

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 37 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



In October 1935, about a month before the parish's celebration of its silver jubilee, assistant pastor and sodality advisor, Rev. Raymond Miller, received sixteen new members into the St. Agnes Sodality at services in the church before the sodality's monthly meeting. The new members were Elaine Reinardy, Ruth Lehsten, Henrietta Nelson, Rosemary Remer, Florence Tenwinkel, Janet Merrick, Virginia Bauman, Mary Reynolds, Dorothy Zwiebel, Rosemary Rueter, Betty Jo Block, Ruth Runzler, Marion Weis, Betty McCarthy, Ruth Kortendick, and Marcella Ketterhagen. At the social session that followed, a program was given on vacation visits. Helen Murphy told of her visit to interesting points in Canada the past summer, and Cecelia Rose described her visit to the Eucharistic Congress in Cincinnati. The seventh and eighth grade girls of St. Charles school sang chorus numbers.



MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP
PRAY FOR US

Souvenir of Mission given by
The Redemptorist Fathers

Also in October a branch of the Confraternity of the Mother of Perpetual Help was established at St. Charles. Weekly devotions of the confraternity were inaugurated with three days of prayer and services which opened on a Sunday night and closed on Tuesday night. A priest from the Redemptorist order at Oconomowoc gave instructions on the meaning and purpose of the devotion and directed the triduum of prayer. A special shrine erected for the devotion was blessed on Sunday night. Mother of Perpetual Help devotions were held thereafter on Tuesday nights.

On October 15, Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand, pastor of St. Charles, attended services in Milwaukee at which Msgr. Aloysius J. Muench was consecrated a bishop. Rev. Edward J. Kersting and Rev. Edward Brill of St. Mary's assisted at the altar during the services. The next month, Bishop Muench was installed as Bishop of Fargo, North Dakota.

As the parish prepared to celebrate its silver jubilee, it could look back on a total of 778 persons who had been baptized from its founding up to October 1935. Of these, 669 were infants and 109 were adults. There had also been 229 marriages and 306 deaths since the parish began. St. Charles school had graduated a total of 430 students from the eighth grade. The school enrollment in the fall of 1935 was 173 pupils, with five teachers.

During the first twenty-five years, four young men from the parish had been ordained to the priesthood: Rev. Philip Rose, Rev. Herbert Wagner, Rev. Cyril Spiegelhoff, and Rev. J. Russell Beix. Also, Rev. Gilbert Heuel, O. M. Cap., who was ordained in Rome, had read his first solemn Mass at St. Charles church. All five priests attended the silver jubilee celebration.

In addition, nine young women of the parish had entered the sisterhood:

- Martha Leber - Sister Mary Lewine, of the St. Francis order;
- Colletta and Florence Verhalen - Sisters Colette and Cyrilla, of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul;
- Dorothy Koenen - Sister Mary Linus; Lydia Wiemer - Sister Mary Frederick, and Caroline Ketterhagen - Sister Alma Louise, all of the Dominican order (Caroline Ketterhagen later left the sisterhood before professing final vows);

- Vivian Hopkins - Sister Mary Jonina, and Dorothy Hopkins - Sister Mary Marita, of the St. Francis order; and
- Hattie Wiemer - Sister Mary Louise, of St. Elizabeth's Order of St. Francis.

The Wiemer sisters, who were adult members of St. Charles at the time they entered the convent in 1932, were graduates of St. Thomas school at Waterford. Both the Wiemer sisters and the Hopkins sisters were among those who attended the silver jubilee celebration.



Hattie Wiemer -
Sister Mary Louise

Hattie and Lydia Wiemer were the daughters of John and Louise, nee Ohlendorf, Wiemer. Their siblings included Frank, Alfred, and Lawrence Wiemer, Mrs. Frieda Pieters, Mrs. Rose Ammon, and half-sisters, Mrs. Effie Rothering and Mrs. Martina Zwiebel. Hattie was born on the family farm in the town of Rochester December 11, 1890. Lydia was born there September 18, 1897. Both received their education at St. Thomas parochial school in Waterford. The family moved to Burlington in 1916.

Hattie entered the convent of St. Elizabeth's Order of St. Francis on November 1, 1932. She was professed in June 1934, becoming Sister Mary Louise. She served primarily at St. Elizabeth's retreat house, Milwaukee. Sister Louise died September 19, 1965, in Milwaukee and was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery, Milwaukee.

Lydia entered the Dominican convent in Racine on August 15, 1932, and was professed on August 4, 1935, becoming Sister Mary Frederick. She served primarily at St. Catherine convent at Racine. Sister Frederick died November 11, 1962, and was buried at the Dominican Sisters Home, Pewaukee.



Lydia Wiemer -
Sister Mary Frederick

The banquet hall, where Archbishop Stritch, Msgr. Dreis, Father Hillenbrand, and the other clergymen who had participated in or attended the solemn jubilee Mass gathered with the congregation after Mass, was decorated in blue and silver appointments for the occasion. As the guests were being seated and during the meal, musical interludes were given. Lillian Bushman played two violin solos and Mrs. Loretta Bauman sang a vocal solo. Both were accompanied by Lauretta Uhen. After the dinner, telegrams of congratulations were read from Mrs. Mary Verhalen Smolensky, St. Charles' first organist, who was then living in Portland, Oregon, and from St. Charles' graduates, Harold G. and Marcella, nee Christien, Reuschlein of Washington, D. C., where Mr. Reuschlein was a law professor at Georgetown University. Archbishop Stritch addressed a few words of greeting and congratulations to the gathering. He urged the congregation to establish a strong sense of social unity in the parish through its organizations so as to inspire habits of Catholic acting and thinking among the young people. At the close of the dinner, the attendees sang "America," and Father Hillenbrand offered a prayer of thanks.

At the reception on Monday evening, an informal program was held, with Father Hillenbrand presiding and introducing the speakers. At various intervals, community singing was led by George Weiler, with Lauretta Uhen accompanying. Luncheon was served at the close of the reception. The program included a greeting by William H. Wagner, who had served as secretary of the parish for twenty-six years, and reminiscences, which were given in a humorous and entertaining manner, of early efforts of the church and of the first classes of the school. Leo Warren, member of the second class to be graduated from St. Charles, spoke for the alumni. Rev. Philip Rose, member of the first class to enter St. Charles in the first grade, gave an account of school days.

Mrs. John McCourt spoke for the St. Ann's Society. Other speakers were Rev. Herbert Wagner, Rev. J. Russell Beix, Rev. Gilbert Heuel, O. M. Cap., Rev. Raymond Miller, parish treasurer L. Reinhard Mangold, Francis X. Klein of Louisville, Kentucky, and Mrs. John Blommer (nee Hilda Rose) of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Msgr. Philipp Dreis, the main speaker, gave his reminiscences of the work of establishing the new church and school. He spoke feelingly of the help and co-operation he had received from the people of Burlington during those early days, and paid high tribute to his non-Catholic friends who had given him invaluable help on many occasions. Msgr. Dreis said that he wished especially to publicly acknowledge the friendly co-operation that Burlington public school superintendent, Fred L. Witter, had given him when he was establishing St. Charles school.

In closing the program, James H. Murphy spoke for the future of St. Charles and pledged a unified congregation in the work of the parish in years to come.

The pupils of St. Charles held their Christmas program at the school hall on December 19. All the grades took part in the entertainment, which included music, recitations, and a playlet. Special numbers were given by John McCarthy, Joan Bennett, Betty Ann Murphy, Margaret Nelson, Kenneth Pihringer, Joseph Conlin, Robert Overson, Jerry Block, Ruth and Robert Reynolds, Gordon Fertel, Elizabeth David, and Catherine Zwiebel.

On Christmas the celebration of the festival began with midnight Mass. Music for the Mass was sung by St. Charles' choir, with the propers of the Mass sung by a choir of male voices. The children's choir provided the music at the 9:30 a.m. solemn high Mass; and low Masses were read at 7, 8, and 11 o'clock.

With the Depression ongoing, Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch came to

Burlington in early March to address an organizational meeting of parishes in the Burlington district to conduct a campaign for the Archbishop's Emergency Relief fund for the Milwaukee archdiocese. Burlington was selected as the key city for the district, which included parishes in Racine County outside the city of Racine, all parishes of Walworth County, and parishes in the western end of Kenosha County. Leo Warren, of St. Charles, was appointed by the Archbishop as the district's general chairman. The aim of the campaign was to raise two funds by voluntary donation, \$175,000 for Catholic charities in the archdiocese and \$125,000 for re-construction of St. John's Cathedral in Milwaukee, which had been partially destroyed by a fire in January 1935. Moving pictures of the Archbishop's visits to the institutions of charity throughout the diocese were shown to display the kind of work done in those homes and schools.

On the third Sunday of March, the St. Agnes Sodality held its fathers and daughters Communion and breakfast, attended by over one hundred persons. At the breakfast meeting, James H. Murphy gave a talk on the influence of woman and her position as a leader of children, especially the girls. Mothers, he said, can instill in their daughters the love of home life and teach them the duties of making a home, but fathers have their responsibilities toward their daughters, too, and should cultivate their daughters' friendship and make pals of them. Mary McCourt introduced the speaker with brief remarks on the significance of the father and daughter get-together. Father Miller gave a brief talk and Marion Robers sang "Pals."

The Liturgies of Christmas

The three different liturgies the Church provides for Christmas each has its special meaning. The Midnight Mass specially recalls the temporal birth of Jesus and the spiritual birth of Christ in our souls. The Mass at Dawn is a reminder of the double manifestation of Christ, man in his coming of grace and God in his coming of glory. The Mass during the Day dwells more especially on the generation of the Word, Christ living in the church. At each Mass the special prayers, the propers of the Mass, signify these various aspects of the Christmas festival.

Source: Standard Democrat, Dec. 20, 1935

Holy Week services included an all-night vigil on Holy Thursday until Good Friday morning, when the Mass of the presanctified was offered and unveiling of the cross took place. Holy Saturday and Easter services followed their established pattern.

The alumni association presented its annual play at the Burlington high school auditorium on Easter Monday. "The Modern Castaway," a highly dramatic presentation of the ill effects of divorce on the unity of the modern family, was chosen as the play for 1936. The cast, under the direction of Father Miller, included William Rewald, Clarence Martin, Joseph Weyrough, Harold Lang, Walter Riel, Charles Rewald, Alois Partee, William Pieters, Rosalind Steinhoff, Rosemary Beix, Claire Schumann, Norbert Ebbers, John Busch, Francis Sommers, Philip Krueger, John Rudkowsky, and Helen Zabler.

On Mother's Day, two hundred mothers and daughters received Communion in a body and attended a breakfast meeting arranged by the St. Ann's Society. Mrs. Delia Zwiebel, president of the society, presided at the breakfast. Mrs. Sophie Daniels was chairman of the breakfast, and Mrs. Florence Bennett was in charge of the program.

A group of St. Charles school children gave a program fitting to Mother's Day, with songs and recitations. Those who took part were Patricia Tobin, Betty Bennett, Phyllis Vos, Edna Sheridan, Carolyn Pieters, Jean Coughlin, Rosemary Krueger, Eileen David, Janice McCormack, Mary Ellen Vos, Margaret Tobin, Helen Zwiebel, Mary Mangold, and Lois Reuschlein.

Musical numbers were given by a quartette composed of Mrs. Clara Steinhoff and her three daughters, and Mary Ebbers who sang a solo. Mrs. Anna Bennett gave a toast to daughters, and Jean Schiller toasted the mothers and offered special tribute to the grandmothers. Mother talks were given by Mrs. June Garvey, Mrs. Hildegard Block, Mrs. Norma Degen, Mrs. Catherine McCourt, Mrs. Mary Beller, and Mrs. Mary Christien. Jane Wagner and Margaret Kolars gave talks for the daughters. Father Hillenbrand gave a few chosen words on the importance of the home and motherhood in forming Christian character.

After the program, gifts were distributed to some of those present for special distinctions. Mrs. Anna Bennett was honored as the oldest grandmother present; Mrs. Lillian Busher as the youngest grandmother; Mrs. Irene Kelly as the youngest mother, and Joan Bennett as the youngest daughter.

In May the safety cadets chosen among the boys of each Burlington school received cadet belts at a meeting of the American Legion. The safety cadets formed a division of the Burlington Safety Commission to aid in the prevention of accidents on the school grounds and on the nearby streets. The belts were a gift of the American Legion to the schools as a uniform for the safety cadets. The St. Charles' group, which Father Miller was in charge of, included Richard Pieters, captain, LeRoy Zabler, Charles Itzin, Malcolm Alby, Adolph Rossmiller, and John Zwiebel.

On Sunday, May 24, a class of twenty-five communicants received their first solemn Communion. Those in the class were:

Francis Bauman	Edmund Elderbrook	Robert Overson	Philip Sheridan
DeLane Betzig	Gordon Fertel	James Pennefeather	James Steinhoff
Jerome Block	Robert Isferding	Louan Pihringer	Florence Uhen
William Bracey	Nicholas Kuhn	Robert Reynolds	Roger Winkler
Donald Clausen	Beatrice Lehsten	Ruth Reynolds	Elmer Wisnefski
Joseph Conlin	Margaret Nelson	Luella Schiller	Marion Zimmermann
Elizabeth David			

The usual Memorial Day exercises were held at Echo Park on Saturday, May 30. The St. Charles school children joined the parade of patriotic groups at the corner of what is now Milwaukee Avenue and Kane Street. During the program at Echo Park, Donald Ketterhagen, who had graduated from St. Charles in 1935, delivered the "Gettysburg Address."

Graduation exercises for the eighth grade class, shown in the photo below, were held Friday, June 5, in the church. Rev. Cyril Spiegelhoff delivered the graduation address.



ST. CHARLES CLASS OF 1936

First row (l to r): Jean Schiller, Philip Peeters, June Heintskill, Malcolm Alby, Mary Eileen David, Richard Pieters, and Marion Weis.

Second row: Rev. Raymond Miller, Helen Stang, Charles Itzin, Virginia Bauman, Harold Beuthling, Lillian Lohaus, Herbert Brook, Gloria Giannini, and Rev. Frederick Hillenbrand.

Third row: John Warren, Janet Merrick, Neal Schumann, Rosamund Tenwinkel, John Zwiebel, Valieta Vos, LeRoy Zabler, and Mildred Huening.

About 250 members of St. Charles Alumni Association celebrated a double occasion on June 18 at St. Charles' hall. The banquet marked the silver jubilee of the first graduating class of St. Charles school, and the nineteenth annual reunion of the association.

The first graduating class, the class of 1911, consisted of the following five members: Cecilia Rose, Burlington; Helen Prash, Milwaukee; Florence Reuschlein Daniels of Kansasville; Irene Kortendick Emmons of Stevens Point; and Martha Leber - Sister Mary Lewine of Farmer, South Dakota.

After Benediction in the church with the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Philipp Dreis, former pastor and organizer of the association, as celebrant, the members repaired to St. Charles' hall for the banquet, business meeting, and program. John Weiler acted as toastmaster at the after-dinner program, which consisted of addresses by association president William Rewald, by Father Hillenbrand, and by Msgr. Dreis; a welcome to the 1936 class by Francis Itzin; and a response by Richard Pieters. Community singing was conducted by Laurretta Uhen. The officers elected for the coming year were president Anthony Itzin, vice president Catherine Hoppe, secretary Marcella Vos, and treasurer Leo Warren. After the program, dancing was held at St. Mary's gymnasium.

In June the young men of the Catholic parishes in this vicinity organized a kittenball league to play Sunday afternoons during the summer. Seven teams were in the league, including St. Charles, representing Burlington, Lyons, Lake Geneva, Elkhorn, East Troy, Waterford, and New Munster. The St. Charles team included John, Charles, and Anthony Weiler, Charles and Norbert Ebbers, Richard and Robert Beix, Al. Goodwin, Francis Dauben, Robert Cook, Carroll Vos, and Harry Kline.

St. Charles school opened for the 1936-1937 school year on Tuesday, September 8, after a high Mass in honor of the Holy Ghost. Sister M. Annette continued as seventh and eighth grade teacher and Sister M. Cordula continued as music teacher. New teachers were Sister M. Bernarda

who replaced Sister Mary Lois as fifth and sixth grade teacher and Sister M. Ardina who replaced Sister M. Floretta as third and fourth grade teacher. Sister M. Linana started the school year as first and second grade teacher as a substitute for Sister M. Rosaline, who was recovering from an illness. Enrollment in the school was 166, divided by grades as follows: First grade, 17; second, 20, third, 25; fourth, 20; fifth, 28, sixth, 25; seventh, 15; and eighth, 16.

At its September meeting, the St. Agnes Sodality organized a junior branch with the following officers: prefect - Ruth Runzler, vice prefect - Dorothy Zwiebel, secretary and treasurer - Norma Degen, chairman of the apostolic committee - Ellen Brehm, and chairman of the social life committee - Betty Jo Block.

In October, the Burlington units of both the Woman's Catholic Order of Foresters (W. C. O. F.) and the Knights of Columbus celebrated their silver anniversaries. St. Monica's Court No. 936 of the W. C. O. F. had been the first Catholic organization of women in Burlington and had held its meetings for the first several months in St. Charles school. The members gathered at their lodge rooms in the Knights of Columbus hall on October 5 for a pot luck supper, a social evening, and the silver jubilee program.

On October 12 Burlington Council No. 1578 of the Knights held a dual observance of Columbus Landing day and the local council's twenty-fifth anniversary. The knights entertained their ladies and other invited guests at the festivities. Past grand knights, charter members, and the council's first chaplain, Msgr. Philipp Dreis, were specially honored. Msgr. Dreis had served as chaplain of the council until 1927. Father Hillenbrand had served as chaplain since then.

St. Charles' hall, where the banquet and program were held, was decorated in symbolic colors and insignia. The hall was festooned with blue paper ribbons, clusters of silver grapes, and small American flags trimming the tables and pillars. Above the speakers' table the badge of the Knights of Columbus executed in colors was mounted against a blue arch bearing the anniversary dates. An immense bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums, a birthday gift of the St. Ann's Society to the council, held a prominent place. Father Hillenbrand offered the prayer before the meal. Leo Warren gave a tribute to the charter members, to which Msgr. Dreis responded.

In September the St. Charles Alumni Association had announced that, while its custom had been to present its annual play in the spring, its next play would be presented in October. On October 25, the association gave two performances of "Skidding," a comedy full of humorous situations, at the Burlington high school auditorium. The setting of the play was a small town in Idaho where a Judge, for the first time in twenty years, met with opposition while running for a district court seat. The cast, directed by Father Miller, included Rosalind Steinhoff, Walter Riel, Catherine Itzin, Harold Lang, Alois Partee, Mary Moe, Rosemary Beix, Alex Rose, Alberta Bushman, and John Weiler.

According to the Standard Democrat, the young actors were line perfect, brought realistic interpretations to their parts, and received well-deserved ovations for their splendid performance from the large audiences. The newspaper added that the committees in charge of properties also merited special commendation for the finished production, and that the between-act specialties were unusually attractive. Those participating in the specialties, which were coordinated by Jane Wagner, included Lois Reuschlein, Janice McCormack, Betty Murphy, Betty Isferding, Catherine Zwiebel, James Bennett, Mary Mangold, Jean Coughlin, Aileen Zwiebel, Dorothy Zwiebel, Rosemary Rueter, Betty Zwiebel, Ellen Brehm, David Brehm, Gordon Schilz, Patricia Tobin, Gertrude Itzin, Carolyn Pieters, Henrietta Nelson, Florence Tenwinkel, and Jack Peterson.

(to be continued)