



Crofton Journal

SCHOOL SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS CELEBRATE 150TH

Staff

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That day back in 2007 was special.

It was the end of an era at St. Rose School, but for Sister Charlotte Schuele, SSSF, who had been a teacher at the school since 1978 and served as principal, the day was both special and sad.

It was her last day on the job, and it was the end of an era and the last day of school at St. Rose for School Sisters of St. Francis. SSSF teachers and Sisters had been teaching at St. Rose, serving the parish and school since the beginning of the school in 1911. Sister Charlotte and Sister Sigfrieda Hettinger were the last of the order to serve at St. Rose School, before returning to their Mother House in Milwaukee. Sister Charlotte's last day included a bouquet of roses, an accompaniment from students Alex Woockman and Preston Mueller, and a special ride around town by horse and buggy, courtesy of Ken Prussa.

From 1911 until that day in 2007, 161 women with SSSF served in Crofton, at first living in the school, and eventually residing in a new convent that currently serves as the St. Rose Preschool building. While most of those Sisters have since deceased, seven who served at St. Rose are still living.

This past Sunday, on Apr. 28, the Sisters at SSSF celebrated 150 years of the order with an anniversary Mass at St. Joseph's Chapel in Milwaukee, celebrated by Archbishop Jerome ListECKI of Milwaukee. Sister Charlotte, who taught music at St. Rose School for many years and led the choir, was fittingly part of the choir for this anniversary Mass. The Mayor of Milwaukee even designated the day, "School Sisters of St. Francis Day" in the city, recognizing their significant contributions, not only to the city, but to the nation.

In 1873, three young women, Emma Franziska (Mother Alexia) Hoell, Paulina (Mother Alfons) Schmid, and Helena (Sister Clara) Seiter - felt called to establish a Franciscan religious community that would care for people in need. They left a 10-member community at an orphanage in Germany, sailed for America and settled in New Cassel, now Campbellsport in Wisconsin. They hoped to help the immigrants coming into America at that time, to meet the needs of the Church through the establishment of a large religious community.

This new community officially began on Apr. 28, 1874. As St. Rose School opened in 1911, Sister Luitgard Gubbels, Sister Edmunda Becker and Sister Agreda Selig were among the first to serve in Crofton. One year later, four more Sisters arrived at St. Rose. SSSF Sisters served in numerous surrounding parishes in northeast Nebraska, as well.

In an interview conducted by Curt Guenther in 2008, the 100th anniversary of St. Rose of Lima Parish, Donna Mae, Don, Daryl and Sister Janet Guenther along with Ernestine Hegge, Lois Leader and Adelia Kaup said that among their days at St. Rose School, Sister Dora, who taught first and second grades, was their favorite. They also recalled that Sister Richard, who taught third and fourth grades, sewed the softballs together when they became loose.

Another favorite from the 1970s was principal and teacher, Sister Veronica. As for Sister Charlotte, she continues to work in music ministry, playing piano, singing in choir and helping however she can.

Along with the 160 other Sisters of SSSF who served at St. Rose School over a 96-year period, she was part of an important faith community that helped more than 2000 St. Rose students learn not only academics, but also how to live out and deepen their faith.