

# PAST STILL PRESENT

CPPS ARCHIVES BULLETIN Issue 27, December 2016

## A BIT OF HISTORY, A BIT OF FUN IN THIS CHRISTMAS ISSUE

**FIRST, THE HISTORY:** excerpts from an article that first appeared in Little Cloister in 1938



“In a spirit of silence and mortification the Gurtweil Sisters waited for the coming of the Savior. Christmas morning found them at the parish church participating in the solemn celebration. With joyous hearts they reached home to find a few nuts, cakes and three prunes, which in the simplicity of their hearts, they thoroughly enjoyed.



“The Christmas celebration of our Sisters at Belle Prairie was similar to that of Gurtweil in spirit and simplicity. After returning home from the parish services they were made completely happy by the little wax Infant living in a nut shell which had been prepared by Sr. Seraphim and was on this account treasured.

“At O’Fallon, Christmas and Midnight Mass were synonymous. It was during this Mass the Sisters received Communion. When for any reason the Holy Sacrifice could not be celebrated at Midnight the Sisters assembled at that sacred hour for adoration. They sang the High Mass in three parts and the beloved “Heiligste Nacht” traditional from the Gurtweil days, was expressive of peace and joy. The Sisters sang German songs during the second Mass.

“With the exception of the three-part Offertory, Chant was sung during the third Holy Mass which was celebrated with great solemnity. The remainder of the morning was remarkable for its silence. In the afternoon the Community assembled in Chapel to chant the Solemn Vespers of our Blessed Mother.”

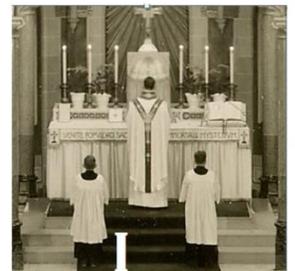
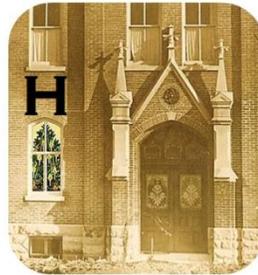
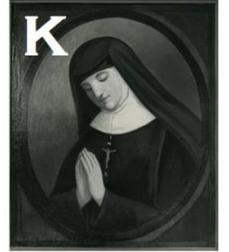
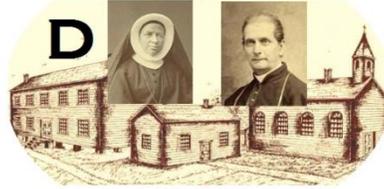


**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**  
**NEXT PAGE IS FOR FUN.**

## Matching Game:

Can you match these December events with their pictures?

1. \_\_\_ December 20, 1845 — Perpetual adoration, conducted silently, was introduced in Steinerberg.
2. \_\_\_ Late in December, 1847 — A group of ten Sisters left Steinerberg to seek a new home in the Alsace in France. They settled in Ottmarsheim.
3. \_\_\_ December 12, 1857 — Six Sisters left for Gurtweil in response to Rev. Kessler's request. There they opened a home for orphans and neglected children.
4. \_\_\_ December 15, 1871 — Mother Augusta received a copy of Bishop Baltes' conditions for our remaining in the Alton Diocese in Illinois. She could not agree to them and therefore applied for acceptance into the St. Louis Diocese.
5. \_\_\_ December 1872 — Fourteen Sisters, seven novices and one postulant were housed with the Ursulines at 12th and Russell in St. Louis for three months--until March, 1873.
6. \_\_\_ December 1878 — Normal School for Teachers opened. This was the beginning of our college.
7. \_\_\_ December 31, 1886 — Sophie [Sr. Raymunda] Krekel, the first vocation from O'Fallon to enter our community, was received as a novice.
8. \_\_\_ December 1903 — Christmas tree was used for first time in the Motherhouse.
9. \_\_\_ December 25, 1922 — *Missa Recitata* was celebrated for the first time at the second Christmas Eucharist, O'Fallon.
10. \_\_\_ December 1, 1934 — Rev. Ermin Vitry O.S.B. arrived here to conduct the Sacred Chant until his death, 1960.
11. \_\_\_ December 25, 1953 — We received relics of our foundress, Mother Theresa Weber, from the Sisters at Ottmarsheim.
12. \_\_\_ December 1, 1975 — Construction work began on St. Joseph Hall.
13. \_\_\_ December 31, 2008 — Sr. Mary Whited signed agreements that enabled us to begin renovations of the Motherhouse Buildings.
14. \_\_\_ December 8, 2015 — Father Mitch Doyen dedicated the new Lourdes Grotto located in the upper part of the park.



Continued from page 1—from the Little Cloister article.



“Prior to the year 1903, the Christmas tree had no place in the festivities. The Novices pleaded its cause so well at that time that Mother Beata sent them to the woods for a tree. When they had decorated it with nuts, apples and cookies and had prepared their simple crib, their joy was complete.

“The simplicity, so characteristic of the lives of our Sisters, was especially impressive in the refectory. There were no table cloths – not even on Christmas. There was no lifting of silence and a proper spiritual reading was made during the meals. But in the afternoon ... there was the so-called *Schwaetzkaaffe!* [coffee chatter] There was usually served cold meat or sausage, bread and butter, wine or beer. ...After the meal there were games for about an hour when all retired to Chapel for Matins and Lauds. Then followed coffee and coffee cake. The Novices shared the feast day treat in their own apartments.

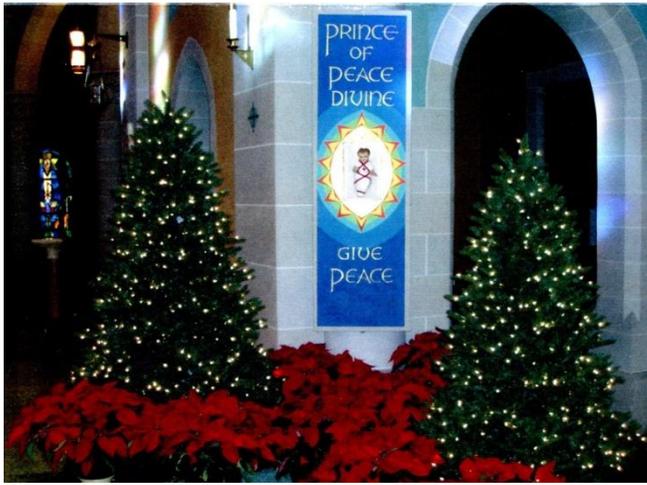
“In 1904 the Christmas tree was placed in the refectory. It was beautifully decorated with gold and silver strands, balls, nuts, apples and candles. Many candles standing proudly in the holders good Sister Clara made so deftly radiated Christmas cheer. On Christmas Eve the Community gathered about the tree to enjoy a little program of songs and readings by the Novitiate. In later years the tree was placed in the Novitiate, the present rest room, where the whole community assembled.



“With Reverend Father Hellriegel’s coming to us in 1918, our Christmas celebration was solemnized by a procession with the Infant Jesus before the Midnight Mass. This was preceded by the inspiring “Silent Night,” first played by Reverend Father on the zither in the sacristy and then sung by the Sisters. The Community congregated in the corridor from whence they proceeded to Chapel singing “*Ehre sei Gott.*” In Church the “*Adeste Fidelis*” with the “*Venite Adoremus*” was sung.

“In 1926 we celebrated Christmas for the first time in our new Chapel. At this time the Holy Infant which we regard so highly was procured. It was carved in Spain and then sent to the Holy Land where it touched the Holy Crib, a relic of which it carries. At that time the Bambino was enthroned above the altar; now it is placed in a *gloriola* between the painting of Mary and Joseph.

“In 1927 the impressive celebration was begun. The dark Chapel, illumined only by candle light, emphasized the brilliance of the newborn Lux Mundi.” (end of article)



In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we still cherish that Infant. Now it is lovingly carried in the procession preceding Midnight Mass and the Celebrant places it on the panel.

*O Prince of Peace divine  
Who came as man to earth below  
That sharing our poor flesh  
Thy peace on us Thou might bestow  
Give Peace, O Thou the world's Redeemer,  
Thy Peace, O give Thy Peace to all;  
O give Thy Peace*

This nativity set has graced both St. Joseph Chapel [in the former sanctuary] and the Precious Blood Chapel.

Perhaps some readers will remember singing this hymn—so perfect for Advent:

God who watchest o'er us,  
Show thyself before us.  
Answer all our prayers and listen to our cry.  
    Long awaited Savior, come before our eyes.  
    Show to sinful man the gates of Paradise.  
    Sacrifice immortal, close the infernal portal.  
God who watchest....

Day of joy and gladness,  
God hath seen our sadness,  
Pitying our woes and coming all our fears.  
    God in flesh appearing on the lowly earth;  
    Soon a humble village will behold His birth. Heavenly throne forsaking, Human ills partaking.  
Day of joy and....



### ONE MORE BIT OF FUN

Would a Christmas Carol by any other name still sound as sweet?

Give these carols back their proper names. [See the graphic for clues]

1. Happened at the cloudless twelve o'clock \_\_\_\_\_
2. Planetary jubilation \_\_\_\_\_
3. Over there in the feeding-box \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hallowed wee hours \_\_\_\_\_
5. Royal Eastern trio \_\_\_\_\_
6. Gather, everybody who believes \_\_\_\_\_
7. Noiseless dusk to dawn \_\_\_\_\_
8. Listen, heavenly spirits serenade \_\_\_\_\_
9. Benevolent Bohemian monarch \_\_\_\_\_
10. Tiny municipality in Judah \_\_\_\_\_

