

Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Motherhouse Says Good-bye to Fr. Hilary



A special social, prepared by Chef Tom, was held at the Motherhouse on September 27th to honor Father Hilary Brzezinski, OFM and to thank him for his years of chaplaincy both at Holy Family Convent and St. Francis Convent. He had been serving as a chaplain since May 1, 2013.

The Sisters were happy to have this time, amid Covid restrictions, to thank Father and wish him well in his new assignment. Father Hilary has been assigned by his provincial to San Damiano Friary in Onalaska, Wisconsin. He is serving in campus ministry at Viterbo University, La Crosse.

College Furnishings Find a Worthy Home



On Thursday, October 15, 12 semi-trucks started arriving to pick up the college furnishings purchased by Addiction Recovery Care, an organization from Kentucky that sponsors drug rehabilitation centers. This organization has 16 rehab sites around the country. The company watches for sales such as ours because they never have enough furnishings for their rehab centers. From our college they purchased the dorm and lounge furnishings, cafeteria furnishings, computers, and kitchen furnishings. Standing

outside the college building, waiting for the semi-trucks to arrive, the men from Kentucky overseeing the move mused, "This would make a good rehab center . . ."

Also, on site on October 15 was a work crew, hired from Manitowoc, to load the semi-trucks. The young man who was the leader of the work crew said he knew our college, having come out as a child and attended the summer reading clinic. He said he learned his reading and phonics and the Sisters were very good to him.

—Sister Leonette Kochan

Sister Mary Zigo Celebrates 104th Birthday



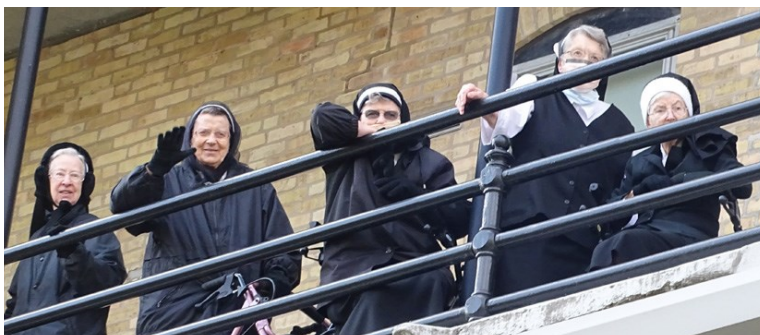
Sister Mary watches from the south porch as the Sisters sing *Happy Birthday*.



Sister Mary Zigo celebrated her 104th birthday on Sunday, October 11, 2020. She was delighted and filled with gratitude by the outpouring of love and prayers from her Franciscan Sisters, family and friends both near and far. At 1:30 p.m. on her birthday, the Motherhouse Sisters gathered in Sacred Heart Court and some of the St. Rita Sisters assembled on their porches to sing "Happy Birthday" to Sister Mary. They sang the traditional "Happy Birthday" then a version known by her Sisters, "A Happy Birthday to you . . ." and finally a group of Sisters sang a Spanish version of the song.

When asked what words she would like to tell everyone she said, "I want to thank everyone who takes such good care of us. Thank you to all of the Sisters who are so kind to me." Then she said, "It feels like winter!" The sun came out on an otherwise cloudy and cool day to make Sister Mary Zigo's day bright and cheerful.

Sister Mary was born on October 11, 1916 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Stephen and Katharine (Kucey). Unfortunately, her birth mother died as a result of the Spanish flu in 1918. The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, the deadliest in history, infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide—about one-third of the planet's population. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. Now Sister Mary is experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic which continues to affect the world's population. She knows firsthand what it means to spend time in quarantine as she prays for an end to this devastating pandemic.



Sister Mary grew up when the radio was the popular way people listened to the news, until the development of the television around 1945. She has also witnessed the arrival of modern technology and has used the computer for e-mail, as well as Zoom to communicate with her family and friends!

Sister Mary entered the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in August 1932. She was accepted as a novice in 1933 and made her first profession in 1935. Sister Mary made her final profession of vows in 1938. She has been a professed member of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity for 85 years! Sister Mary is the oldest living member of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity! God bless you, Sister Mary Zigo!

—Sister Elizabeth Benwie



The Sisters of West Point took advantage of the nice weather October 17 (before the rise in Covid numbers caused new restrictions) and headed to Gretna for a day of relaxation and a community outing. We first stopped in Omaha to pick up Sister Renee Mirkes and proceeded onto The Cloisters on the Platte. It is a beautiful spacious retreat center with larger than life outdoor Stations of the Cross open to the public.

After an hour with the Lord, meandering through woods and over a rushing creek, we drove 10 minutes down the road to the Shrine of the



Holy Family, a small glass chapel looking down upon Highway 80. The purpose of the location is to offer weary travelers a quiet respite with the Lord during their trip. After taking Sr. Renee back to Omaha, we stopped in Fremont to dine out, literally, eating in the van. This was a long awaited community event since our

original community day activity was canceled due to Covid 19. It was a wonderful day and well timed because the temperatures dropped dramatically and we had snow on Sunday and Monday!



When word got out that our Sisters in St. Rita's were again confined to their rooms because of Covid 19, Sister Elizabeth Ann had her 7th and 8th grade theology students write letters and carefully colored designed posters to help brighten up the Sisters hearts and rooms. They also wanted to let the Sisters know that they are praying for their healing, safety and care.



This past weekend the Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School softball team made our school and West Point proud by capturing the Class C title of State Champion Softball Team!! In the tournament they played 7 games with a team powerhouse total of 12 homeruns, some being grand slams. Last year our Bluejays came in second in the state,

so this year they were determined to show everyone their skill, power, and teamwork. Way to Go Big Blue!!

Guardian Angels Central Catholic School in West Point, NE successfully made it through the first quarter of school going face to face with the students. Working carefully to assure this the students sanitize their hands on entering school and every classroom. Mask wearing is expected in the hallways, classrooms where there isn't the ability to social distance, and sanitizing the desks after every class. Besides these efforts the hallways are sprayed down with a fogger twice a week and stairway railings and bathrooms sanitized a few times a day. Mr. Clean has nothing over the diligent efforts of administration, custodian, staff, and students!! When the weather was warmer some classes went outside to study where the students were able to demask themselves and work in groups.

With the virus numbers rising in Cuming County—we are reaching into the orange warning alert—we are striving in everyway to make every effort to maintain an in-school, face to face contact for the second quarter. A few teachers tested positive, and some students were exposed to positive family members so there have been some in quarantine but no need to quarantine a whole class or go to virtual learning. The students are trying hard to abide by the expectations because they personally do not want to go back to remote learning. Let us continue to pray for one another as we travel our way through this Covid virus Highway.

Pope Francis has given us much to pray and learn about in this month's intention: *That the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.*

Our first step may need to be a look at definitions. The dictionary tells us the following:

Robotics: the branch of technology that deals with the design, construction, operation, and application of robots.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): a branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent behavior in computers or, the capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior

Having determined WHAT we are talking about, now we may ask WHY is this a concern to bring to prayer? Well, let's look at some areas for apprehension among experts in the field.

- Not all agree on what AI means. Artificial intelligence is a broad term used to describe everything from machine learning, such as product recommendations on Amazon.com, to "strong AI," or efforts to build devices with the intellectual ability equal to a human's. *Jack Jenkins May 26, 2018 CRUX*
- There's a very strong moral question about whether AI-assisted weapon systems can be used to wage a just war. Should a machine be making decisions on the battlefield for human beings? Will a machine be able to follow the responsibilities of just-war theory? *Levi Checketts, Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Holy Names University, Berkeley, CA*
- Algorithms used by Silicon Valley companies can lead to hiring more men than women, or Google Image search results for "professor" primarily produce pictures of older white men. *Professor Shion Guha, Director of Data Science Graduate Program, Marquette University*
- The asymmetry, by which a select few know everything about us while we know nothing about them, dulls critical thought and the conscious exercise of freedom. The inequalities that are expanding enormously with knowledge and wealth accumulate in a few hands with grave risks for democratic societies. *Pope Francis*

Clearly there are substantial concerns. Some of these also relate to points dealt with in *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter on racism. So let's look at what the Church is saying and doing in regard to these problems. Pope Francis tasked the Pontifical Academy for Life, in cooperation with Microsoft, IBM and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, to craft what has come to be known as the Rome Call for AI Ethics. Let's look at 3 core precepts outlined by this group as of February 28, 2020.

1. AI shall not discriminate
2. AI shall be good in its intent
3. AI shall care about sustainability

In what way could artificial intelligence, or use of robots discriminate? Researchers from MIT and the University of Toronto have found that some facial recognition technology labeled darker-skinned women as men 31 percent of the time. Lighter-skinned women were misidentified 7 percent of the time. Darker-skinned men had a 1 percent error rate, while lighter-skinned men had none. Of course, this is just one product and one example of sexual discrimination combined with racial disparity. Other sources and studies cite discrimination due to use of robotics in jobs often filled by low income populations as well as the unavailability of some technological advantages by those who cannot afford devices, or live in remote areas where internet accessibility is lacking.

The second core precept states that AI shall be good in its intent. This includes the notion that AI and robotics companies need to look beyond mere economic growth and success to consider the ethical ramifications of the tools and products they produce. One example might be the proposed self-driving car. Presumably this would be a financial boon for car companies. However, will these corporations have considered how their product will perform in all situations? Perhaps a child has run out into the street and the car will have to "decide" whether to hit the child or hit a tree which may cause the passengers harm? Will the car be programmed to proceed solely in perceived "safe" environments? Will this mean that the car will not proceed into an area where a tornado has been predicted? Will the car circumvent neighborhoods that its creators have designated unsafe? Companies will have a huge task in insuring that the good be done.

The final core precept deals with sustainability. Pope Francis urged the authoring group to include care for creation and the challenge of ending world poverty and hunger in their considerations. How can AI and robotics function in this area? A combined use of satellite images and AI photo readers can help to locate and define areas of poverty that they might be better served. Robots with AI capability work in fields in third world countries to help determine which types of seeds grow and produce most profitably for the people there. Our experience of education during the pandemic has alerted us to the use of technology in furthering learning. Improved programs and devices as well as greater availability would surely lead to a literate world where our coming generations are schooled in principles of sustainability for the Earth.

There is much to think and pray about. Some worry that the growth of artificial intelligence and robotics will lead us into a science fiction-modeled world of horrors in which we, as hu-

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Just Gospel (Continued from page 4)

mans have no power. In answer to those fears, Alan Kay, American computer scientist and winner of the 2003 A.M. Turing Award, the highest honor in computer science says, “Some people worry that artificial intelligence will make us feel inferior, but then, anybody in his right mind should have an inferiority complex every time he looks at a flower.”

Some even fear that artificial intelligence-powered robots will claim a certain humanity and thus would be considered capable of having a spirit. Sister Iliia Delia, OSF tells us, “The key issue here is one of freedom, and that, I think, only belongs to organic biological human personhood. To be called into a relationship and to respond to that relationship is still . . . unique to the human person as an image of God.” Let us go forward with faith in the God that created us to be stewards and use our gifts to continue His work of creation.

Baptismal Consecration: The Life of Charity

As a human virtue, charity (or love) is, *perhaps*, most easily grasped. Who of us does not resonate deeply with Mother Teresa when she reminds us that we are made to love and be loved? We innately understand ourselves to exist in relationship to and with others; we understand this so much so that, when we are young, one of our greatest sufferings is occasioned when we “hit up against the limits” of our relationships, whether the limits in question are those of others (our parents, our siblings, our friends) or our own. Both Middle and High School experience is often a prolonged, anguished desire to relate well to others and our misery when this fails. At a certain point, we discover within ourselves a desire not only to live *with* others, but more deeply to live *for* others. we long to have someone to whom we can give ourselves completely in love. The bedrock for our human capacity to make a gift of ourselves in love is our experience of having been loved by others.

And yet . . . The human tendency in our culture to understand love as an emotion rather than as a choice, and therefore as a virtue, cripples both our understanding *and* our relationships for many reasons. If love is an emotion, then our experience of positive emotions (as we define them) becomes the litmus test for whether we are experiencing love. Love becomes as fleeting, changeable, and even beyond our control as our emotions. Moreover, love probably becomes something that we look “to get” and not “to give,” except, perhaps, to those who first give us what we want. Love that we “give” becomes “repayment” for favors shown us or for the good feeling that a person occasions.

Here is where the importance of the human soil in which God’s grace is planted becomes most evident. If human love is only an emotion, we will identify God’s love as the good feelings we have when we think about God. At the level of human understanding, this is unsatisfactory for all kinds of reasons. What about those who experience *bad* feelings when they think about God? Or what about the believer who does evil because they believe God’s “love” requires this evil?

Humanly, it seems to me that the only way out of a “get” understanding of love is to embrace a “give” understanding of love. We are innately drawn to and inspired by the love of those who lay down their lives (both literally and figuratively) for the people around them. Sacrificial love moves us to tears every time. If you don’t believe me, try watching the 1997 film *Life is Beautiful* without crying. The story of St. Maximillian Kolbe’s sacrifice inspires believers of every religion or no religion at all.

The human virtue of love, then, is the virtue by which we *give our lives away*, living as a gift to and for others. While human love presupposes both human faith and hope, love is both the root and perfection of our fidelity to one another, especially in times of difficulty. The one who loves sees and desires that which is truly good for the other person and oneself.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus demonstrates joy in His Father’s love *for Him* and single-hearted commitment to His Father’s love *for us*. Jesus’ love for His Father is the life-blood of his fidelity to the mission entrusted to him, even when that mission unfolded in his death. Jesus sacrifices Himself rather than abandon His Father’s love. He sacrifices Himself for us so that we might be reconciled with and drawn into His Father’s love and life. “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” *John 10:11* It is remarkable to note, with St. Paul, that Jesus sacrifices Himself for us *while we were enemies of God*: “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” *Romans 5:8*

Baptism plants the Father’s love as revealed in Christ within the soil of our human love: “the love *of God* has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us.” *Romans 5:5* In a very real way, God vows Himself to us out of love, “in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health.” We are able to experience ourselves as beloved of God and we are able to fall in love with God. Hopefully, we fall in love with God before we fall in love with our spouses so that we are able to experience our spouse as an instance of God’s love for us. Falling in love with God makes us aware that all of our human loves can be fueled by divine energy and love; we can be transformed into chaste (that is, single-hearted) persons who, like Christ, *love our enemies, even unto death!*

Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora, OSF, S.T.D.
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St. Francis Day Celebration

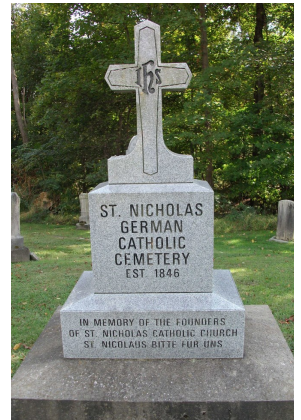


Sister Bernadette Selinsky (Vanna White) recorded the letters as the Sisters played their version of Wheel of Fortune.

Zanesville, Ohio—The Sisters at Good Samaritan Convent played "Wheel of Fortune" to celebrate St. Francis Day. However, there was no "wheel" and only one "fortune." Sister Bernadette made 6 crossword puzzles using Franciscan words, phrases, saints, prayers, places, etc. and wrote

the corresponding blank squares on large pieces of cardboard. Each Sister got one turn at a time to name one letter which Sister Bernadette then filled in on the puzzle. Whoever could figure out every word first, was the winner for a puzzle. And the fortune (prize) at the end: No matter how many or few of the puzzles each Sister won, they each got the same fortune: a day of prayer. They were all reminded of our Franciscan heritage this fun way.

They also went to the two cemeteries in Zanesville where two of our Sisters are buried. The older of two cemeteries is "St. Nicholas German Cemetery" where Sister Antonine Hildebrand is buried. She died at the age of 29 at her home in Zanesville and was professed on her deathbed. She is a relative of our two subsequent Hildebrand Sisters. The newer cemetery is "Mount Olive" where Sister Mary Michael O'Keefe is buried.



—Sister Mary Ann Nugent

Sisters at St. Francis Convent Celebrate Feast of St. Francis



1.



2.



3.

The Community at St. Francis Convent celebrated the feast of St. Francis with the Transitus, October 3 and with Mass, a delicious dinner, and a social on October 4. *Picture 1.) Sister Mary Gabriel Van Dreele read a reading and 2.) Sister Patricia Sevcik carried the Francis candle to the altar during the Transitus service.*

Pictures from the social: 3.) Sister Mary Lou Loonsfoot, Sister Donalise Popelka, and Sister Anne Marie Lom preparing their Bingo cards with the Franciscan terms they picked from the list. 4.) Sister Helena Young, Sister Ritarose Stahl and Sister Mary Carol Kopecky selecting prizes from the Prize cart.



4.

—Sister Mary Ann Tupy

“Happy” Brings Big Smiles on the Feast of St. Francis

“Happy” poses with:

1. Sister Georgiana Rank
2. Sister Andrene Flasch
3. Sister Clarita Ryan



"Happy" the clown (Sister Elizabeth Bennie) visited St. Rita Health Center on St. Francis Day. Each Sister received a notepad made by Sister Mary Jerome Wensel, a pen from Holy Family College, and candy in a bag tied with colored ribbon. Each Sister also received an animal

balloon or flower. Sister Annette Kurey and Sister Karen Suhr prepared each of the gift bags, while Sister Lois Ann Gosch took pictures of each of the Sisters. Everyone had a most enjoyable afternoon with plenty of laughter and smiles.
 —Sister Elizabeth Bennie

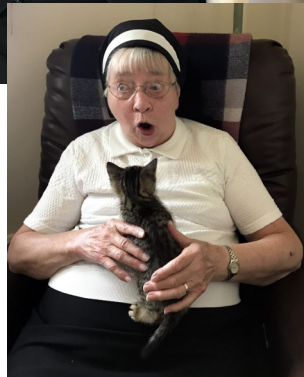
“Happy” poses with:

4. Sister Aurelia Hanousek
5. Sister Kathryn Vanness
6. Sister Colette Hoadley



Sisters on the fourth floor St. Rita Health Center are making the most of their situation and the need for social distancing. Sister Andrene Flasch reads to another Sister who sits in the doorway. Sister Georgiana Rank is busy making masks for staff and Sisters. Sister Clarita Ryan enjoys the visit of a kitten.

—Sister Elizabeth Bennie



Sister Martina Van Ryzin enjoying the Packer game!

Faith Formation at St. Anne Parish

Chassell, Michigan—Faith Formation at St. Anne Parish took on a different look for the month of September. Not knowing what would happen due to the rising number of COVID cases since the three colleges in our county began semester classes. Most of the classes went online even before school actually started.

So, instead of a Pizza-Making party for the Faith Formation families, we decided to do outside activities. On September 13 families gathered at Waterworks Park in Calumet for an outdoor Mass and built a fire down by the beach. On September 20 we had a canoe trip for any Faith Formation families that went down a portion of the Sturgeon River and ended at the Chassell



A perfect day for a canoe ride on the Sturgeon River with St. Anne, Faith Formation families.

Park. Individually wrapped snacks and play time followed. On September 27 the family met at the Bishop Baraga Shrine in Baraga for a hike and prayer.

The following Sunday, October 4th, it was decided to have ZOOM sessions for the Faith Formation. Our numbers in Houghton County are still rising, though MTU (Michigan Technological University) is testing about 400 people per week and their number of cases on campus are declining.

Our outdoor activity with distancing has helped families to have some community spirit needed at this time of COVID.

—Sisters Jacqueline Spaniola and Carolee Vanness

Novitiate Team Plays Rosary Quiz via Zoom

True or False—Originally there were 150 “mysteries of the rosary” on which to reflect. True! Each prayer had its own reflection from Scripture on the life of Jesus.

True or False—The rosary tree, which grows in Florida, produces seeds that have a hard coating and a natural hole in the center which makes them desirable for rosary making. True! Beware, however, as the seeds are extremely poisonous.

Early rosaries were fashioned from: a) clay, b) cedarwood and olive kernels, c) pebbles joined with cord. B is the answer as these materials were associated with the Holy Land.

How did you do on this Rosary Quiz? These are samples of questions used in a game at the celebration of Sister Mary Jane’s feastday—the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Since the Novices and their team members were all in quarantine, the celebration had to go viral! All 7 Sisters joined via Zoom for the quiz game.

A spinning wheel on the screen determined the question to be answered as well as the points to be awarded for a

correct answer. While a “virtual crowd” cheered madly to encourage each contestant before they got their question.

The questions, gleaned from across internet sources, ranged from simple ones for 1 point to those bordering on the impossible for 10 points. All learned something, laughed about something and rejoiced with the feastday celebrant, Sister Mary Jane, as she achieved the winning score! Rosary anyone?

—Sister Kathleen Murphy



Sisters Mariadele Jacobs and June Smith at the Annual Rosary Rally on Saturday, October 10, 2020, at noon in front of the Guernsey County Courthouse, Cambridge, Ohio.

Sisters at San Xavier Enjoy a Community Outing



Left photo—Sisters at San Xavier Mission on their Community outing 1 to r: Sisters Mary Ann Spanjers, Rosalyn Muraski, Mary Karen Oudeans, Clare Rose Oswald and Carla Riach (shown in photo 2 & 3).

With the temperature still in the 100's at the end of September here in Tucson, Arizona; the Sisters at San Xavier reflect with refreshing joy upon their Labor Day community day at the Shrine of Our Lady Undoer of Knots up in the coolness of Mount Lemmon! We were so blessed to have the whole area of the Shrine to pray, discuss, relax and enjoy the beauty of each other and the mountain!

—Sister Mary Ann Spanjers

Omaha 2020 Training Conference in NaProTechnology



Achebe (MD, CFCMC, FCP, DFM, FCEI), St. Margaret's Hospital & Maternity, Felele, LoKoja, Kogi State, Nigeria, MCD/CEO; **Sr. Cecilia Adache, OSF** (RN/RMIBNSC, CFCP, FCEI) Our Lady and St. Francis Catholic Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria, Hospital Administrator; **Sr. Martha Agredo, OLA**, Our Lady of Apostles Clinic, Tafabalewa, Buachi, Nigeria, Chief Medical Officer. They are wonderful icons of African joy and courage. God bless them and all our American attendees who are so committed to making our brand of women's healthcare available throughout the world.

—Sister Renee Mirkes, OSF, PhD

As God would have it, the Saint Paul VI Institute's second phase of their 2020 Educational Conference which was originally scheduled for the end of March was—you guessed it—delayed until September because of Covid-19. Most of the European contingency was unable to fly to Omaha for the event because of the travel ban, but the Nigerian contingent was allowed to come at the last minute. They—and we—were especially pleased, and I thought all of you would enjoy meeting the physicians/practitioners from Nigeria who were able to complete the 2020 NaPro-Technology training conference. From right to left, please meet: **Sr. Ann Ugweke**, MSN, NP who is from Nigeria, but currently practicing in St. Louis, MO; **Dr. Francis**



Holy Family Conservatory
of Music— new address:

6751 Calumet Ave.
Manitowoc, WI 54220



Reflection on Silver Lake

A special joy to share with all of you - a perfect REFLECTION! The Lord placed me at the right place; at the right time (about 8:15 a.m.); the trees were in perfect change; Silver Lake behind the Motherhouse was calm and the sun just right; plus, I had my camera with me!!! – October 14, 2020! I was at the same spot about 2:15 p.m. and it was windy and the lake choppy so no reflection. Probably the most perfect picture I ever took.

—Sister Verna Osterhout.



While Sister Theresa Schleis was enjoying some time on the porch a little feathered friend rested on her shoulder.



Sister Rochelle Kerkhof and CCD students enjoy snack time before class outside at St. Joseph's, Benkelman Stratton, Nebraska.