

## St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

1910 - 2010

No. 41 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years



The graduation exercises for the 1940 St. Charles graduating class were held in the church on Friday, June 7. The program opened with a processional in which the school children escorted the graduates into the church. "O Sing Unto the Lord" was sung by the pupils of the seventh and eighth grades, after which Rev. Charles Myers delivered the graduation address. Conferring of the diplomas and presentation of cadet certificates followed, and the evening's program closed with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the recessional. The 1940 graduating class is shown in the following photo.



### Class of 1940

Row 1 (l to r): Leslie Eckert, Janice McCormack, Charles Brook, Mary Mangold, James David, Lois Reuschlein, Robert Clausen, Evelyn Martin, and Rupert Kuhn.

Row 2: Rev. Raymond Miller, Carolyn Pieters, Richard Weyrough, Shirley Busch, Edward Ketterhagen, Frances Johnson, Walter Schiller, Betty Bennett, James Budd, Rita Hopkins, and Rev. Charles Myers.

Row 3: Mary Ellen Vos, John Ketterhagen, Marion Schiller, Ralph Luetten, Mary Edna Sheridan, Herbert Uhen, Bernice Scholtes, William Vos, Gwendolyn Overson, Roger Winkler, Dorothy Pihringer, and Joseph Steinhoff.

On the following Monday, Father Myers, Father Miller, and the Sisters of St. Charles school were hosts to the graduates at a picnic at St. Francis. A full day of picnic activities was thoroughly enjoyed.

More than 300 members and guests of the St. Charles Alumni Association filled the church hall to overflowing on June 20 to renew friendships of long standing and reaffirm their loyalty to the school. The occasion marked the organization's twenty-third annual reunion and was made more memorable by the presence of Msgr. Philipp Dreis, former pastor of St. Charles and the "father" of the alumni association. Alois Schmidt acted as toastmaster. Community singing was led by Jane Wagner.

“The association prolongs the influence of your education at St. Charles,” Msgr. Dreis told the gathering. “Be what you are and remember the three great loyalties – loyalty to conscience, country, and church – which you were taught in grade school. That marks the perfect man or woman. Each night I thank God and bless my parents for coming to America so that I could be born an American.”

The main speaker of the evening was Rev. J. Russell Beix of the class of ‘23. “At St. Charles you were taught how to live as children of God and citizens of our country,” Father Beix said. “Education must be a training of the whole person – physical, intellectual, and moral. The best education includes religious training. Knowledge is only useful; the formation of character is indispensable.” Father Beix attributed much crime in the nation to “education without God.” “We should thank God each night for a Catholic education. God bless our schools which taught us to love God and our country,” he concluded.

Philip Krueger of the class of ‘34, who was home on furlough from the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, gave the address of welcome to the 1940 graduates. He said “There is a spirit about this organization which binds you to St. Charles no matter where you are; these ties won’t weaken but will continue to give members a feeling of good fellowship at all times.”

Responding for the class of ‘40, James David pointed out the growth of the alumni association. “We hope it will continue to grow strong,” he said. “We of 1940 are glad to be here tonight; some of the best days of our lives were spent within the walls of this school.”

Outgoing president John E. McCarthy said that the wonderful crowd was an indication of loyalty to St. Charles. “All of us have a little of our memories within its walls; God hope that we can have many more such reunions.”

Following the banquet, dancing was enjoyed at St. Mary’s gymnasium. New officers elected for the ensuing year were president Mrs. Hildegard Block, vice president Richard Beix, secretary Mrs. Maryon Weiler, and treasurer John Weiler.

St. Charles grade school opened for the 1940-1941 school year on Wednesday, September 4, with an 8 o’clock high Mass. There were three new faces on the teaching staff. Sister Raphael replaced Sister Bernarda, who had taught the fifth and sixth grades and been Mother Superior for four years. Sister Rose Dominic replaced Sister Annette, who had taught the seventh and eighth grades for the previous ten years. And Sister Rose Ann was assigned to take the place of Sister Cordula, who had been the music teacher and choir instructor for the previous nine years.

In mid-September, there was also a change in assistant pastors. Father Miller, who had been assistant at St. Charles for the previous nine years, was assigned to Madison, and Rev. William Jung was named assistant to Father Myers at St. Charles. Father Miller was very popular at St. Charles and during his stay made many friends who were sorry to see him leave. Father Jung, who for the previous six years had been assistant at St. Bernard’s parish at Madison, arrived at St. Charles on September 18 to take up his duties.

The members of division ten of the CYO, which included St. Charles and several other parishes, attended a day of recollection at St. Charles on September 29. The retreat began with a communion Mass at 9:30 a.m. and continued with retreat sessions throughout the day. A dinner was served at 5:30. Rev. Benjamin Blied of Pio Nono College, Milwaukee, was retreat master.

On Friday, October 18, a large crowd of members of St. Charles, St. Mary’s, and the surrounding parishes attended a presentation of the “Living Rosary” in St. Mary’s high school auditorium. The high school students, numbering about seventy, recited the rosary and sang “Queen of the Rosary.” The girls wore their uniforms, and small net veils covered their heads. The boys wore dress suits. All students carried lighted candles, as the hall was in semi-darkness

with only the statue of the Blessed Virgin illuminated. The inspiring service had been presented for the first time two years earlier and, because of its enthusiastic reception, had become an annual affair. The ceremony, held in celebration of the Feast of the Holy Rosary, was closed with Benediction in the church.

On October 28, the members of St. Mary's church at Dover lost their pastor of thirty-nine years when Rev. Edward B. Schiefen died at Memorial Hospital from injuries received in an accident a short distance from the church. Father Schiefen's automobile had skidded on a slippery pavement and rolled over in the ditch on highway 75 just north of the intersection with highway 11. Father Schiefen was well-known at St. Charles, where he had assisted in or attended many parish services and activities.

The fall of 1940 saw the organization of the Happy Harmonizers, a club whose members were students of the St. Charles school of music, under the direction of the Dominican Sisters. The Sisters offered private and class instructions in piano, violin, and accordion to both St. Charles' and other students. The club held bi-weekly meetings at which the students presented talks on music-related topics and demonstrated their musical talents.

On the weekend of November 23 and 24, Catholics in Burlington joined in the world-wide prayer for peace requested by Pope Pius XII. Archbishop Moses E. Kiley set apart Saturday as a day of fast and abstinence for all Catholics in the archdiocese and requested that all receive holy Communion on Sunday. At St. Charles a holy hour of prayer was held after the 7:30 Mass on Sunday morning. St. Mary's held its holy hour at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon.

The St. Charles Alumni Association presented both matinee and evening performances of its 1940 play, "Let's Get Together," at the Burlington high school auditorium on November 24. The play revolved around a typical all-American family with typical all-American troubles – car, children, cash, and clocks. The cast was headed by Alois "Pete" Partee in the role of Dad who "cracked down" on the young people of the family resulting in a mixture of comedy and near tragedy. Other members of the cast were Patricia Partee, Virginia Breidenbach, Jeanette Crowley, Charles Wiemer, Art Rewald, Mary Mangold, Betty Jo Block, Robert Isferding, James David, and Art Kayser.

The entertainment between acts was provided by "The Old Refrainers," a quartette dressed in 1890s' fashions and composed of Loretta Bauman, Rosemary Schneider, Art Kayser, and Ellsworth Rein, with Jane Wagner at the piano. Also featured was George Commo, of Racine, with accordion selections.

At its December 1940 meeting, the St. Ann's Society voted to conduct a unit for Red Cross relief sewing and knitting. Mrs. Louis Reuschlein was named to head the unit, which was to work under the city chairman, Mrs. John Wilson, Jr. The unit's first weekly meeting was held at the Knights of Columbus club house, where sewing machines and materials were assembled for the work. The members were able to do their work either at the weekly meetings or at home.

On December 15, St. Charles school invited parents and friends to an open house where the visitors were greeted by the Sisters and representatives of each grade, and shown the work of the pupils, which was attractively exhibited. The Happy Harmonizers, the music pupils of Sister Rose Ann, entertained the guests with a program of musical numbers, including solos and group numbers on the piano, violin, and accordion. The climax to the program was the first appearance of the vested choir of young boys, whose singing of Christmas carols instilled the real spirit of the Christmas season. The boys' vested choir also joined the adult choir on Christmas Eve in the prelude of Christmas carols sung before the solemn midnight Mass offered to celebrate the birth of the Redeemer.

The 1941 first Communion class was relatively small compared with those of preceding years. Eight children made their first Communion at St. Charles church on Sunday, May 4, at the 7:30 Mass. They were:

Margaret Block	Dolores Kitkowski	James Peterson	Ronald Stallman
David Isferding	Joseph Maglio	James Shanahan	Russell Wegge

A week later the mothers and daughters of St. Charles were treated to a Mother's Day breakfast served them by the fathers and sons of the parish after the 7:30 Mass. A short talk on the meaning of Mother's Day was given by Mrs. May Hrobsky of Lyons. Mrs. Hrobsky traced the day back to the time of the early guilds when one Sunday in mid-Lent was called "Mothering Day." This day was set aside for the young men and women, who had left home and gone to work as servants and craftsmen, to return home for the day bringing special gifts for their mothers. The mothers in turn served special foods for the homecoming. In the United States, Mother's Day evolved, reaching its maturity when, by act of Congress, it was proclaimed a national observance in 1914. In addition to Mrs. Hrobsky's talk, the program included musical numbers by Helen Zwiebel, Mrs. Loretta Bauman, and the grade school children; a recitation by Mary McCarthy, and a brief talk by Father Myers.

At Burlington's two Catholic churches on Sunday, May 18, as at Sunday Masses throughout the United States, the gospel and epistle of the day were read for the first time using the words from the revised New Testament. This was the first public use of the modernized version of the New Testament, work on which had been carried on for the previous five years by the Catholic Biblical Association of America. The revised version replaced the Douay version of the Bible, which was rendered in English from the Latin Vulgate in 1582 and had always been the Catholic Bible used in the United States. The revised version was true to the original and yet modern in style and idiom.

On Sunday afternoon, May 25, the St. Charles branch of the St. Albertus School of Music in Racine presented the first twilight musical and tea to be given in Burlington. The event, held at St. Charles hall, was by invitation only. Mrs. Ammon and Mary Elderbrook had charge of the tea tables, and Richard Pieters and Paul Spiegelhoff were ushers.

The high spot of the musical was the work of the junior choir whose members were DeLane Betzig, Jean Coughlin, Elizabeth David, Rose David, Carl Degen, Mary Degen, Bill Grossman, Betty Isferding, Rosemary Krueger, Beatrice Lehsten, Theodore Menheer, Vincent Menheer, Louan Pihringer, Helen Zwiebel, Ruth Reynolds, Phillip Sheridan, James Steinhoff, Margaret Tobin, Phyllis Vos, Richard Vos, Marie Wiechert, and Marion Zimmermann. Other performers included Evelyn Tenhagen, Betty Bennett, Catherine Zwiebel, and James Bennett.

The following evening, the pupils of St. Charles' Federated Music Club appeared in a junior recital. Especially pleasing in this program was Mary Lois Bauman, junior voice student, who showed promising talent in her debut. Others on the program included Philip Reuschlein, Edward Wisnefski, Catherine Siehoff, Donald Prasch, Thomas Busch, Mary McCarthy, Joan Lois, Jean Trimberger, Marie Menheer, Joan Bennett, Luella Schiller, Frederick Eisenbart, Rita Bauman, Gloria Grossman, Carol Pihringer, Rita Reesman, Kenneth Pihringer, Gary Krug, Patricia Prasch, Florence Uhen, Mary Kayser, Julia Bayer, Mary Hrobsky, Dennis Boyle, Marcella Eisenbart, Betty Hofner, Donna Rice, James Steinhoff, and Beatrice Lehsten.

Both programs were polished presentations. A variety of duo piano numbers highlighted the junior program and a fine selection of instrumental combinations made for an attractive program.

On May 30, Burlington paused for a few hours to pay homage to those who had died in the nation's wars. The Memorial day services were conducted by the Woman's Relief Corps and the American Legion. The St. Charles school children again participated in the parade to Echo Park. Two days previously, a new American flag and a flaming red geranium were placed on each of the graves of the 127 soldiers, sailors, and members of the Woman's Relief Corps and American Legion Auxiliary in Burlington's cemeteries.

Of the total, there were 77 graves of the men who had served in the Civil War, 30 world war veterans, seven Woman's Relief Corps members, eight Legion Auxiliary members, and five soldiers of other wars. Decoration of the graves was done under the direction of the Woman's Relief Corps, the American Legion and Auxiliary, and four uniformed Boy Scouts.

St. Charles students finished their work for the 1940-1941 school year during the first week in June, with the eighth grade graduates receiving their diplomas admitting them to high school. The graduates are shown in the following photo.



Class of 1941

Row 1 (l to r): Joyce Warren (flower girl), Edward Nelson, Eugene Wanat, Rose David, William Grossman, Helen Zwiebel, Carl Degen, Phyllis Jean Vos, Robert Wegge, Richard Rossmiller, and Rita Vos (flower girl).

Row 2: Father Boniface, O.S.A., Edward Wisnefski, Betty Jane Isferding, Ralph Pieters, Bonnie Jean Coughlin, Edward Siehoff, Marie Wiechert, Raymond Clausen, Rosemary Krueger, and Rev. Charles Myers.

A strong faith was necessary in a pagan world, Rev. Joseph Niglis, St. Mary's assistant pastor, told the nearly 200 members of St. Charles Alumni Association and friends at the organization's twenty-fourth annual reunion on Thursday, June 26. In the main speech of the evening, Father Niglis decried the world-wide trend from Christianity to paganism. "Two main ideologies are rampant today," he said, "and they are one and the same – communism and nazism." The paganism of Europe, he said, was the result of an over-emphasis of material values and a disregarding of spiritual and intellectual values.

Father Niglis told the audience that the world of paganism, in which they lived, demanded a strong Christian faith. "Our faith must be a dynamic force and there must be no compromise," he declared. The leadership of faith begins in the home and is nurtured and developed in the schools, elementary and high school, said Father Niglis. "We never cease learning, both mentally and spiritually, but the two must grow together," he asserted.

Other speakers included Mrs. Hildegard Block, retiring president; Leo Warren, toastmaster; Mrs. Eleanor Coughlin, who welcomed the incoming class; Bonnie Jean Coughlin, who responded for the class of '41; Rev. Charles Myers, pastor; and Msgr. Philipp Dreis, former pastor.

Mrs. Block presided at the business meeting. Officers elected for the ensuing year were president Celia Rose, vice president Anthony B. Rewald, secretary Mrs. Irene Kelly, and treasurer Evelyn Bushman. The organization also voted a \$25 appropriation to the St. Ann's Society for preparing and serving the banquet and awarded the Sister Mary Hermana trophy to the class of '33 for having the largest percentage of membership in attendance.

Msgr. Dreis said it was a pleasure to be back and to know that "just a little bit I've tried to do has grown into this splendid group." "The world today is half crazy," he said. "Things necessary for living have been forgotten – the salvation of souls and keeping our way of life. A nation conceived in liberty will last as long as the ideas of its founding fathers last. The fathers of this nation believed in liberty, equality, and Christianity; if we give up Christianity our liberty will go," he said.

Mrs. Coughlin said it was a pleasure to welcome the class of '41. She traced the history of the alumni association from its inception in 1917, under Father Dreis, to the present. "This banquet," she declared, "is really the tie that binds. We are proud of the record of our former grads and it is with special interest that I welcome this year's class."

Mrs. Coughlin's "special interest," her daughter Bonnie Jean, responded for the class of '41. She said that the class was thankful to God, their parents, and their teachers for the education they received at St. Charles. "We are happy to become members of the alumni, to look forward with faith to assisting, but we feel sadness, too, at leaving the school," she said. "We are not really leaving St. Charles – its spirit goes with us wherever our paths may lie."

Burlington native, Rev. James McCarthy, who had given the sermon at St. Charles' dedication Mass in November 1910 and attended several other functions at St. Charles over the years, died on June 28, 1941, at St. Camillus hospital in Milwaukee after a long illness. Father McCarthy, aged 65 at the time of his death, was a brother of John L. McCarthy and had served as pastor of St. Jerome's Catholic church at Oconomowoc for thirty years. Father McCarthy was widely known as a student of ancient languages and had one of the finest libraries of classical and biblical books in the state.



Rev. Francis J. McGarry was named assistant at St. Charles in 1941; he became a Navy chaplain in World War II.

Among the transfers and assignments of priests in the Milwaukee archdiocese announced by Archbishop Moses Kiley in July 1941 was the assignment of Rev. Francis J. McGarry as assistant at St. Charles. He replaced Rev. William Jung, who had served for just over a year. Father McGarry, a Milwaukee native, had studied and was ordained at St. Francis Seminary. After entering the priesthood he served a year at Fond du Lac and for the four years prior to his assignment to St. Charles, had been assistant at St. Rose parish in Milwaukee.

In August former pupils and her many friends in Burlington extended best wishes to Sister Mary Hortense who celebrated her silver jubilee as a member of the Dominican order. Sister Hortense, who taught at St. Charles school from 1919 to 1929, when she was transferred to St. Catherine's in Racine, was remembered especially for her friendly counsel and her interest in her pupils.

(to be continued)