

PAST STILL PRESENT

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GOD'S ACRE: OUR CEMETERY IN O'FALLON

A Brief History:

Our cemetery was originally laid out during Mother Augusta Volk's term (in America from 1870 to 1884). It was enlarged during Mother Armella Beutler's term (1884-1902). At first a large wooden crucifix stood on a mound in back of the priests' graves. **A picket fence surrounded the cemetery and a four-foot wooden cross marked each grave.** On the cross was painted the name and birth and death years of the Sister. The cemetery was enlarged again in 1909, during Mother Beata Neukum's term (1902-20). **Added then were the crucifixion group and the Mortuary Chapel** [dismantled in 1960].



In 1919 the old picket fence was replaced with a **stone wall**, and wooden crosses were replaced **with concrete crosses**.

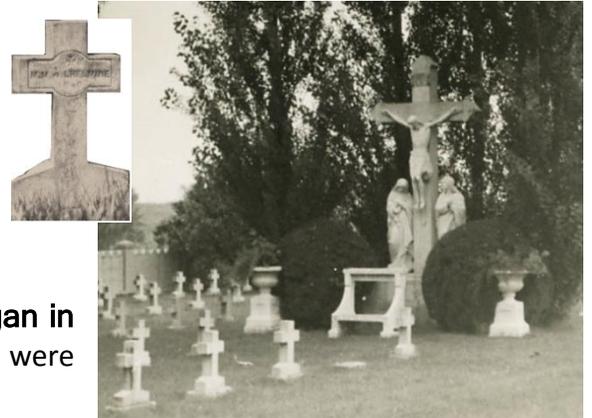
The cemetery was enlarged once more in the early 1950s during Mother Borgia Springrose's term; the enlargement provided for about 150 graves.

The use of burial vaults began in the 1960's. **Double burials began in 1975.** The Stations of the Cross, made by Sr. Mary Beth Kemper were blessed in March of 1988.



In 1998, during Sr. Andree Fries's administration and completed under Sr. Susan Borgel's administration, the cemetery was not enlarged but **completely renovated**. The Crucifixion Group was repainted. The wall was cleaned and sealed and numbers put on the north inside wall to facilitate location of graves.

The ground was sodded and the graves were leveled because of the general deterioration of the concrete markers. **Seven concrete ribbons were laid** extending all the way across from east to west. **On these ribbons the new beveled granite markers were placed. In the center of each marker is an engraving of our traditional community cross.** On either side of the cross is the name of a deceased Sister together with the year of her birth and of her death.



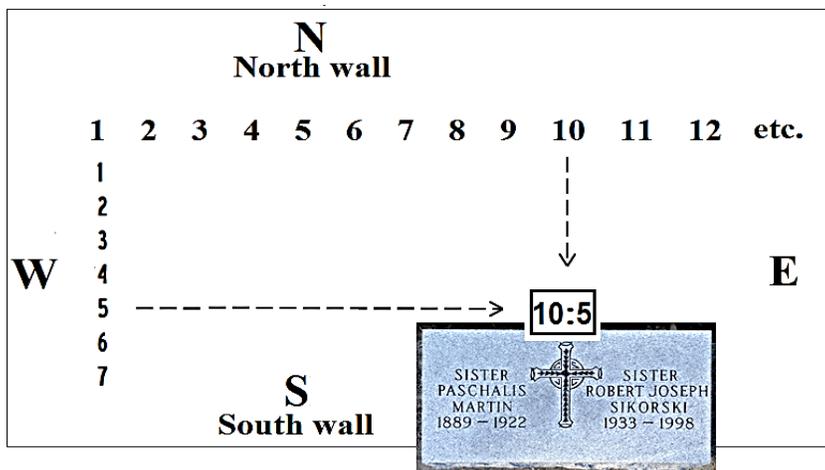


On October 31, 1998, **Mother Theresa Weber's relics**, some of which we had since the 1950's and some of which Sr. Andree Fries brought from Ottmarsheim in 1997, were interred in a **memorial grave dedicated to her and Mother Augusta Volk**. This memorial is located right in the front near the west gate. Both names are on the marker.

Finally, in 2009 the seven monuments for priests in our cemetery were replaced with grave markers like the ones used for Sisters.

Cemetery Layout explained

To use directions, face the cemetery



Example: 10:5.

The first number indicates the **ROW, 10**
the second number indicates the **GRAVE, 5**

To locate the **ROW**:

Note the numbers on the north wall
Count from west to east. → 10

To locate the **GRAVE**:

Count from north to south. ↓ 5

Oh how glorious is the kingdom in which all the saints rejoice with Christ. Robed in white with palm in hand, they follow him where'er he goes. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Sisters Buried in our O'Fallon Cemetery



top: Sr. Catherine, Sr. Elisabeth
bottom: Sr. Christina, Sr. Johanna

Four Sisters, the first to die here at O'Fallon, were buried in separate graves, near to and facing the chapel [i.e., auditorium]. Later around 1890 during Mother Armella Beutler's term when the cemetery was enlarged and extended to the east, the remains of these four Sisters were exhumed and buried together in one grave, **Row 8, Grave 4**. They were: **Sisters Catherine Dietrich, Elisabeth Weber, Christine Bruegel, and Johanna Langenbach**.



Three Sisters are buried together in **row 17, grave 4**. These Sisters died in St. Louis before we moved to the Motherhouse. **Sr. Anna Scholl** died at St. Agatha's Parish. **Sr. Rose Imhof** and **Sr. Christine Hippler** died at the Ursuline Convent in St. Louis and all three were buried in Calvary Cemetery. When the cemetery at the Motherhouse was established, their remains were exhumed from in St. Louis and brought here.

Sr. Seraphine Zwissig—the only Stienerberg pioneer to reach O’Fallon

Sr. Seraphine [born at Seelisberg, Canton Uri, Switzerland, baptized Maria] entered at Steinerberg, Sept 11, 1846. She spent two years of her religious life at Steinerberg, nine years at Ottmarsheim, and sixteen years at Gurtweil. She left Gurtweil for America with the fourth group in 1873 and lived the rest of her life, twenty-five years, at O’Fallon and St. Elizabeth Academy. Sr. Seraphine died at O’Fallon on Easter Monday, April 15, 1898, at the age of 67 of infirmities of old age and lies buried in our Convent Cemetery, **Row 17, Grave 2.**



Judge Arnold **Krekel** and his younger brother Nicholas are credited with the founding of the town of O’Fallon. In 1854, Arnold purchased property and laid out the town. Nicholas built the first house and operated the first general merchandise store inside his home which still stands on the corner opposite City Hall. Nicholas married Wilhelmena Moritz. One of their seven children, Sophie, born in 1864, became the first vocation from O’Fallon to enter the community. She was known as **Sr. Raymunda**. She is buried in **Row 38, Grave 5.**



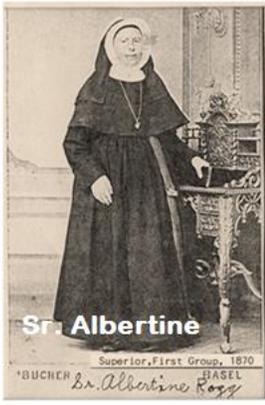
Seven sisters from Gurtweil served as nurses in the Franco-Prussian war July 1870 - June 1871: Sisters Theckla Zahner, Bonaventure Mühlhaupt, Amalia Mutter, Augusta Schmiedle, Paula Heinemann, Barbara Weber, and Clementine Zerr.

According to the *Gurtweil Chronicle*, seven Sisters volunteered to care for the wounded soldiers at the suggestion of Reverend Anthony Fraessle, Spiritual Director of the Community. Their offer was accepted by the German Government and towards the end of July 1870, the seven Sisters went to Karlsruhe. The Sisters were mainly employed in the lazarettes or hospitals in Mannheim. Their task was a strenuous one and because her health soon broke down Sr. Clementine Zerr returned to Gurtweil. The other six, however, continued to the end of the war. All came to America [Sr. Theckla in the 2nd group, August 1871, the others in the fourth group, August 1873] and all but Sr. Clementine are buried here.



Six of the nine pioneer sisters are buried in our cemetery:

The other three:



Sr. Emilie Zimmermann, died 7/11/1871, is buried in Belle Prairie, IL.
Sr. Josepha Dietrich left the community, date of death unknown.
Sr. Caroline Knoerr returned to Ruma, June 1875.

- Sr. Benedicta Hegele, d. 8/13/1927 20:5
- Sr. Mechtilda Muehlhaupt, d. 5/17/1918 33:3
- Sr. Walburga Schneider, d. 3/6/1888 22:3
- Sr. Theresa Wissmann, d. 3/14/1908 3:5
- Sr. Albertine Rogg, d. 5/31/1886 7:4
- Sr. Philippine Moser, d. 8/12/1918 31:3

Priests and Lay People Buried in our O'Fallon Cemetery

Father Herman Leygraaff, 1845-01/30/1881, was at St. Agatha Parish when our Sisters came to St. Louis. He welcomed them and turned over the rectory to them. Later he was chaplain in O'Fallon 1879-1881. 12:6

Father George Hoehn, 02/09/1943, was pastor and founder of the shrine in Starkenburg. He brought Father Hellriegel and others to America from Germany. He retired in O'Fallon. 14:6

Father Herman Moorbrink 2/29/1892 is described as a young and zealous chaplain who was in O'Fallon only a short time before his death at age 27. 11:6

Msgr. Martin B. Hellriegel, 04/10/1981, was chaplain in O'Fallon from 1918 to 1940, and early leader in the Liturgical Movement in the United States. 9:6

Dom Ermin Vitry, O.S.B. 1884-07/09/1960, came to O'Fallon from Maredsous Abbey in Belgium. in 1934. As choir director he taught the Sisters an appreciation of sacred liturgical music through Gregorian Chant. 15:6

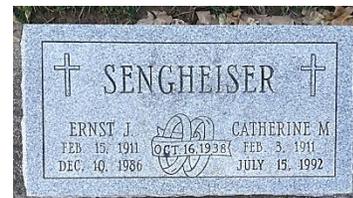
Father Louis Schlathoelter, 1862-08/14/1934, a brother of Bernard, who was a chaplain here 1897-1904, requested to be buried in our cemetery. 13:6

Father Joseph Keller, 1881-12/22/1939, was befriended by our community when he came here after being tarred and feathered in the south. He was a friend of Msgr. Hellriegel who was then chaplain. 10:6



Ernst Sengheiser and his wife **Kate Reynolds** were long-time friends of the community. Both are buried in our cemetery. 53:7

Xaveria Schramm, 1860-1904, entered the community in 1883 and made profession in 1886. Due to illness she was released from First Vows but remained here as a lay person. 18:1



Ottilia Stegle, died June 6, 1906, was a hired girl from Europe who took care of the chickens. 6:1

Anton Baechle, nephew of Sr. Barbara Baechle, worked for our Sisters in Gurtweil and came to America. On December 22, 1915, he was taking packages to be mailed. Being almost deaf, he did not hear the approaching train which struck and killed him. 33:1

Herman Kleinebrahm, brother of Sr. Annunciata and nephew of Sr. Anselma Lange, came to America after World War I. He remained briefly in O'Fallon, moved to St. Louis, then Omaha. He died suddenly October 26, 1928. His body was returned to O'Fallon for burial. 42:7

Magdalen Schuler came from Germany and lived at St. Elizabeth Academy where she worked as a maid and shopped for the Sisters. Poor health prevented her from entering the community. She died Jan. 20, 1923. 35:1



Richard Hilpert had chosen the spot where he wanted to be buried and that is where his memorial stone is placed. He died of a heart attack in the airport in Zurich, Switzerland, as he was about to return to O'Fallon from his visit with relatives in West Germany. He was buried in Waldshut. 34:7 Memorial.

Maria Denissoff attended the English School in Finland from ages 5-16. The Sisters continued to befriend her through the rest of her life as she faced continued illness. She died in her early forties. She asked that her ashes be buried in our cemetery. 34:7

