



**FROM THE
PRIORESS'
DESK**

**For June 2011
Newsletter**

The last two weeks were marked with three Solemnities -

The Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, the Solemnity of the most precious Body and Blood Congregation Feast – The Sacred Heart of Jesus. In all three feasts we encounter the God who is present, who shows us the divine love and the God who cares.

Let us focus shortly on these three mysteries of our faith. The feast of the Most Holy Trinity shows us the God who is without beginning and end, the God who is creator and goes with his people through history and the God who promises to be always with us until the end of time.

This God made himself visible in Jesus Christ his only beloved son who became by the power of the Holy Spirit like us and dwelt among us. Before returning to the Father, before his suffering, death and resurrection he gave us his body and blood. He made himself the bread of life. Christ is present among us. He is the center. He is the great YES of God to us human beings. He is the new presence of the God among us until he comes in glory. This is what we celebrate in the feast of Corpus Christi.

The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus shows us that God has a heart that loves and waits for love. This love of God became visible in Jesus. He revealed to us the heart of God, the heart that is wounded, pierced and always loving. This feast is not separated from other feasts. We celebrate it day by day as often as we encounter in faith the Lord in the Sacrament and can draw from the fullness of life. Karl Rahner said that for centuries the word HEART OF JESUS has been prayed, whispered and proclaimed, sometimes in poor taste, but the Church

has embraced this word for the reality it expresses. What is the Heart of Christ but the unifying and yet ineffable centre of the God-Man? Maria Droste zu Vischering, a Good Shepherd Sister, who was influential that our congregation was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was overtaken by Christ. (see *“Sustained by God’s faithfulness”* Vol. I pg 153 and 192) She let herself be drawn into the centre of His person. Her devotion to the Heart of Christ was not a vague emotion or sentiment, but a lived reality for she lived by this love. That we all may like her lead others to this Source of Love.

By *Sr. Pia Portmann, OSB*

**SACRED HEART SCOOOL
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN SING
SONGS ABOUT SPRING.**

AT 11:00 a.m. the morning of Monday, May 16th, children from the three Kindergarten classes of Sacred Heart Elementary School came here to our Monastery to sing songs they had learned. They had walked down Madison Avenue to 18th.Street where they first stopped at St. Joseph’s Nursing Home to entertain the Residents there. And then came across the street to sing for us Sisters. Mrs. Linda Hammond said most of their songs would be about spring. All the songs had actions and they moved up and down full of energy. Unfortunately, because they came in the morning this time, not as many Sisters were available to be there to enjoy them as when they came last year in the afternoon to sing songs about Halloween and Thanksgiving. But the 12 to 14 of us who could welcome and enjoy them greatly appreciated their visit to us. They were accompanied by their three respective Teachers, Mrs. Linda Hammond, Mrs. Terri Bowder and Mrs. Caroline Simon.

It is obvious these Teachers are helping and encouraging these young Students to be able to sing and enjoy performing before an audience. May God bless them, their Parents and Teachers.

Reporter

Sr. Philomena Roche, OSB



**NEWS FROM WINNEBAGO
GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT**

April, May, June 2011

This year the greater part of April was still spent in the spirit of lent. We participated in ecumenical services at various churches in Walthill and Winnebago on Sunday evenings.-- Father Mike presented "Why do we do what we do?" referring to the upcoming changes on the liturgy. About a dozen people came to these discussions and a different family hosted the soup supper on Wednesday nights in the church basement. On April 19, more than 20 persons from all four parishes responded to the invitation for a communal Reconciliation Service with four Confessors at St. Augustine's.

At the Easter Vigil one adult, ten school children and a number of younger siblings were received into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism. On the following weekend there were four First Communions at St. Cornelius in Homer and four at St. Augustine's.

On May 16 the school year came to an abrupt end, two days before the planned closing, because of a water problem that took several days to be repaired. Thus: no field day, no awards ceremonies, no last day havoc or end-of-year parties! However, graduation ceremonies in church were held on Wednesday, May 18, in the presence of proud families: sixteen children from Kindergarten to first grade, four from eighth grade to high school.

A crowning event that did honor to children and staff of St. Augustine Indian Mission School was the final Ho-Chunk tournament. (*Ho-Chunk* is the Winnebago name for the language and the people of Winnebago.) All year, four times a week, the local Ho-Chunk Renaissance Program sent teachers of the winners, a high school class, in their original homeland in Wisconsin. The overnight bus trip there, with teachers and a parent for each child, was sponsored by the Tribe. What an honor!

Our summer program has begun. On May 21, we said good-bye to Sister Ellen Marie and thanked her

for the past five years of enthusiastic, untiring service to the children, parishioners, and the whole Mission. Pinagigi! In exchange, Mother Pia brought us Sister Madeleine Miller who had just made her vows a few months before. Welcome, Sister Madeleine! We wish you a very fruitful ministry here.

On June 3, forty persons arrived from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Andover, KS, to do outreach work. After a few days of painting in and around the school, they followed the call in the media for volunteers to help fill sandbags to shore up the banks of the flooding Missouri River in South Sioux City and Dakota City. That experience topped everything else they did here and made their mission trip eminently worthwhile.

Our Mission experienced a change of pastors on June 23. After several farewell parties and tearful good-byes, Father Mike Eckley left us to become pastor at St. Pius X parish in Omaha. Father Dan Wittrock from South Sioux City arrived to continue pastoral ministry here in our four parishes together with Father David Korth, our Mission Director, who is presently completing his three months' sabbatical with a spiritual retreat.—A very blessed summer time to all our readers!

Reporter
Sister Frances Betz, OSB

**NEWS FROM GRACEVILLE
HOLY TRINITY CONVENT**

March – June 2011

After a long hard winter, March came in like a lamb but left like a lion. During the month of April the snow started to melt but very slowly. Then the rains came in May so the farmers could not get their crops in until late May and early June. Some fields did not even get planted this year. June saw rain almost every day so the fields have water standing in them. But here we are more fortunate than those living along the Missouri and Red Rivers.

Sr. Hilda Choi had started a youth choir in the parish earlier in the year and so they held a fundraiser with soup and bread on Ash Wednesday.

NORFOLK PRIORY NEWSLETTER



JUNE 2011

It was good to see the youth work hard during their fundraiser. The youth were the recipients of the prizes won by the sisters when they participated in raising funds for the Hospice. The prizes were gift certificate for bowling which the youth used for a happy time together.

On March 19th Sr. Ann Terese Dana drove to Omaha to help move her 90+ year old mother into an assisted living facility in Omaha. It was hard for her to see her mother's decline but she is happy that she will be well cared for in the facility.

Every year the nursing home holds a resident family dinner. Usually this is held around Christmas but with the winter being so hard and the difficulty in traveling it was moved to Spring. Even with only 50 residents there were about 400 people attending. It is a masterpiece in organizing dinner for that many.

The physical therapist at the hospital started an exercise program April 12, for "over 60". The sisters participated, thinking she needed our moral support for trying to do this. She was surprised over 30 people showed up for the program which ran 2 times a week for six weeks. It seems that is a need in our area for the many senior citizens we have.

On April 13 was the long awaited opening of the lake. Finally the ice was gone, but lots of snow remained on the ground.

We are slowly adjusting to being owned by someone else. The operations at the hospital and home seem to go much the same as always. Dr. Persons and Peter Jacobson from Fargo, who are the director and president of the West Region of Essentia Health visited Graceville and were well accepted by the staff and management. Peter Jacobson is one of the new board members in Graceville. Another new member is Sr. Mary Christa Kroening, OSB from Duluth Benedictines. The April Board of Directors' meeting was even held in Fargo so we could see the facility there. Essentia Fargo Hospital is the largest hospital in the Essentia Health West Region.

It is a very beautiful new building. This is the hospital that the majority of our patients go for more extensive treatment.

May 1st was first Communion for the children in the parish. The great nephew of Sr. Mary Joseph was one of those making their First communion. After Mass the sisters attended a little reception at his home here in Graceville.

Sr. Hilda and Sr. Ann Terese left on May 6th for Omaha. Sr. Hilda attended the wedding of her niece and Sr. Ann Terese was able to see how her mother was adjusting to her new home in the Assisted Living.

During the Nursing and Hospital Week from May 9-13, one of the events was the employee appreciation dinner. The employees who have anniversary of work are honored. Sr. Hilda Choi was recognized for her 5 years of service and one employee was honored for her 40 years of loyalty to the hospital.

The end of May saw the four sisters from Graceville drive to Norfolk to attend the Priory Chapter. Coming back with them for vacation was Sr. Josephine Ewertz and Sr. Paula Leick for about two weeks. The weather did not cooperate very well. It rained many of the days during this time.

Sr. Hilda Choi started her home visit to Korea on June 7th and returned June 29th. Then on June 12 the car with Srs. Mary Joseph and Ann Terese with the two vacationers left for their annual retreat, leaving Sr. Pia Rottinghaus alone for one week. She had a visitor staying with her for some of the days. A Filipina nurse was working double shifts at the nursing home and didn't have a way to get back to her uncle's home so she was invited to stay at the convent during those days.

At the end of June, we are finally getting some summer weather.

Wishing all celebrants of namedays and birthdays of June many blessings.

Reporter

Sr. Mary Joseph Mead, OSB

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