



Heritage Happenings

Archives Office

June 2023

Lest We Forget...

YOU'LL FIND
THERE'S
NEVER
A DULL
MOMENT IN
THIS HOUSE.

Never a Dull Moment: Twenty Years with Mother Alexia

The new 1890 wing has been finished and Mother Alexia is elected Superior of the Community. During her 20 years many changes were seen in the community. At the beginning of her government, the community consisted of 141

Professed Sisters, 35 novices, and 36 candidates. The Sisters conducted 42 parochial schools and the Institute of the Holy Family for young ladies at the Motherhouse.

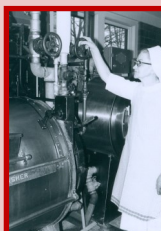
March 1892 the beautiful Holy Family Pieta between first and second floor was donated by friends from Kaukauna.

In October 1892 Sister Hilaria Schaefer's father donated \$200 to have a porch built off the second floor of the 1890 infirmary section for the comfort and pleasure of the ailing Sisters who could now get outside and walk a bit in the fresh air.



On **September 27, 1893** Leopold Stieger died and was buried in our cemetery. He was a faithful worker for the Sisters from 1879 (before the 1881 fire) for 17 years. He was born in Germany in 1823.

In September of 1894 laundry improvements were needed. Mother Alexia was trying to find a means of relieving the Sisters in charge of the laundry. With the increase in numbers and the poor arrangement of the laundry, washing had become quite a burden. A Steam Laundry Plant was finally purchased and the health needs, especially proved. Far Photo: Sr. Irenaus, Stanislaus and Monica.



colds, finally improved. During this same year, the new high altar in St. Francis chapel was erected. On the Feast of Corpus Christi the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered on it for the first time. Remember: no electricity! Amidst all good things, one tragedy stands out.

On **February 4, 1896**, Sister Coletta, our Foundress, met with a terrible accident. Her right arm was caught between the heated rollers of the large laundry mangle, but God did spare her life and her hand.

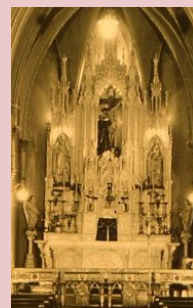
TRAGEDY

Over in Beaverton, Oregon, Father Joseph Fessler died on

June 20, 1896. He was buried in the cemetery of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. A stained glass image in their chapel is dedicated to him.

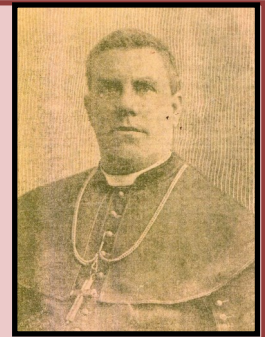
June 21, 1896 the Apostleship of Prayer (League of the Sacred Heart) was established and the convent became a Center of the League. All Sisters were enrolled and accepted one hour a day, called the Hour of Guard, to unite themselves mentally with the presence of Jesus.

August 16, 1896 a dear friend and benefactress of the convent, Mrs. Ellen Rose, had a terrible accident which caused her death. Because her will gave the convent about \$1000.00, the community pledged to have two Masses said for her every year as long as the convent exists...on August 16...every year.





November 10, 1897 was the day of enlightenment: at 4:00 PM Archbishop Katzer blessed the Dynamo and the Engine and an hour and a half later the convent was illuminated by electricity! What a thrilling time that must have been in our history: no more kerosene lanterns, candles to light one's way in dark halls, inability to read the Office in chapel, dorms with only one kerosene lamp!!



November 11, 1897, Archbishop Katzer spent the day after electricity came to the convent,...working. Being greatly interested in the revision of our ceremonial, he spent five whole hours at this work with a zeal and devotion that was really inspiring. In archives is one of his three inkwells that he used.



The cover of this Ceremonial is shown here and was used for the first time on **May 25, 1898**. The ceremony description included: wearing of bridal dresses, cutting of a few locks of hair, ceremony prayers that were said with significant changes for



the postulant, these being:

1. **Habit:** May our Lord Jesus Christ clothe you with justice and sanctity.
2. Wear this **scapular** as an emblem of modesty and humility
3. Receive this **coif:** let your life be hidden with Christ in God
4. Receive this crown/**wreath** which our Lord has prepared for you from all eternity. (A crown of flowers at Reception and First profession, of thorns made from trees in our Motherhouse woods, was worn by the Sister for three days of celebration.)

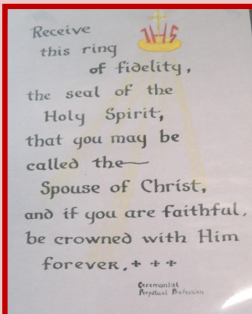


5. **Rosary and Office Book:** May the Lord hear your prayers and hearken to your petitions.

6. **New Name:** "Strive to bear your names worthily."

From one of the Sister making final vows, this prayer card says:

Receive this ring of fidelity, the seal of the Holy Spirit that you maybe called the Spouse of Christ, and if you are faithful, be crowned with Him forever.

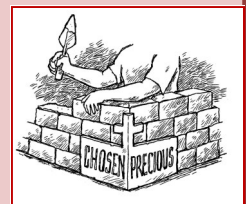


The earliest final vows formula in the archives was written in German by Sister Pauline Knust in 1907: "I, Sister Mary Pauline, vow and promise to god Almighty, the blessed Virgin Mary, our Holy Father Francis and all the Saints in Heaven, to you, Most Reverend Father, and to you, our Reverend Mother, to live all the days of my life in poverty, chastity, and obedience according to the Rule approved by Pope Leo X for the members of the third Order of Saint Francis living in community. Furthermore, I promise to obey the Minister General of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis and to observe the Constitutions approved for this Congregation by the Most Reverend Bishop of Green Bay, and I am ready to accept the penances imposed on me by the Most Reverend Visitor or by our Reverend Mother for any transgressions [...]."

September 22, 1898 the cornerstone of the new Holy Family Hospital was laid.

One year later, **September 27, 1899**, was to be a day of great rejoicing at the dedication of the new hospital ... but it was also a day of sadness. Mother Odelia died at 2:20 AM that morning. Her work for God's people and her love for the Lord were now completed and she could rest in peace.

A new era in health care for our community began with the dedication of Holy Family Hospital and others that followed. To be continued.



Coming in next issue: *Who were the Chaplains who served us over the past years?*