sunday, Christmas, and Easter collections, or an additional \$800 in place of the collection if they desired, while pastors in towns of less than 10,000 would receive \$1,200 and collections. Assistant priests were to receive \$500, with an allowance of \$100 made to the pastor for the board of each assistant. These were the first general salary increases for priests in thirty years, according to the Archbishop. The new schedule dated back to January 1.



The young ladies who sang and danced between acts of the alumni play, "The Sisterhood of Bridget," were, left to right, Millicent McCarthy, Margaret Holtz, Loretta Ebbers, Leona Wanasek, Loyola Alby, Myrtle Weiler, Marie Alby, Mildred Stallman, and Esther Finke (seated right). The handmade silk dresses were in pastel colors; the hats were handmade of crepe paper.

Also in April the St. Charles alumni association presented "The Sisterhood of Bridget," a farce in three acts at the Burlington opera house. The cast included Arthur Finke, Arthur Ketterhagen, Harold Reuschlein, Edward Warren, Daniel Wegge, Lester Harding, Ralph Spiegelhoff, Katherine Holmquist, Gladys Forge, Margaret Cunningham, Colista Elderbrook, Evelyn Bushman, and Millicent McCarthy. Music was provided by Evelyn Spiegelhoff and Harold Reuschlein.

The play dealt with a society woman of socialistic ideas changing places with her servants for a day. Needless to say, it developed many humorous situations and the young people who took the various parts made the most of them and the audience was kept in a continual uproar. Pleasing specialties were introduced between the acts by Arthur Finke, Katherine Holmquist, and Loretta Ebbers, assisted by a chorus of Burlington beauties. The production drew a capacity house, and a great many late comers were unable to gain admittance.

According to the Standard Democrat, the actors played their parts splendidly and to give one special mention would hardly have been fair to the others. In May the alumni presented the play at St. Alphonsus hall at New Munster.



On Sunday, May 9, a bronze tablet, in memory of those from St. Charles who had served in the world war, was dedicated with an impressive ceremony at the church. The members of the American Legion, led by the drum corps, were joined by Civil and Spanish-American war veterans and members of the Women’s Relief Corps as they marched to the church. A crowd that packed the church to the doors was present to take part and to see the service flag, which had done honor for over two years to those who served, replaced by the tablet which would stand for generations as a record of the Americanism of St. Charles’ service members. At the ceremony, Father Dreis delivered an excellent address, voicing the appreciation of the people of the nation for the sacrifices that were made. He said that while the people

and the church disliked war, yet it was their duty when war became necessary to do all possible to gain the end sought and then terminate it. The service flag and the tablet had one gold star, that of Otto B. Zwiebel, who had died at Camp Hancock, Georgia, and Father Dreis asked for the repose of his soul and the blessings of eternity upon him.



Otto B. Zwiebel died in service during World War I.

The bronze tablet was then unveiled by Catherine Christien and Wyota Harding. The tablet bears the inscription “Memorial to Those Who Served in the World War.” Inscribed on it are the names of the then-current parishioners - sixty-five men and one woman - who served. Father Dreis touched on the prevalent unrest throughout the world and the question of many as to whether the war really brought the big things we fought for. He said to keep on trusting and working for the right, that it would take a long time to get back to normal conditions after four years of horror, but that Christianity with its teachings of justice, truth, mercy and charity would surely triumph.

During the service Lillian Bushman played three beautiful violin solos, Meditation from “Eve,” by Massenet; “Ave Maria,” by Schubert, and “Praise Ye the Father,” by Gounod. Mrs. Mary Smolensky accompanied her.

On Sunday morning, May 30, a class of fourteen young people received their First Holy Communion at a special high Mass read by Father Dreis. Those in the class were:

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| Mark Bauman | Joseph Klein | Francis Reuschlein | Cecil Vos |
| Francis Cook | Angeline Kos | Andrew Rossmiller | Gilbert Vos |
| Norma Ketterhagen | John Liska | Catherine Stradinger | Margaret Warren |
| Barbara Ketterhagen | Aloysius Partee | | |

Dame nature was kind on Monday, May 31, providing ideal weather for the Memorial Day observance and Burlington people turned out in a body to do honor to their military dead. The forenoon was devoted to the decorating of graves. Six veterans of the Civil War were able to attend the services. The children of St. Charles school, headed by their drum corps, fell in at Lewis Street and St. Mary’s students joined at McHenry Street as the procession headed to St.

Mary's Cemetery. A short program of songs by the school children and talks was carried out at the cemetery chapel, after which the graves of the veterans buried there were strewn with flowers. The ceremonies then moved across the Jefferson Street bridge and on to Burlington Cemetery.

On June 20 graduation services were held at St. Charles for a class of twenty-seven. The program included a talk by Father Dreis. The young people who received diplomas were:

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| Elmer Bauman | Francis Holmquist | Anthony Rewald | Evelyn Vos |
| Edward Cook | Eleanor Ketterhagen | Charles Rewald | Marie Wagner |
| John Cunningham | Edward Koenen | Kenneth Riel | Florence Wanasek |
| Arthur Ebbers | Albert Kornhoff | Agnes Rossmiller | Robert Warren |
| Dorothy Eckert | Florence Kornhoff | Evelyn Schneider | Irene Weyrough |
| Wyota Harding | James Mangold | Evelyn Spiegelhoff | Victor Woeste |
| Ralph Henningfield | Loraine Reuschlein | Peter Surges | |

An exhibit of school work was shown Friday, June 18, at St. Charles hall; and on that evening the pupils of the eighth grade held a debate. On the following Monday, the children of St. Charles school enjoyed their annual picnic at Bohner's Lake.

The annual reunion and banquet of the St. Charles Alumni association was held at the church hall on Thursday, June 24. After the business meeting, dinner, and the program, the members went to the Knights of Columbus club rooms for a dance.

The St. Charles choir went to Mukwonago, on Sunday, June 20, at the invitation of St. James' pastor, Rev. B. Salbreiter, to sing at the 10:30 high Mass. In the afternoon the choir picnicked at Phantom Lake. According to the Mukwonago Chief, the congregation appreciated the beautiful singing of the St. Charles choir, and gave them a warm invitation to come again. On the following Sunday, the choir enjoyed its annual picnic at Bohner's Lake; and in August, the choir "sailed" on the Fox River from Wilmot to McHenry where they visited the lotus beds at Grass Lake. In September the choir gave a farewell banquet for its director, Mrs. Mary Smolensky, who moved to Chicago with her son, who was starting college there. (*See article at right.*)

School started the first week in September with an enrollment of 160. A new system of visual education, called the Keystone system, was installed to help the pupils daily see the things they were studying about. The system

St. Charles' Choir Gives Banquet for Directress

Something new in the line of progressive dinner parties was originated by the members of St. Charles' choir last Wednesday evening when they gave a farewell banquet in honor of Mrs. Mary Smolensky, for ten years past directress and organist at St. Charles church.

The party differed from the set form of Progressive dinners in that all the courses were served right in the parish hall. The guests did not have to move from one house to another until some six or more courses were completed.

Instead every lady serving one of the courses ordered the guests to leave the table while she reset it, redecorated it and re-placed the people. There were five courses to the meal and each one a delightful treat to those present.

After the meal was concluded the guests formed a moonlight auto party to the Verhalen farm where they had a marshmallow roast and between singing and jokes managed to make the party last until the wee hours of the morning.

The choir presented Mrs. Smolensky with a beautiful leather hand bag as a parting gift. Mrs. Smolensky leaves for Chicago to make a home for her son who will attend one of the Chicago medical colleges. Miss Loretta Uhen, assisted by Mrs. John Prash, will take Mrs. Smolensky's place.

Those at the party were: Rev. Philipp Dreis, Mr. and Mrs. William Wagner, Misses Amanda and Celia Rose, Loretta Ebbers, Eleanor Woeste, Colleta Verhalen, and Loretta Uhen; Mesdames William Gill, T. J. Shouldis, Louis Wagner, John Prash, and S. M. Reinardy; and Messrs. Frank Mueller, Andrew Verhalen, Ben David, and George Weiler.

Burlington Free Press, September 9, 1920

consisted of a set of 600 stereograph pictures illustrating various phases of history, geography, English, agriculture, nature, domestic science and domestic arts, industrial arts, hygiene, fine arts, arithmetic, and literature. The pictures were used with stereoscopes (see illustration) during class



hours and, using a projection lantern, could be shown on a screen for recitation and review. The teachers were very enthusiastic about the new method because the stereographs helped students correct any misconceptions they might have had when visualizing the objects discussed; they helped interpret the text to the pupils; and, by adding new ideas of a definite character, they created a genuine enthusiasm for the whole lesson and became a vital stimulant to thought development.

On October 26 and 27, St. Mary's celebrated its diamond jubilee. The first day featured a parade from downtown Burlington to the church, a pontifical high Mass celebrated by Archbishop Messmer and four priest-sons of the parish, a dinner and supper in the church hall, an afternoon of games and amusements, and an evening program by the school children. The second day was dedicated to the deceased members of the congregation, with a solemn requiem high Mass celebrated by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Rainer, vicar general of the Milwaukee archdiocese. A planned procession to, and program at, St. Mary's Cemetery had to be cancelled because of inclement weather. Forty-six priests, including Rev. Philipp Dreis of St. Charles, assisted during the two days in celebrating the establishment of Burlington's first Catholic congregation in 1845.

At a meeting on October 29, St. Charles' finance committee, which had been appointed by Father Dreis at the February 1 annual meeting, reported to the congregation on the needs for the coming three years. The report related that the school was outgrowing its existing quarters and that the room used by the Sisters would be needed for school purposes. The report recommended that the present parsonage be given over to the Sisters and that a new parsonage be built. The committee's report was adopted.

In November the Catholic church in Wisconsin announced a drive to raise \$5,000,000 among its members early in 1921 for educational and charitable purposes. The campaign covered the three dioceses of Milwaukee, Green Bay, and La Crosse. Two million dollars was to be set aside for a seminary fund, and the remainder, to be used for diocesan charitable institutions, was to be divided among the three dioceses in proportion to what each contributed.

In December, a number of Burlington ladies went to Milwaukee to attend an organization meeting of the Milwaukee Council of Catholic Women. Mrs. Mary Beller, a St. Charles parishioner, went as a delegate of the Women's Catholic Order of Foresters; Mrs. Anna Daniels and Miss Elizabeth Fenn represented St. Mary's; and Mrs. Elizabeth Spiegelhoff and Miss Clara David represented St. Charles. Mrs. Beller was elected to act on the council's board of directors.



Portion of St. Mary's diamond jubilee parade on October 26, 1920. Parade came up Geneva Street (now Milwaukee Avenue) from the downtown area and turned on McHenry Street to go to the church. The Schemmer and Rossmiller Hillside grocery store is at right. Rails seen at left on Geneva Street were for the Interurban electric cars.

(to be continued)