

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 33 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



When St. Charles school opened for the 1932-33 school year on September 7, 1932, it reported an enrollment of 185 children in the eight grades. A new seventh and eighth grade teacher, Sister Mary Joseph, joined the faculty, succeeding Sister Mary Redempta. The other teaching Sisters who returned from the previous



St. Charles classroom in 1930. This was the second grade class. Diagonal row 1, right, front to back: Adolph "Abe" Rossmiller, Neal Schumann, Malcolm Alby, Herb Brook, and George Granger. Row 2: Jean Schiller, Lillian Lohaus, Gertrude Spieker, Gloria Giannini, Richard Pieters, John Zwiebel, and John Hopkins. Row 3: Dorothy Zwiebel, unidentified, unidentified, Helen Stang, unidentified, Clifford Kortendick, and unidentified.

year were Sister Mary Annette, Sister Mary Rosaline, and Sister Mary Borgia. Sister Mary Cordula returned as music teacher.

Indications that prowlers had entered St. Charles church and school sometime during the previous night were detected on Tuesday morning, October 11, when teachers found every room ransacked, desks gone through, and papers and books scattered about. Nothing was found missing. The would-be thieves had entered the sacristy in the church and left indications that they had tried to force open a fireproof safe. Tools were found nearby, but the lock had not yielded. Foot prints were found in the sanctuary and hand marks were left on altar linen.

Later in October, several women from St. Charles attended a three-day session of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, which convened in Milwaukee. They included Mesdames Elizabeth Bushman, Elizabeth Spiegelhoff, Grace Rose, and Mary Beller, and Miss Leona Beller. The conference opened with a pontifical high Mass at St. John's Cathedral on Sunday morning, with Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch officiating. With the Depression and unemployment causing major problems at that time, poor relief and social endeavor among women of the parishes was the general theme of the conference. The Archbishop appeared at each session and admonished that help to the poor was the primary duty of the parishes in those stressful times. Former St. Charles pastor, Rev. Philipp Dreis of Sheboygan, was on the program and explained the Sheboygan plan of poor relief.

On November 18 Rev. Philip Rose returned to St. Charles to celebrate a solemn requiem high Mass at the funeral of his mother, Mrs. John G. Rose, nee Cecelia B. Klein, who had passed away at age 70. In the sanctuary were fifty-one priests, including Father Hillenbrand. During the requiem high Mass, two low Masses were read simultaneously at the side altars, one by Mrs. Rose's brother, Rev. Philip Klein of St. Francis, and the other by Rev. Peter W. Gersbach of Fond du Lac. Father Dreis preached the funeral sermon.

For Christmas, the St. Charles choir prepared a program of Christmas carols in addition to the music to be sung at the 5 a.m. Christmas Mass. There were several low Masses between that service and the children's Mass at 10 o'clock. At the 10 o'clock Mass, the children's choir

furnished the singing. One of St. Charles' seminarians, Herbert Wagner, who earlier that year had received the order of subdeacon, the first major order preparatory to entering the priesthood, preached the sermon at both the 5 and 10 o'clock Masses. He had also acted as deacon at the midnight Mass at St. Alphonsus at New Munster.

Two other young men of St. Charles who were studying for the priesthood assisted in Christmas Masses at other neighboring parishes. J. Russell Beix went to Delavan where he assisted in the midnight Mass, and Cyril Spiegelhoff acted as subdeacon at the midnight Mass at St. Mary's.

The ladies of the St. Ann's Society held a pre-lenten home baking sale, "kaffee klatsch," and card party at St. Charles hall on the last Thursday in February. It proved to be one of the most successful affairs of the season. A group of women spent the morning hours in the kitchen at the church hall, baking six hundred doughnuts, forty kuchens, and about forty pies. They disposed of everything besides other baking that had been donated by society members and said they could have sold more. During the afternoon an old time "kaffee klatsch" was held and many dropped in for coffee and home baking. At the card party in the evening, twenty-five tables were filled with 500 and bridge players.

Ash Wednesday was observed at St. Charles with ecclesiastical ceremonies opening the season of Lent and distribution of ashes. Lenten devotions were held twice a week, Wednesday night the Lenten sermon and Friday night stations of the cross. Forty Hours devotion opened at the 7:30 a.m. Mass on the first Sunday of Lent and closed with a solemn procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on the following Tuesday night. At the 8 o'clock solemn high Mass on Easter, two of the parish's seminarians, Herbert Wagner and Cyril Spiegelhoff, assisted Father Hillenbrand, serving as deacon and subdeacon, respectively. Herbert Wagner also delivered the Easter sermon at that Mass and at the 10:30 Mass.

"Looks Like Rain," was the play selected for 1933 by the St. Charles Alumni association for its annual dramatic presentation. The production, under the capable direction of Father Raymond Miller, was given before a large audience at the Burlington high school auditorium on Easter Monday. It was the usual pleasing success that the association had gained a reputation for producing. The plot centered around a young man making good with a sizable cash inheritance from his father, which he was supposed to increase by fifty per cent within a year's time. A mineral spring, which was the prospective money-making feature of a hotel property the young man purchased, had gone dry because of lack of rain. His interested friends, as well as his cousin, who was to come in for the entire inheritance in case the young man failed to make good, found things exciting the day before the terms of the will expired. The cast included Ruth Wagner, Catherine Itzin, Marcella Prasch, Ray Nanning, Francis Itzin, Aloys Partee, and Charles Rewald.

Some of the children from St. Charles school entertained with specialty numbers between the acts. James Bennett and Norma Degen gave a song dialogue, "If I Were a Girl, If I Were a Boy;" a ukulele orchestra composed of Marjorie DeGrave, Laretta Granger, Patricia Partee, and Genevieve Prasch played a group of old familiar tunes; and selected instrumental numbers were given by Patricia Sughrue, Jack Bennett, and Philip Krueger, accompanied by Jane Wagner. In addition, eight alumni girls then in high school performed an umbrella dance. In the group were Dolores Spiegelhoff, Helen Reesman, Gloria Reynolds, Beatrice Heintskill, Catherine Rossmiller, Rosemary Beix, Grace Moe, and Marcella Vos. Joan Kenney performed a specialty dance for the skit.

On May 1, a group of women from St. Charles motored to Sheboygan to be present for the name's day celebration of their former pastor, Father Dreis. Those who attended were Mesdames Theresa Schmitt, Grace Rose, Elizabeth Spiegelhoff, Anna Beix, Clara Eckert, Eulalia Wagner, Mary Zwiebel, Frances Reuschlein, and Elizabeth Bushman, and the Misses Celia Rose and Florence Wagner. The women attended Mass celebrated by Father Dreis at 8 o'clock, and after Mass were guests at a formal breakfast held in the priest's honor.

Parish work for Catholic women, covering activities in spiritual, social, and educational fields of endeavor, was presented to women of the Racine and Burlington deaneries of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women at a conference held at St. Mary's on May 23. The women of St. Mary's and St. Charles congregations, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Grace Rose, were hostesses to the gathering of the three hundred women who attended the conference. Working under the direction of Rev. Edward J. Kersting, pastor advisor, the local committees carried out a successful program that emphasized the part women may take in Catholic action through rural social work, community relief work, education, and parish sodality activities. At the opening business session, Father Kersting and Father Hillenbrand welcomed the conference visitors.

On Sunday, May 28, a class of twenty-five children received their first solemn Communion at 8 o'clock Mass. Those in the class were:

Richard Alby	Leslie Eckert	Jack Petersen	Bernard Tenwinkel
Irene Angsten	Louis Granger	James Pihringer	Herbert Uhen
James Bennett	Jack Ketterhagen	Rosemary Remer	John Warren
Charles Brooks	Robert Klein	Frank Runzler	Arthur Zimmermann
James Budd	Mary Leach	Marion Schiller	Catherine Zwiebel
Shirley Mae Busch	Albert Miller	Paul Spiegelhoff	Raymond Zwiebel
Joseph David			

As had been customary for many years, Burlington joined with the rest of the nation on May 30 in honoring the soldier and sailor dead with programs and services appropriate to Memorial Day. As in past years, the program started with a parade of patriotic organizations heading from the downtown area to St. Mary's Cemetery. The children of St. Charles school joined the line of march at Lewis Street. Burlington's only surviving Civil War veteran, George Jones, was unable to appear in the procession due to old age and illness. (Jones passed away about five months later at age 88.)

Following a Mass offered for departed veterans at St. Mary's church, the members of that congregation and its school children went to St. Mary's Cemetery for a memorial program, which opened after those marching in the parade from downtown had assembled. While the program was in progress, the American Legion and Auxiliary and the St. Charles school children went to St. Charles Cemetery for memorial rites. A chorus of school children sang "America" after which prayer was offered by the American Legion chaplain. A military salute was fired and taps were sounded in farewell. The participants then returned to St. Mary's Cemetery, where the guns again roared their salute and, as the reverberations died away, taps were sounded over the silent graves.

The participants then proceeded to the Lincoln Statue where members of the Woman's Relief Corps had decorated the grounds with memorial wreaths. The program there included a recitation of the Gettysburg Address by Francis Itzin, a 1930 St. Charles graduate. The procession then headed to the Burlington Cemetery for concluding ceremonies, stopping on the way at the Fox river bridge, where flowers were strewn on the water below and a salute of honor was fired for departed sailors.

Graduation exercises for the St. Charles eighth grade class (shown in the photo below) were held Sunday evening, June 4, with services at the church. Father Hillenbrand gave the graduation sermon and presented the graduates with diplomas.



Class of 1933

First row (l to r): Genevieve Steinhoff, Genevieve Prash, Cecilia David, John Wiechert, Rosella Wiechert, Sigrid "Serie" Newell, and Marie Roter. Second row: Rev. Raymond C. Miller, Myron Schneider, Marjorie DeGrave, Henry Leweling, Rose Uhen, Joseph Pieters, Marcella Ketterhagen, Lawrence Granger, and Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand. Third row: Rollin Vos, Joseph Rewald, Lucille Luetten, John Moe, Loretta Granger, Charles Wiemer, and Jeanette Crowley.

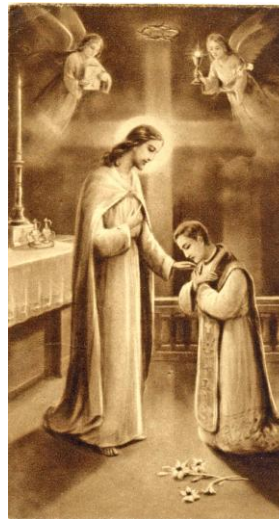
Two days later, the children of the St. Charles school music department entertained over 300 parents and friends at their annual music recital at St. Charles hall. A large class of pupils took part in an interesting program that included solo and group numbers. Also during that week, Mrs. Jeannette Rewald, chairman of the conservation committee of the Woman's Study Club, presented nature study awards to a number of St. Charles students. An oil painting of an oriole by Henry Leweling received special mention. The seventh and eighth grade room won the school prize, a book entitled, "Nature RamblesBWinter." The other rooms received copies of "Nature Magazine."



Rev. Herbert Wagner (shown at left), son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Wagner, was ordained to the priesthood at St. John's Cathedral in Milwaukee on Saturday, June 10. Father Wagner was one of a class of twenty-five young men who had completed their course in theology at St. Francis seminary that year. Eighteen members of the class, including Father Wagner, were ordained for the Milwaukee diocese by Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch (later Cardinal Stritch). Assisting at the ordination services was the

Rev. Dr. Aloysius J. Muench (later Cardinal Muench), rector of St. Francis Seminary.

On the following Tuesday, with beautiful ceremonies symbolizing the first public ministry of his priesthood, Father Wagner celebrated his first solemn Mass in his home parish. Hundreds of relatives and friends gathered at St. Charles to attend Mass and witness the ceremonies. The altars were decorated with masses of white flowers and glowing candles, to carry out the effect of the papal colors, white and gold.



"O Mary, my Mother, assist me in the service of thy Divine Son."

A Remembrance
of my
First Solemn Mass
St. Charles Church
Burlington, Wis.
June 13, 1933

Ordained to the Priesthood
June 10, 1933
Herbert J. Wagner

"To Thee, O Jesus, I recommend my parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and all those living and dead who have helped me to Thy Altar."



Rev. Herbert Wagner with some of the participants in his First Mass. Back (l to r): Rev. Philip Rose, Rev. Philipp Dreis, Rev. Herbert Wagner, and Rev. Frederick Hillenbrand. Front: Bridal group – Jack Ketterhagen, Mary Mangold, and Paul Spiegelhoff.

At the rectory preceding the Mass, the celebrant and his assistants vested for the altar service. Then, together with the bridal party of children, they were met by the procession of altar boys and visiting clergymen and conducted to the church. The procession was headed by the cross bearer, J. Russell Beix, and candle bearers, Francis Dauben and Gilbert Foley, who were followed by the altar boys and visiting clergymen. Then came the clerical group and the bridal group. The officiating clergymen were Cyril Spiegelhoff, master of ceremonies; Rev. Philipp Dreis, deacon, Rev. Philip Rose, subdeacon, and Rev. Wagner, accompanied by Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand, presbyter assistant, and Rev. Raymond Miller.

Immediately preceding Father Wagner was the bridal group dressed in symbolic costumes, Paul Spiegelhoff and Jack Ketterhagen as pages and Mary Mangold as bride. The ceremony of the bridal party is symbolic of the priest accepting the church as his spouse, the church being represented in the bride. The bride carried a white satin pillow on which lay a green wreath intertwined with orange blossoms. The pillow and the wreath

were those used twenty-one years earlier during the first Mass of Rev. Gilbert Heuel (born John Rittman), cousin of Father Wagner. The pages were dressed in yellow satin costumes with white satin capes and plumed caps. One carried a sheaf of golden wheat and the other a vine of grapes, symbolizing the sacrament of the altar. As the procession entered the church, the choir sang “Tu Es Sacerdos.”

The newly ordained priest proceeded to the foot of the altar and intoned the “Veni Creator,” with the choir responding. As the hymn ended, the celebrant began the opening words of the Mass, “I will go unto the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth.” The sermon was preached by Father Heuel. St. Charles’ choir, under the direction of Lauretta Uhen, sang the music of the Mass, with Arthur and Everett Reinardy, violinists, and Mrs. Ralph Bauman, soloist.

Dinner was served in St. Charles hall immediately after the Mass, with local priests, visiting clergymen, relatives and close friends as guests of Father Wagner. The tables and hall were decorated in the papal colors of yellow and white. In a brief after-dinner program at which

Father Wagner’s ordination to the priesthood came after twelve years of study and preparation, including six years devoted to study in classical courses and six years to study of philosophy and theology at St. Francis seminary. The young priest was born in Burlington July 1, 1904, the oldest child of William and Eulalia, nee Rittman, Wagner. His siblings included Mrs. Marie Spiegelhoff, Mrs. Ruth Rubach, and Robert and Oswald Wagner.

Herbert attended St. Charles school and St. Mary’s commercial high school before entering St. Francis Seminary in September 1921. In 1931 he received the degree of bachelor of arts and in 1932 received the degree of master of arts. For his bachelor’s thesis Rev. Wagner wrote on the subject, “International Service Clubs.” His master’s thesis, “Life of Father Wisbauer,” was based on original historical research and included the progress and history of St. Mary’s Catholic parish in Burlington during Rev. Michael Wisbauer’s life.

Father Wagner’s first assignment was as assistant pastor at St. Rose parish in Racine for two years, after which he was transferred to St. Joseph parish in Fond du Lac. He later served at Sacred Heart in Franklin, St. Kilian’s in Hartford, St. John’s in Byron, and St. John’s in Twin Lakes. After retiring, he moved to Sun City, Arizona. He died August 24, 1974, in Van Horn, Texas. The funeral was held at St. Charles with Archbishop William Cousins officiating, and burial was in St. Charles Cemetery.

Father Hillenbrand presided as toastmaster, Father Dreis extended congratulations to the young priest and his parents upon their son's achievement. Father Wagner then extended thanks to his parents, pastors, and all who helped him in his preparation for the priesthood.

At the public reception, held in the hall during the afternoon, hundreds of friends came to offer congratulations. At 4 o'clock, Father Wagner presided at solemn Benediction in the church. He was assisted by Father Heuel as deacon, Cyril Spiegelhoff as subdeacon, and J. Russell Beix as master of ceremonies. Arthur Kayser sang a vocal solo, "O Salutaris," during the Benediction.

About a week later, the spirit of felicity and good fellowship that had grown to characterize the annual reunions of the St. Charles Alumni association was prevalent as 230 graduates of the school gathered at the church hall for their annual banquet and reunion. Purple and gold, the alumni colors, were used in decorating the hall and tables. The ladies of the church prepared a three course dinner which was served by the mothers of the 1933 graduating class. The graduates were guests of honor and were received into membership during the program. Father Dreis, former pastor of the school and founder of the association, was also guest of honor.

The reunion opened with solemn Benediction in the church with alumni members attending in a body. Father Herbert Wagner officiated at the service, assisted by Father Dreis as deacon and Cyril Spiegelhoff as subdeacon.

After the banquet, association president Charles Rewald welcomed the attendees and introduced toastmaster William Rewald. Richard Beix gave the welcome to the class of 1933, and John Wiechert responded for the class. A costume dance, "The Masqueraders," was given by Dolores Spiegelhoff and Jeanette Eckert, and talks were given by Father Hillenbrand, Father Miller, and Father Dreis. During the program, community singing was directed by Arthur Reinardy, with Jane Wagner as accompanist.

After the attendance roll was taken, it was announced that the Sister Mary Hermana trophy for best percentage of attendance was awarded to the class of 1928, which had twelve out of eighteen members present. Greetings were read from Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Reuschlein of New York City. Out of town alumni who returned for the banquet were Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Surges of Milwaukee; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hust (nee Wyota Harding) of West Allis; and Hildegard Bauman, Rose Ward and Lester J. Harding, all of Milwaukee.

At the business meeting, Aloysius Vande Sand was elected to head the association for the next year, with Catherine Itzin as vice president and Genevieve Huth as secretary and treasurer.

Various parish groups participated in activities during the summer. The choir held its annual picnic on the second Sunday in July at the Fred Ebbers cottage at Bohner's Lake. The afternoon and evening were spent in a full program of picnic events. On August 29, the ladies of the parish sponsored a public card party and bake sale at the Antlers resort at Brown's Lake. Bridge and 500 were played with all the tables well filled with card players. The members of the St. Agnes sodality enjoyed a pot luck picnic supper at Echo Park on August 31.

The summer of 1933 also saw the organization of a kitten ball league among the Catholic boys of the city. Under the leadership of J. Russell Beix, actively assisted by Father Raymond Miller of St. Charles and Father Henry Maurer, assistant pastor of St. Mary's, six teams were organized with boys from the sixth grade through high school on the rosters. Two games were played each Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening from July 11 to August 7.

(to be continued)