

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 32 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



An event that did not directly involve St. Charles but proved to be important to the history of our parish occurred on Sunday, July 26, 1931, when the St. Francis monastery near Burlington was blessed and dedicated to the service of charity as a community of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor. In impressive ceremonies Bishop Paul P. Rhode of Green Bay officiated at the dedication and celebrated a pontifical high Mass in the monastery church in the presence of hundreds of spectators who had come to witness the dedication and attend the community gathering which was held during the remainder of the day. Among the clergymen seated in the sanctuary during Mass were Rev. Joseph A. Van Treeck of St. Mary's, Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand of St. Charles, and Rev. Anthony C. Biwer of St. Joseph's, Lyons.



Images of Franciscan Monastery, circa 1931.
From Herbert Lederer post card collection.

The ceremony of blessing the structure began at 10 o'clock in the morning. Except for the group in procession with the Bishop, the monastery was vacated during the ceremonies. The Bishop first consecrated the church, after which the procession moved outdoors for the blessing of the exterior walls. As the procession left the church and descended the steps of the main entrance, it passed between a guard of honor formed by members of the Burlington Council of the Knights of Columbus. Visiting priests of the Franciscan order and Catholic clergymen from parishes in this vicinity led the procession. Then came the friars in the brown

robes of their order, chanting the order of service, followed by Bishop Rhode, wearing mitre and robes and bearing his staff. He was attended by acolytes bearing censers and holy water for use in the service.

The celebration marked the completion of the fourth school of the Polish Franciscan Province of Wisconsin. When school opened in the fall, six priests, thirty clerical students, and seven lay brothers would reside at the monastery. The seminary courses included work for fifth and sixth year college and first and second year philosophy. The province head was at Pulaski, Wisconsin, the minor seminary was at Sturtevant, and the theological school was located at Green Bay. Beginning the Sunday of the dedication, the portion of the monastery serving as home and school for the clerical students, teaching priests, and lay brothers was cloistered according to regulation of the order to which the community belonged.

In August, the members of St. Ann's society held a birthday dinner in St. Charles hall. Twelve tables were decorated, each representing a month in the year, and a hostess took charge of each table. A hundred and three persons attended. The birthday cake was given to Mrs. Leon Litzler (nee Bernice Ebbers), being the youngest member present. Mrs. George Brefeld (nee Mary Maas) received the prize for being the oldest member present. Cards were played after the dinner and a favor was given the high at each table. The young ladies of the parish served the dinner.

St. Charles school, like most schools in the city, opened on Labor Day, September 7, for registration for the 1931-32 school year. St. Charles started regular classes the next day with 183

students. A full-time music teacher, Sister Mary Cordula, was added to the teaching staff. She taught piano music and all orchestra instruments.

Parish activities during the fall and Christmas seasons of 1931 followed earlier year patterns with society communions and breakfast meetings, card parties, an Alumni association dance, a choir get-together, and other activities. In November the Redemptorist fathers held a mission at St. Charles with services each morning followed by a special instruction, and services with sermon preached by the mission fathers each night.

School activities included a visit by the eighth grade class to the Bank of Burlington where they were taken through the bank and shown its systems. On the Tuesday before Christmas, the lower grades presented a Christmas program of musical numbers and recitations in the second grade room. In January it was announced that Henry Leweling, a seventh grade pupil at St. Charles, had been awarded a prize for an original pen and ink sketch of a Chinese mission chapel submitted in an art competition conducted through the school by the junior department of the Crusade Catholic Missionary society. His prize was a set of books and his drawing was included in the society's magazine, "The Shield."

On the first Monday in February 1932, 125 members of the young ladies' sodalities of St. Mary's and St. Charles held a joint supper at St. Mary's church hall, the first social gathering of the two groups. The supper was sponsored and arranged by the St. Mary's Sodality for the purpose of uniting the spiritual aims and activities of the two groups in developing firmer ideals of Christian womanhood. A program of talks and music was arranged for the evening with Rev. Henry Riordan of St. Francis seminary as the main speaker. Rev. Henry A. Maurer, assistant pastor of St. Mary's, was toastmaster.

Words of welcome and acknowledgement were given by Nancy Cunningham, president of St. Mary's Sodality, and by Mary McCourt, prefect of St. Agnes Sodality. The pastors of both parishes, Rev. Van Treeck and Rev. Hillenbrand, responded to toasts, as did Rev. Raymond Miller, assistant at St. Charles. The Masquer double quartet of St. Mary's high school provided the musical entertainment.

"Heroines of the Old Testament" was the subject chosen by Rev. Riordan for his address. He chose as his theme the qualities of character that make a woman strong for her tasks in life whether it be in her personal life in the circle of the home or in the call to service by her people and nation. The heroines he cited included Eve, who bore the burden of a son's death, while at the same time suffering through the knowledge that another son was a murderer; Esther, who saved the Jewish people for the fulfillment of their destiny; Judith, who overcame the greatest of obstacles by holding fast to pure ideals and profound faith; Ruth, whose conversion to the faith of her mother-in-law, Naomi, was rewarded with material good and security in her lifetime, and with the honor of being the ancestress of Jesus Christ; and Mary, the mother of Jesus, who recognized in her son the divine Friend whom she did not hesitate to turn to and ask for a favor at Cana. Her confidence, Rev. Reardon said, that her son would not refuse her request, even though it caused him to move ahead the time of his public mission, should be an inspiration to Christian womanhood to emulate the faith and love of the woman who was closest to our Lord while he lived on earth.

In March, members of both sodalities attended a meeting of the young ladies section of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women held in Milwaukee. Twelve hundred young women gathered for the meeting and attended Mass at St. John's Cathedral, at which Archbishop Stritch officiated. During the afternoon session, Rev. Daniel A. Lord and Miss Dorothy Willmann of St. Louis, Missouri, outlined a program for individual societies to take part in the unified work of the archdiocese. Those from Burlington who attended were Catherine

Huening, Lucille Budd, Mary McCourt, Ruth Wagner, Cecilia Rose, Marie and Florence Kornhoff, Margaret Kolars, and Evelyn Bushman of St. Charles, and Marie Willich, Nancy, Mayme, and Judy Cunningham, Theresa Fox, Marie and Clara Vandenboom, Loyola Breuckman, Catherine Corbett, Elizabeth Rueter, Constance Cook, Alice Smith, Margaret Juranek and Celia Yanny of St. Mary's. St. Charles parishioner, Mrs. William Rose, a member of the board of directors of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, also attended.

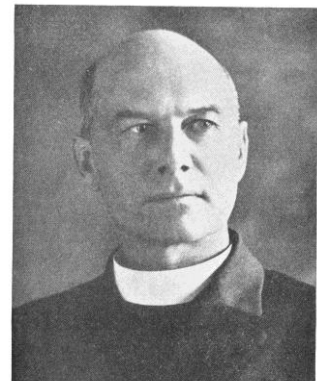
The Lenten season included a Forty Hours Devotion held at St. Charles church beginning Friday, March 4, and continuing Saturday and Sunday with solemn closing exercises Sunday night. The Forty Hours, or Quarant Ore, Devotion had been a Catholic practice for over 500 years, with the selection of 40 as the number of hours the faithful pray and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed outside the tabernacle likely commemorating the number of days Jesus fasted and was tempted in the wilderness, the days of rain causing the great flood during Noah's time, and the years of journey the Israelites wandered in the desert. The original regulations regarding the devotion were issued in 1577 by St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan.

On March 29 the Burlington Council of the Knights of Columbus, in keeping with a nationwide observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Catholic fraternal order, held a ceremonial program at the club house. One hundred fifty knights from the local council gathered for the golden anniversary. Their chaplain, Father Hillenbrand, was among those who gave appropriate remarks. Eight of the twelve men who, as grand knights, had led the Burlington Council during its nearly twenty-five years were present for the ceremonies.

On Easter Monday, the St. Charles Alumni association presented the three-act comedy, "Crooks For a Month," to a packed audience at the Burlington high school auditorium. The plot involved three young men, upon the spur of various motives, seeking to raise \$500 each within a month. The cast, directed by Father Miller, included Edward Cook, John Busch, Charles Rewald, Ruth Beix, Mary McCourt, Francis Meurer, Aloys Partee, Alberta Bushman, and Elizabeth Heintskill. Between the acts a group of children who composed the St. Charles school harmonica band made a big hit in their costumed skit. Serie Newell was band director. The Knights of Columbus chorus also gave three selections from their repertoire which were greatly enjoyed. Freddie Reuschlein and his Golden Troubadours provided orchestra music during the evening.

Wednesday, May 25, was a sad day for St. Mary's congregation when Rev. Van Treeck, their pastor for seventeen years, died at St. Joseph's health resort at Wedron, Illinois, at age 71. Father Van Treeck had also served as administrative officer of the archdiocese, having been dean of the Catholic parishes in this vicinity, including St. Mary's, St. Charles, New Munster, Brighton, Lyons, Dover, Lake Geneva, Elkhorn, and Waterford. Rev. Henry Maurer, his assistant, and Rev. Hillenbrand had visited Father Van Treeck the first of the week and had driven to Wedron on Wednesday expecting to pay him a last visit. They arrived only a few minutes too late.

Archbishop Stritch presided and preached the sermon at the funeral Mass celebrated by Rev. Michael Weyer of Milwaukee. Pall bearers after Mass were Rev. Hillenbrand of St. Charles, Rev. Anthony C. Biwer of St. Joseph, Lyons, Rev. Edward B. Schiefen of St. Mary's, Dover, Rev. Ziegler of St. Francis, Rev. Joseph H. Wurm of St. Alphonsus, New Munster, and Rev. J. G. Smith of St. Francis de Sales, Lake Geneva. Among priests attending the funeral were Rev. Philipp Dreis of Sheboygan, Rev. Edward J.



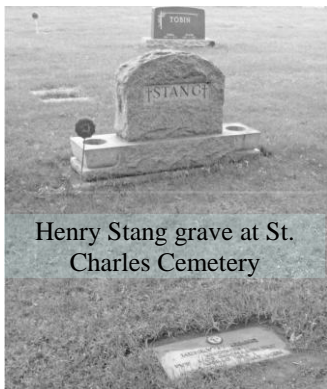
Rev. Joseph A. Van Treeck

Kersting of Cross Plains, Rev. Philip J. Rose of Fond du Lac, and Rev. Raymond C. Miller of St. Charles. In fulfillment of a request that his body be laid in a plot in the farthest circle of the new addition to St. Mary's Cemetery, Father Van Treeck was buried among departed members of the flock he had shepherded so faithfully.

A couple of weeks later, Rev. Kersting was named pastor of St. Mary's to succeed Father Van Treeck. Father Kersting had been pastor of St. Francis Xavier at Cross Plains for 10 years. That was the same parish from which Father Van Treeck had been transferred to St. Mary's.

On May 29 the children of St. Charles and other Burlington schools united for a bicentennial program at the high school auditorium honoring the memory of George Washington and the 200th anniversary of his birth. There was mass singing of patriotic songs, costumed drills, and an address on George Washington by Father Hillenbrand. The program, which had been planned as an outdoor celebration at Athletic Park, was re-arranged for indoors on account of inclement weather.

A massed chorus of all school children of the fourth grades and upward opened the program singing the "Star Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful." After a costumed flag drill by the children of Lincoln school, Father Hillenbrand delivered his address. A group of St. Charles school children appeared next on the program in a flag drill, and a miniature George Washington gave a loyalty pledge. Father Hillenbrand's address stressed the unselfish character of Washington in casting his lot with the American colonists, his readiness to sacrifice material benefits for his country's sake, and his deep trust and faith in God to aid the colonists in their struggle for liberty. Father Hillenbrand referred to the deep religious spirit that moved Washington throughout his public life. The hard winter at Valley Forge, when his cause seemed lost, he was found kneeling on the cold ground lost in prayer. His last message to his countrymen testified to his firm belief in the importance of a nation's love and confidence in almighty God. It was George Washington, the father of his country, who warned that liberty would perish when religion was left out of the government of a nation.



Henry Stang grave at St. Charles Cemetery



The religious and patriotic ceremonies on Memorial Day were similar to those of previous years, but included, for the first time, a visit to St. Charles Cemetery, where Henry N. Stang, the first veteran buried there, had been laid to rest in July 1931. St. Charles school children joined the parade as usual at Lewis Street as it proceeded to St. Mary's Cemetery. From there, the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary went in cars to St. Charles Cemetery where, after the offering of prayers by Father Hillenbrand, the Legion conducted military rites. The entourage then returned to St. Mary's Cemetery for the concluding military rites there, before proceeding to the Lincoln Monument, the White river bridge, and Burlington Cemetery.

First Communion services were held at St. Charles on Sunday, June 5. The class of first communicants included twenty children, as follows:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| David Brehm | Rita Hopkins | Agnes Miller | Gordon Schilz |
| Ellen Brehm | Gertrude Itzin | Edwin Miller | Patricia Tobin |
| Paul Coughlin | Viola Ketterhagen | Donald Pieters | Richard Weyrough |
| Ann May Crowley | Ruth Lehsten | Elaine Reinardy | Charles Wiechert |
| Norma Degen | Romana Lohaus | Ruth Runzler | Betty Zwiebel |

Graduation exercises for the twenty-five-member eighth grade class (shown in the photo below) were held in the church on Sunday evening, June 12. Father Hillenbrand gave the graduation sermon and, after the distribution of diplomas, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was held.



Class of 1932

First row (l to r): Joseph Sughrue, Gertrude Scheel, John Ammon, Kathleen Giannini, Aloysius Schmitt, Helen Lehsten, and Norbert Ebberts. Second row: Catherine Eckert, Charles Albright, Madaline Tenwinkel, Donald Giannini, Rev. Frederick Hillenbrand, Beatrice Heintskill, Edward Bayer, Helen Zabler, Florence Steinhoff, and Blanche Bauman. Third row: William Sughrue, Helen Murphy, Herbert Rossmiller, Helen Reesman, Viola Kortendick, Jerome Augusten, Bernice Schiller, Donald Eckert, and Cecelia Linneman.

The annual outing for the graduating class was held June 15. The young people visited St. Francis seminary and points of interest in Milwaukee.

The pupils of the music department of St. Charles gave a recital at the school hall on Tuesday evening, June 14, appearing individually and in orchestra groups. The groups included the St. Charles Harmonica band and a group of the younger children who gave a playlet, "The Brownies and Fairies." Jane Wagner accompanied throughout the program. The student participants included Serie Newell, Virginia Breidenbach, Virginia Rueter, Philip Krueger, Hugh Gene Dardis, Donald Ketterhagen, Margaret Reynolds, Patricia Sughrue, Catherine Zwiebel, Ellen Behm, David Brehm, Florence Steinhoff, Genevieve Steinhoff, Paul Steinhoff, Eileen David, Viola Kortendick, Patricia Tobin, James Bennett, Robert Brehm, Jeanette Crowley, Robert Wanasek, John Weimer, Mary Mutchler, Betty Jo Block, Ethel Johnson, Jack Bennett, Jean Schiller, Betty McCormack, Dorothy Zwiebel, Gordon Schilz, Neal Sperhake, Cecelia David, Bernice Schiller, Marian Lynch, Helen Stang, Henry Leweling, and Malcolm Alby.

On Tuesday, June 21, two hundred former students of St. Charles parochial school gathered at St. Charles for one of the largest and most enthusiastic reunions of old graduates during the fifteen years of the Alumni association's existence.

The meeting opened in the church with solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament conducted by Rev. Philipp Dreis of Sheboygan, under whose pastorate the association was founded. Two association members, Rev. Philip Rose of Fond du Lac and Herbert Wagner, who had received the subdiaconate order at St. Francis de Sales seminary on June 19, assisted as deacon and subdeacon, respectively. The altars were decorated with two large vase bouquets of purple larkspur tied with gold bows, the alumni colors.

The banquet was served in the church hall which was attractively decorated with green boughs and table appointments of purple and gold. Guests of honor who were seated at special tables included the members of the 1932 graduating class, visiting clergymen, and members of the school board. During the banquet, music was furnished by Everett Reinardy's orchestra.

During the business meeting held immediately after the banquet, a telegram of greetings from association members, Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Reuschlein of New Haven, Connecticut, was read. The following were elected officers for the coming year: president - Charles Rewald, vice president - Eleanor May, and secretary-treasurer - Francis Meurer.

Norma Ketterhagen, president of the association, opened the after-dinner program with an address of welcome and then introduced Leo J. Warren as toastmaster. In introducing the first speaker, the toastmaster said that St. Charles school had "come of age" in 1932, having passed its twenty-first birthday, while the association had been organized for fifteen years. Robert Beix welcomed the newly graduated class, stressing the value of friendship and mutual helpfulness among members as the years passed. Aloysius Schmitt gave the response for the class of 1932.

Lauretta Uhen directed community singing during the program, with Ellsworth Rein accompanying at the piano. The first song was the alumni hymn, "To St. Charles." Mrs. Ralph Bauman then sang two vocal selections.

After talks by Father Hillenbrand and Father Miller, the main address was given by Father Dreis. The former pastor urged the association members to strive first of all to develop individual characters of Christian ideals. "You have the wonderful personality of the Lord Christ to inspire you to the best of actions and the noblest of thoughts," he said.

As the program closed, the Sister Mary Hermana trophy was awarded for the second successive year to the class of 1926 for having the largest percentage of its class membership present at the reunion. After the program, the members enjoyed a dance at the Knights of Columbus hall.

Besides Father Dreis and Father Rose, the following clergymen from other parishes were guests at the alumni reunion and banquet: Rev. Kersting and Rev. Maurer of St. Mary's; former St. Charles assistant, Rev. Harland Kuehn of St. Robert's, Shorewood; Rev. Edward B. Schiefen of St. Mary's, Dover; and Rev. John Pierron of St. Thomas Aquinas, Waterford.

On Sunday June 26, a solemn jubilee high Mass was celebrated at St. John Nepomuk Catholic church in Racine in observance of the silver jubilee of ordination to the priesthood of the pastor and Burlington native, Rev. Anthony G. Weiler. Burlington relatives and friends who attended the celebration included Messrs. and Mesdames Peter Weiler, Jacob Weiler, Francis May, and Joseph A. Rueter; Mrs. Al. Juranek; Harold, Joseph, and Mary Weiler; Celia Yanny; Rev. Edward Kersting of St. Mary's; and Rev. Hillenbrand of St. Charles. Rev. Weiler's nephew, Philip Weiler, and grandnephew, James May, participated in the ceremony.

(to be continued)