

## St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 38 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



St. Charles' choir members entertained their spouses and the William H. Wagner family at a dinner party in St. Charles' hall on November 11, 1936, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Wagner, who were retiring from the choir.



William H. and Eulalia Wagner (shown at left about 1938) had been choir members since its organization twenty-six years earlier at the formation of the parish. After the dinner, a program was presented in the form of a Major Bowes amateur hour. The Major Bowes role was played by Arthur Kayser, with everyone present called upon to perform.

Mr. Wagner also retired as parish secretary after the first of the year, turning over that position to Louis H. Brehm.

The late fall, the Christmas season, and the pre-Lenten and Lenten seasons were marked with church and society functions, most of which were similar to those that had been carried out at St. Charles in previous years. Two new programs did start, however, involving recreation activities for the young women and men of the parish.

At its February 1937 meeting, the St. Agnes Sodality made plans to hold recreation nights for sodality members at least twice a week in St. Charles' hall. Indoor games and sports, including dart ball, shuffle board, ping pong, and various table games were to be inaugurated at first, with other activities being developed as the demand for them was felt. The program started the first Monday in March with the girls given their first lessons in dart ball and ping pong. The program was to continue on Monday and Thursday nights with proctors being present each night to direct the activities.

The Knights of Columbus also started a Catholic boys' center for the young men of both St. Charles and St. Mary's parishes at the Knights' club house in March. At the first meeting, two well known amateurs in the sport of fencing, William Scholl and Chester Rutkowski, co-captains of the Marquette University high school fencing team, demonstrated the proper use of foil and sabre. To many who watched, it was a new sport. Harry O'Haire, former fencing coach at Marquette, directed the demonstration. The boys also enjoyed an educational and entertaining talk on safety in the home given by a Red Cross representative. The talk was followed with a demonstration on artificial respiration. At the business meeting held after the entertainment, John Moe was elected president of the new group, with Robert Wanasek as vice president, Philip Krueger as secretary-treasurer, Joseph Essman as chaplain, and Charles Weiler as song and morale director.

On Sunday, April 4, a class of twenty-four children received their First Holy Communion at 8 o'clock Mass. The members of the class were:

Joan Bennett	John Grueter	Donald Martin	Kenneth Pihringer
John Betzig	Roman Grueter	John Martin	Catherine Siehoff
Rosemary Bracey	John Ketterhagen	John McCarthy	Louise Tenwinkel
Thomas Busch	Mary Ann Lackas	Patricia McCarthy	Jean Trimberger
Marjorie Coughlin	Donald Lois	Walter Miller	Richard Vos
Helen Elderbrook	Evelyn Marsili	Betty Ann Murphy	Charles Zwiebel

On the following day, St. Charles pastor, Rev. Frederick J. Hillenbrand, started on an extended trip that would include spending three months touring and sightseeing in Europe and the Holy Land. Father Hillenbrand first went to Washington, D. C., to visit with a former classmate on the faculty of the Catholic University. He also visited Mr. and Mrs. Harold G. Reuschlein, William Beller, Rev. Gilbert Heuel, O. M. Cap. (who had recently been transferred to New York by his order), and other former Burlington people living in the east. In mid-April he sailed for Naples, Italy, from New York harbor. During the twelve-day passage, the vessel made several stops at island ports, including the Azores.

In Naples Father Hillenbrand met his nephew, Rev. Frederick Hillenbrand, who was rector of a house in Rome, Italy, for graduate students of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary at Mundelein, Illinois. Together they spent several weeks in Naples and Rome. During that time, Father Hillenbrand was granted an audience with Pope Pius XI at the Pope's summer home at Castel Gandolfo near Rome. Father Hillenbrand then journeyed to the Holy Land for a three-week tour. Upon returning to Europe, he traveled to Vienna, Austria, to visit with an old friend; spent some time in Munich, Germany, and environs; visited Switzerland; and returned to Italy to visit several important cities, including Florence, Assisi, Milan, and Venice. He then returned to Rome to spend the last month of his vacation.

In April St. Charles' eighth grade class organized for graduation and started preparing the school annual. They selected orchid and white for class colors, and the lily of the valley for their flower. Their motto was "Labor Conquers All Things." Class officers elected were president Alfred Klein, vice president Lester Johnson, secretary Dorothy Zwiebel, and treasurer Betty Jo Block.

On Mother's Day about two hundred fifty mothers and daughters attended a breakfast and program in the church hall following the 7:30 a.m. Mass during which they received Communion in a body. Each mother was presented with a pink rose. The program, over which Mrs. Hildegard Block presided as toastmistress, included a toast to daughters by Mrs. Clara Brehm and a toast to mothers by her daughter, Ellen Brehm. A toast to grandmothers was responded to by Mrs. Anna Bennett, and Father Miller delivered the principal address. St. Charles' school children entertained with several numbers. The men of the Holy Name Society served the breakfast.

Later in May, delegates from the lay societies of both St. Charles and St. Mary's parishes, together with a large number of other Catholics from Burlington, attended meetings of a three-day Catholic Action conference in Milwaukee. St. Charles' official delegation included Rev. Raymond C. Miller for the clergy; Mrs. Eleanor Richter and Mrs. Delia Zwiebel for the St. Ann's Society (and the Daughters of Isabella); Helen Reesman and Ruth Wagner for the St. Agnes Sodality; George Weiler for the Holy Name Society; and Jack Bennett for the Junior Holy Name Society. The purpose of the conference, sponsored by Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch, was to call together the congregations of the archdiocese to discuss practical means of carrying the spiritual fruits of religion over into the modern social life.

Sixty pupils of St. Charles' music department presented a recital in the church hall on May 30. All music grades took part in the musicale. In addition there was a musical playlet, "The Princess Has a Birthday," by Vandevere which was given in costume.

June 6 was a memorable day for fifteen members of St. Charles' eighth grade who received their diplomas at exercises held in the church. After the class processional, the services opened with the singing of "O Sing Unto the Lord" by the pupils of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Rev. J. Russell Beix delivered the commencement sermon. Father Miller presented the diplomas. After Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the congregation sang "Holy God We Praise Thy Name." The graduating class is shown in the following photo.



#### ST. CHARLES CLASS OF 1937

First row (l to r): Florence Tenwinkel, John Hopkins, Henrietta Nelson, Leonard Koenen, Ruth Lehsten, and Lester Johnson.

Second row: Elaine Reinardy, Mary Reynolds, Rev. Raymond C. Miller, Ruth Runzler, and Betty Jo Block.

Third row: Adolph Rossmiller, George Granger, Rosemary Rueter, Dorothy Zwiebel, and Alfred Klein.

The following day, the graduates were entertained at an outing and picnic. Accompanied by Father Miller, they motored to St. Francis Seminary, spent some time visiting the grounds and buildings, and then went to Washington Park in Milwaukee.

On June 17 the graduates gathered with over 250 former St. Charles' graduates, together with guests and clergymen, at the twentieth annual reunion of the St. Charles Alumni Association. It was the largest homecoming of graduates to be held since the association was organized. Honored guest at the banquet was Msgr. Philipp Dreis, former spiritual director of the association. Father Hillenbrand sent a cablegram from Rome greeting the alumni, which was read at the banquet.

After solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the church, the attendees sat down at the banquet, served in the hall which had been decorated with a solid woven canopy of the school colors, purple and gold, and festoons of the same colors. At the business meeting held previous to the program, Anthony Itzin, president of the association, presided. Annual reports were given by Marcy Vos, secretary, and Leo Warren, treasurer. The Sister Hermana trophy, awarded to the class having the largest percentage of its members in attendance, was won by the class of 1932.

Arthur Reinardy presided at the after-dinner program as toastmaster. He introduced Mrs. Hildegard Block of the class of 1914 to welcome the class of 1937 into the association. Mrs. Block was chosen to give the welcome especially because she was the first St. Charles graduate to have a child who also graduated from St. Charles - her daughter, Betty Jo Block. Alfred Klein, president of the class of 1937, responded to the welcome and acknowledged the honor of membership in the name of his classmates.

Rev. Cyril Spiegelhoff, member of the class of 1922, was the main speaker of the evening. Msgr. Dreis also addressed the gathering. Father Miller greeted the alumni in the name of their absent pastor and gave the roster of those who had married or joined the sisterhood during the year. Telegrams were read from Gladys Forge and Mrs. Helen (nee Forge) Finke, Chicago; Rev. Herbert Wagner, Fond du Lac, and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Reuschlein, Washington, D. C. Officers

elected for the following year were president Anthony Rewald, vice president Robert Beix, secretary Viola Kortendick, and treasurer Charles Ebbers.

On June 21 St. Agnes sodalists who had become brides during the past year were guests of honor at a June Bride party given by the sodality in the church hall. An original program featuring a parade of wedding dresses of past years was the feature of the evening. Many styles of wedding dresses appeared in the parade with sodality members acting as models. Wedding dresses shown were those of Mrs. Henry Cantwell, 1857; Mrs. Anna Bennett, 1877; Mrs. Clara Eckert, 1899; Mrs. Anna Prash, 1902; Mrs. Hildegard Block, 1920; Mrs. Norma Degen, 1924; Mrs. Juliaette May, 1930; and Mrs. Romana Kayser, 1930. The guest brides also wore their wedding dresses and appeared in the parade for styles of 1937. A comedy skit of the anticipated wedding costume ten years in the future (1947) was then presented. Laretta Uhen played the music for the parade, and Mrs. Loretta Bauman sang several solos.

Other summer events involving the parish or of interest to St. Charles parishioners included:

- The organization among the young men of the Catholic parishes in this vicinity of a softball league to play games on Sunday afternoons. Burlington was represented by St. Mary's and St. Charles; the other six teams were from the congregations at Lyons, New Munster, Brighton, Waterford, East Troy, and Elkhorn.
- The initiation at St. Charles' hall of forty-five candidates from Burlington and Lake Geneva to membership in the Knights of Columbus, followed by a banquet at St. Mary's hall, at which Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch was the principal speaker.
- The annual summer pilgrimage of members of the St. Agnes Sodality who visited the monastery of the Redemptorist fathers and the retreat house at Monte Alverno near Appleton. At Fond du Lac, Rev. Philip Rose joined the group. At Monte Alverno, Rev. Gilbert Heuel, who in June had celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination, conducted them through the grounds. Those who took the trip included Lucille Budd, Florence Hoffman, Bernice Schiller, Dorothy Riel, Evelyn Bushman, Cecelia Rose, and Helen Reesman.
- The annual Portiuncula pilgrimage to the Franciscan Monastery near Burlington in August drew thousands of visitors from Chicago, Milwaukee, and other places to the grounds to participate in services celebrating the special Franciscan indulgence (see box at right). The occasion also marked the blessing of a richly ornamental painting of "Our Lady of Ostra Brama," a copy of a venerated 15th century painting. The day of the Portiuncula indulgence fell on the feast of Our Lady of the Angels and special services were held in the afternoon for the dedication of the painting which was hung in a special shrine in the chapel.

The Portiuncula indulgence is a special religious observance of the Franciscan order, dating from 1220. Every year patrons of the local monastery from Milwaukee, Chicago, and other surrounding cities made a pilgrimage to take part in the prayers and visit the Franciscan chapel. The indulgence derives its name from the chapel of Portiuncula which St. Francis, founder of the Franciscans, built in Assisi, Italy, when he established the order.

On Sunday, July 25, St. Charles parish welcomed home its pastor, Father Hillenbrand, at a banquet held in his honor in the church hall. Father Hillenbrand had returned the previous Wednesday from his nearly sixteen week trip during which he had visited Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and the Holy Land. About four hundred parishioners and other friends were present to greet the traveler. The parish had sent special invitations to Father Hillenbrand's relatives, to members of the library and hospital boards of which Father Hillenbrand was a member, to clergymen of neighboring churches, and to priests who were former members of St.

Charles. As Father Hillenbrand entered the hall, escorted by Louis Brehm, parish secretary and chairman of the homecoming committee, and Father Miller, who had served as pastor during Father Hillenbrand's absence, the four hundred waiting guests rose and tendered him a hearty ovation.

George Weiler presided as toastmaster after dinner. Mr. Brehm extended a welcome to Father Hillenbrand for the parish. Two spiritual bouquets were then presented by two young pages, John McCarthy, Jr., and Kenneth Pihringer. The former presented a spiritual bouquet from the adults of the parish; the latter, from the children. Parish treasurer L. Reinhard Mangold then presented the pastor with a gift of a purse from the parish.

The guest of honor responded to a request from the toastmaster and gave an enjoyable account of his summer's tour, recounting places of beauty and historical interest he had seen and giving his impressions of economic and national conditions in the countries he visited (see box at right). He said that he had read Mass at the tomb of St. Peter in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and at many other shrines in Rome. He spoke of the intense spiritual edification he experienced in

the Holy Land in visiting the sacred places where the Savior lived. At Bethlehem he had read Mass at 3 a.m. at the shrine of the Nativity. In Germany he visited his father's birthplace in Munich in the parish where records dated back to 1120.

Patriotic songs by those attending the homecoming banquet were led by Laurretta Uhen before and after the program, with Ellsworth Rein accompanying at the piano.

St. Charles school opened for the 1937-1938 school year on September 8, 1937. The enrollment of 170 pupils was divided as follows in the four rooms: First and second grades, 40; third and fourth, 46; fifth and sixth, 49; seventh and eighth, 36. The sixth grade, with 29, had the largest enrollment. The eighth grade had the smallest enrollment, with 15.

In October, as a new feature of the educational program marking Fire Prevention and Safety week, the children in each of the Burlington grade schools were given a practical lesson in how to turn in a fire alarm and how to conduct themselves at the scene of a fire. Early in the week teachers explained the fire alarm box system to the children and helped them in locating the alarm boxes nearest the school and their homes. Later in the week, a pupil was selected in each school to go to the nearest box and turn in the alarm for a theoretical fire. The Burlington Volunteer Fire Department then made a trial run to each of the schools.

Later in October Burlington's Catholic women's organizations were well represented at the seventeenth annual three-day convention of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women held in Milwaukee. Representing the St. Agnes Sodality of St. Charles at the Young Ladies session on Sunday afternoon were Cecelia Rose, Helen Reesman, Virginia Hegeman, Bernice Schiller, and Jean Schiller. The St. Mary's young ladies sodality sent Theresa Fox and

*Among Rev. Hillenbrand's most interesting comments on his 1937 trip to Europe and the Holy Land, as we look back on them seventy-three years later, were his impressions of conditions in Europe about two years before the Second World War started there when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.*

All Europe was living on borrowed money, he said, and was taxed to the limit. Every Italian was taxed 5 per cent of his property and 7 per cent on all that was sold. Europe bristled with militarism. Little boys marched on Sunday and soldiers in Italy and Germany were everywhere. France had the greatest army in her history. This was the reason for poverty and taxes. Rev. Hillenbrand did not think there would be war in the near future because Europe didn't have the money necessary. He expressed the earnest hope that this country would not contribute one dollar to Europe for credit, war material, or food in the event of war abroad, because without help from the United States, Europe was helpless. The German dictatorship was supported by the army, he explained. When the army withdraws its support, he said, the Hitler regime must end.

Beulah Armock as delegates. Other sodalists who attended from St. Mary's high school, some of whom were St. Charles' graduates, included Rosemary Rueter, Betty Bazal, Dorothy Zwiebel, Patricia Partee, Betty Wagner, Eileen David, Virginia Rueter, Rosemary McCourt, Betty Stark, Dorothy Prailes, Gertrude Beguhl, Rosemary Uhen, Lorraine Schumann, Jeanette Weber, Helen Frey, Jean Wagner, Dorothy Dreesman, Lucille Ward, Magdalen Hammiller, Henrietta Nelson, and Marie Weithaus.

The women's sessions opened Monday morning with the offering of Mass at St. John's Cathedral by Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch. General sessions were held Monday and Tuesday. Msgr. Philipp Dreis gave an address, "Co-ordinating Charity Activities," at one of the sessions. Mrs. Grace Rose, of St. Charles, who was re-elected as a member of the Archdiocesan Council's board of directors, presided at the general session on Tuesday afternoon. St. Charles congregation was represented by Mrs. Mary Beller, Mrs. Albert Ketterhagen, and Mrs. Rose Kuhn.

On November 21 the St. Charles Alumni Association presented the comedy, "My Mother-in-Law," at the Burlington high school auditorium as its annual dramatic event. The play was a modern comedy based on the stereotyped conception of the mother-in-law. Under the direction of Father Miller, the plot was handled in an entirely original and amusing way that worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned. The play was well staged and all the parts were well taken by a talented cast that included Rosemary Beix, Alois Partee, Mary Ann Luetten, Mary Moe, Charles Wiemer, Marcella Prasch, Charles Ebbers, Herbert Rossmiller, Mary Lou Stang, and Joan Kenney.

Under the direction of Rosemary Forge, entertainment between the acts helped provide an evening of excellent entertainment. Jane Wagner played musical interludes; Lois Reuschlein and Janice McCormack gave a costume dance; and the "Burlington Songsters," under Lauretta Uhen's direction and accompanied by Clara Vandenboom, made a successful initial appearance in a group of chorus numbers. The chorus was composed of Marion Robers, Rose Vandenboom, Dolores Frey, Margaret Kerkman, Elfrieda Robers, Mary Epping, Rosemary Beix, Jack Weiler, Charles Ebbers, Robert Henning, Joseph Weiler, Francis Kueht, and Edward Furman.

During the first two weeks of Advent, November 28 to December 12, fourteen parishes, including those in Racine County outside Racine, and the rural parishes of Walworth and Kenosha counties conducted the drive among Catholics to help raise the annual \$200,000 quota for the archdiocesan charities. Leo Warren, of St. Charles, was again general chairman of the local district, with George Weiler as chairman for St. Charles parish and Leonard Cunningham for St. Mary's parish.

In announcing the campaign, Archbishop Stritch said that, in family relief work alone, the archdiocese was caring for an average of 9,000 families a day and that care for the delinquent, dependent, and aged was given to about 2,400 daily. He said that the Catholic church was the largest private charitable group in Wisconsin. "In doing this work," the Archbishop said, "we are doing the thing the church wishes us to do. There is a great deal of fallacy in putting things off on the state. The church wants us to practice charity."

In giving evidence of the work being accomplished, the Archbishop remarked that he was "proud that not a diocese in the United States is doing a finer job in charity work than we in the archdiocese of Milwaukee. We are not only equal to all others in the United States - we are ahead of them. We give a high standard of care."

(to be continued)