



Heritage Happenings

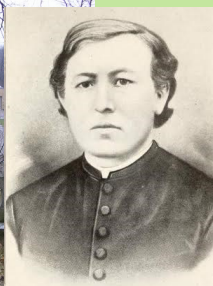
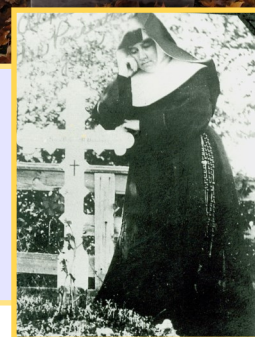
Archives Office

May 2023

Lest We Forget...

Trials and Tribulations after the Fire

Even after the fire, trials and sadness awaited the growing community. After the fire and the adjustment to rebuilding the two wings of the convent, Mother Pancratia, just elected in 1880, was called to her eternal home September 22, 1883. *For three and a half years our Venerable Mother had been suffering from tuberculosis of the larynx and lungs, an illness she bore with fortitude and patience. When her end came she fell asleep sweetly smiling in the Lord.* She was only 37 years old and professed just 17 years. Mother Alexia, having personally experienced the holiness of Mother Pancratia, requested that she be buried next to the saintly woman, a request that was granted. Mother Odelia prayed these words: "O holy Mother Pancratia, pray to the heavenly Father for us and recommend us to the intercession of our Holy Father Saint Francis." Photo: Mother Alexia leaning on the original wood grave cross of Mother Pancratia.



As though this death was not enough for the Sisters, within two years, on May 28, 1885, Father George Fessler, their much revered Spiritual Director, was called home to the Lord. He was ordained At St. Francis Seminary by Bishop Henni on 22nd December, 1872. His first appointment was assistant to his brother, Father Joseph, at St. Boniface parish in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He succeeded his brother, Father Joseph, as pastor at Alverno (Silver Lake) and chaplain at the motherhouse of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in the fall of 1880. He was only 37 years old when he died.



Eulogies: the "D"s are being added! 10 with photos



Left to Right: Sr. Dolorose Goetzler, Sr. DePazzi Meister, Sr. Davidica Beschta, Sr. Denise Cardin, Sr. Dominica Bentzler

Left to Right: Sr. Dionysia Kiefer, Sr. Dominica Bichler, Sr. Donald Marie Cyr, and Sr. Dorothy Wood.

TOTAL Eulogies added so far: 215!!

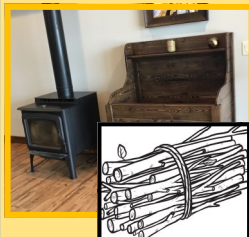




Changes continued....



After the death of Mother Pancratia, Mother Odelia was again elected as Community Director. Her term this time was for one year (1883-1884) and then she was re-elected and served another 7 years until 1891. During this time, changes were made in the new buildings.



The stoves being used for heat were replaced with a furnace. No longer did they have to carry wood into the house to all the different rooms on the five story, two-wing building where fire was needed. Think of it...no elevator!!



During her time in office Mother Odelia worked hard to update the education of the Sisters and was responsible for the establishment of Holy Family Institute, a boarding school for girls, and Holy Family Academy and Normal School. She was known to say: "Better teachers – better schools."



She now worked with Rev. J. P. Van Treek who followed Father George until 1888. After him, Rev. J. P. Welbes was assigned and it was him who deemed it necessary to add on another wing for the purpose of obtaining room for a more suitable chapel. So Mother Odelia was again back in "Building Mode". The new addition was completed in 1890 and solemnly blessed by Vicar General Msgr. Zeininger on the 20th of May, 1890. She had one more year to go and then she finally went out on mission to teach in 1891. Mother Alexia was elected. Many changes would be seen over the next 20 years.



This Crucifixion plaque was on display during Holy Week 2023 and generated many questions about its story. "Several years ago in 1987 when Sister St. Francis Wenzel was stationed at St. John's Komatke, we received cancelled stamps from veritably all over the United States. One package came frequently from an elderly Episcopalian lady in New York. I would always acknowledge it with a THANK YOU note and a few words. Gradually our letters became more friendly and we kept corresponding. Mary had lost her dear husband, Bill, and was grieving over him. Occasionally she would send me \$10.00 and I would have a Mass said for her and her husband. About two years ago Mary was failing and couldn't live alone any more. She was in her 90's so she went to live with a kind, loving niece of hers. One day this fall I received a letter from her niece saying that Mary was doing very poorly. I began to pray for a happy death for Mary. I also sent her a Get Well wish. About December 5th I received a note from her niece. My first thought was: "Mary died!"



yes, Mary died and in the words of her niece: "...was too ill to hear your loving message....You have provided her with a lot of pleasure by corresponding with her and I thank you for being there for her. Aunt Mary made you a bequest of \$3,000 in her will...she left a carving of Jesus at Calvary. It wasn't mentioned in her will but I am sending it to you I know you will pray for her eternal rest." My personal thoughts: "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave Me to drink. When I was ill and lonely, you visited me!" All you you read this little article, please pause a moment and please say a pray for Our dear friend, Mary Jessurun. PHOTO: Here is Sister Herman Joseph Hautzinger (R-1900) cutting out stamps for delivery to the missions.

