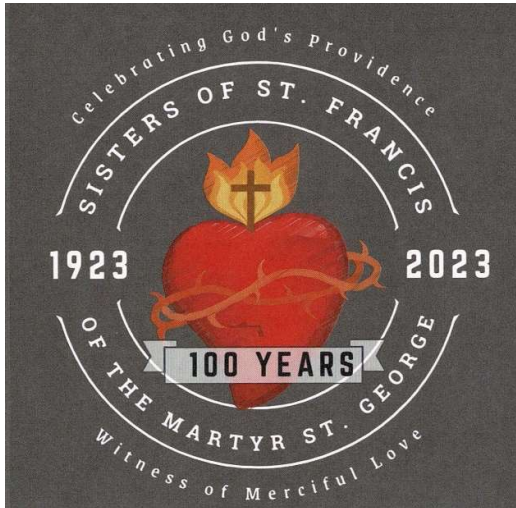


Report on the Jubilee of the American St. Elizabeth Province



Celebrating God's Providence – Witness of Merciful Love

This is what is written on the Jubilee logo of the American St. Elizabeth Province, and it aptly sums up the spirit of the Jubilee celebration marking the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first five Thuline sisters in America on December 26, 1923.

December 26th

After all of the 108 sisters of the Province who live in the USA had arrived at the Provincial Motherhouse in Alton by late afternoon on December 26, they gathered in the chapel for Scripture reading and Evening Prayer. There the Jubilee candle that Mother Mary M. Cordis had given to the American Province was blessed and lit by the house chaplain, Father Stephen Sotiroff. Afterwards, Provincial Superior Mother M. Mediatrix opened the Jubilee year and the General Vicarress, Sister M. Maximilia, read the greeting from Reverend Mother Maria Cordis, General Superior. There was a festive dinner, which was marked by lively conversations, the joy of reunion and a joyful anticipation of the coming days.



December 27th

December 27 was a day of silence, prayer, reflection and renewal. As a "Day of Recollection – Day of Remembrance," it focused on internalizing God's great work of grace in the American Province and in the vocation of each individual sister. In the morning and the afternoon, Bishop Thomas Paprocki gave a reflection on the theme of the Jubilee, i.e. on the celebration of God's Providence (first conference) and on the

witness of God's merciful love (second conference). Following the talks, there was the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament after Evening Prayer brought to a close the day of encounter with the merciful God, from whose

loving heart everything has come forth. The recollected silence was carried into the stillness of the night.

December 28th

December 28 was designated as the Day of Celebration. This English phrase expresses better than the German translation that the outward celebration is deeply rooted in the praise of God and flows, as it were, from the recollection and prayer of the previous day. This is because the translation of the Latin term "*celebrare*", from which "celebration" is derived, means: "to celebrate festively", "to celebrate" - and literally: "to praise".



The high point was the Jubilee Mass, presided over in the early morning by Bishop Paprocki. Another highlight of the morning was the blessing by Bishop Paprocki of the newly built "Mother of Divine Grace Library" and a statue of Mother M. Anselma. Also invited were the relatives of the late Sister Mary Grace, who had made the construction of the library financially possible, the architect and others involved in the construction, and the artist who had designed and made the statue of Mother M. Anselma.

In addition to the books and media, the library contains various adjoining rooms: a workroom



with computers, the archives and a conference room for smaller events. Overall, the library fits very organically into the overall layout of the Provincial House, so that the beautiful garden and park with its Stations of the Cross and view of the valley are enclosed on three sides by the professed wing of the convent, the novitiate wing, and now by the new library.



The bronze statue of our foundress shows a "young" Mother M. Anselma holding five roses and three loaves of bread in reference to the patroness of the Province. The roses also commemorate the first five sisters of our Congregation who began their apostolate in America 100 years ago. After the blessing, there was an opportunity to take a closer look at the new rooms.

Also inviting visitors to linger was the history wall, which was created for the Jubilee and blessed on the anniversary of the founding our Congregation. It impressively and vividly captures the 100-year history of the St. Elizabeth Province in pictures,



documents and exhibits on several wall sections with a continuous timeline, and of course it also takes a look at the founding site in Thuine and the spirituality of our worldwide Congregation.

In the afternoon, community activities were on the agenda: a photo with all the sisters present



and a cheerful gathering in the adjacent Day Care Center. Similar to the fun afternoon on Epiphany at the Motherhouse in Thuine, there were skits, creative songs and short videos from past Epiphany skits, which created a rousing atmosphere.

This very eventful Jubilee day concluded with

Evening Prayer and adoration before supper, and a beautifully choreographed candle dance by several sisters in the chapel afterwards. On this day, the jubilation was expressed in many different ways.

December 29th

On the third full Jubilee day, December 29th, the focus was on giving thanks to God, praying for the deepening of the Jubilee graces and remembering the deceased sisters of the St. Elizabeth Province. Msgr. Hoefler, had who visited the Motherhouse in Thuine this past summer with Bishop Paprocki, presided over the Holy Mass. In his homily, he spoke about the fruitfulness and motherhood of our lives as consecrated religious women. The witness of this life, like motherhood in general, contains traits of martyrdom, as it always demands that we let go and die for the sake of others.



The renewal and deepening of the grace of being taken into this deep communion with the Lord through religious profession was also the subject of a talk given to the sisters in the morning by Father Wieck, SJ. These thoughts were echoed in small group discussions as well as in the afternoon prayer for graces and the praise before the exposed Blessed Sacrament.

The commemoration in the evening of the first sisters of the American Province and of all the sisters who have already passed away was very touching. Under the program item "Candlelight reading," five sisters read by candlelight fictitious letters based on historical sources, which the first sisters might have written after their journey by steamship across the ocean and their arrival in a foreign country. Letters to parents and siblings, to Reverend Mother and co-sisters in Thuine or to a spiritual director about initial experiences, desires, difficulties and hopes provided an insight into what this departure to a new continent may have been like at the time. Finally, a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by meditative music brought to mind all the deceased sisters of the Province in their life and work. Due to the weather, the originally planned procession to the graves of the sisters was replaced by a candlelight procession to the chapel, where the evening came to a quiet conclusion with the singing of the Ultima.



December 30th

On the last day of the Jubilee celebrations, December 30, Archbishop Rozanski was present and presided over the Holy Mass. Based on the Gospel, in his homily he presented the sisters with the example of the consecrated life of the prophetess Anna: she consecrated herself completely to the service in the temple and constantly gave witness through fasting and prayer to her trust in God's



promise that the Redeemer would come. This testimony of patient and persevering service in the presence of God ultimately allowed her to see the Savior of the world. How wonderful it is that, through the Eucharistic presence of the Lord, we can live in an even deeper way always united with Him and that He can be bodily present and born in us. Like the prophetess Anna, the first five sisters who left Germany for America 100 years ago were also, through their union with the Lord, completely open to His call. In every country and in every age, God illuminates our path with the light of His promise, with the presence of the Redemptive Event through the incarnate Son of God. May we carry this grace, which has been at work in the American Province for the past 100 years, to the people to whom God sends us.



Before the sisters from the daughter houses departed, Mother M. Mediatrix gave a short spiritual review and reflection during a hearty breakfast. She focused on three very memorable words "*remember - restore - rest*" and explained the meaning of these words:

Remember: In preparation for the Jubilee, the 100-year history of the province was vividly presented to us with the creation of the history wall. With the candlelight reading and candlelight procession, the memory of the first sisters and all the deceased sisters who shaped the work and life of the Province was evoked in a touching way. It is not only about recalling the past, but also about internalizing it and thus about faithfulness and a living connection with the beginning, which can shape our present.

Restore: Through the reflections, the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharistic Adoration with the prayer for Jubilee graces, the sisters have sought a deep renewal in order to be open to the redemptive love that the Lord wants to give us and to make His merciful love visible as we trust in God's providence.

Rest: The solemn opening of the Jubilee Year, which began in these days, leads to a year of jubilation and grace from the Lord. A Jubilee year brings liberation from all shackles and leads into the rest of God's loving heart. In the Province, this is to be expressed through various gatherings of the sisters, small oases of renewal, as it were. The sisters will be invited to these during the course of the year.



As one can imagine, the departure of the sisters to the places of their apostolates was accompanied by laughter and tears. However, the joy of the days spent together provided the necessary momentum, so that there was joyful singing in the convent parking lot as the departing sisters were bid farewell. Jubilee cards and a candle for each convent were given as gifts. The outward departure after these Jubilee days was deeply motivated by a new interior beginning, which may continue to be supported and accompanied by God's grace, as it says in the

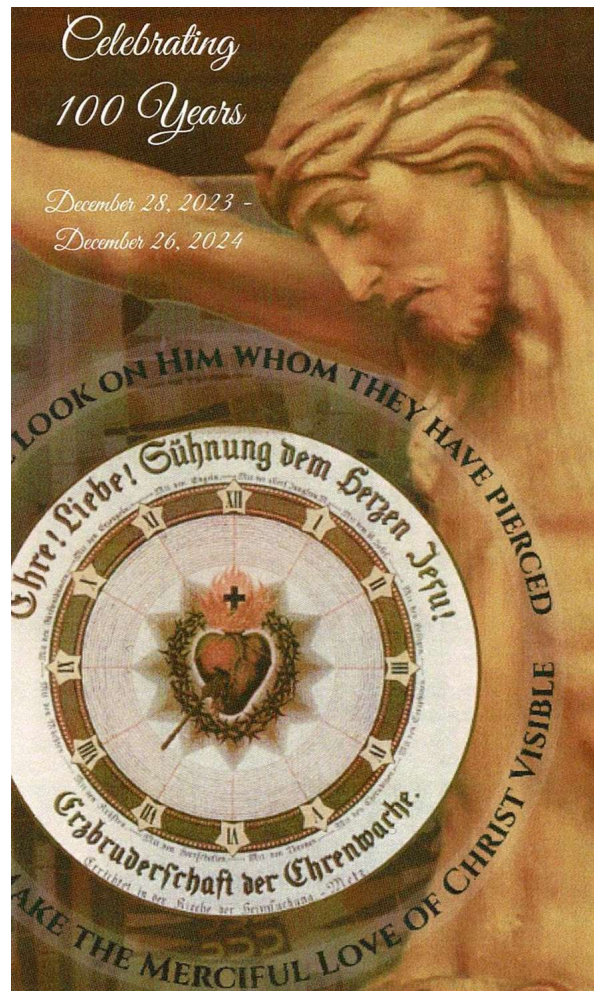
following prayer for the Jubilee Year:

O Trinity, the Most High God,
we bless, praise and honor you
for the gift of our charism
given to Mother M. Anselma
and all the members of our Congregation.

We thank you for giving us your
Mother Mary as the model
for our consecrated life.
Echoing her fiat, we have each
welcomed you into our hearts
with great reverence and joy.

For one hundred years,
through your providence
and following the example
of our Blessed Mother
and our Holy Father Francis,
we have been seeking to make your
merciful love visible here in the Americas.

In this year of Jubilee, we ask you
to grace us with an epiphany,
allowing your merciful love
to be manifested anew
to those whose lives we touch.
At the Crib, the Cross, and before
the Holy Eucharist, may our joy be found in
you alone and in doing your most holy will.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Picture: from a portion of the history wall

Here are two more pictures with Sister M. Timothea and Sister M. Alfreda, the last two German sisters who were transferred to the American Province as young sisters and still live there.



In the wheelchair:
Sister M. Timothea

Center:
Sister M. Alfreda

