

# The Powerhouse Press

Published by the Sisters of IHM at Camilla Hall



July 2010

Volume 6 #9

June 2, 2010 was a date to which we had been looking forward for a long time – the Fiftieth Anniversary of the opening of Camilla Hall! And it was a day that we are not likely to forget in a hurry! All day long we kept wishing one another, “Happy Birthday!” For the most part, it was an in-house celebration – with a few notable exceptions: Sister Lorraine McGrew and the General Administration, the Regional Superiors, Senator Andrew E. Dinniman, the Formation Team, and the sisters in Formation. These honored guests graced our festive dinner in a variety of roles – the leadership of our religious congregation, the future of that congregation, and the Pennsylvania legislative branch. The surprise of the day came when the motherhouse delegation transformed themselves into a troupe of theatrical performers. It has become a kind of tradition here that any time we invite guests from “across the street” to a festive occasion, we entertain them with a song. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> they reversed the roles with an original parody of *Dearie* – which *they* sang to *us*! And we were told that this clever idea came “straight from the top.” Do you realize, Sister Lorraine, that through your choice of song, you have unwittingly revealed your age to your “subjects”? You may live to regret this action! Sister John Evelyn took over as emcee, doing a super job, and the performance itself was worthy of Broadway! To my knowledge, this was the first time the Camilla Resident Chorale was upstaged by the Motherhouse Philharmonic Symphony. What will be the next “breaking news” out of Chester County?

No festive occasion is complete without “remarks,” and ours were provided by Senator Dinniman who, as an “outsider,” lauded the work of the IHM’s and expressed appreciation for the contributions made by Camilla Hall to the quality of life for the many who benefit from our services. Sister Lorraine, speaking as an “insider,” once again filled us with pride at the magnificent accomplishments of the founders of this great nursing home and with gratitude for the gift that has been passed on to us. To everyone’s delight, Sister called special attention to Sister Maria Benedicta, the only living nurse from the original staff who was “on duty” that day in June 1960 when the sisters moved into Camilla Hall. This great lady was given a well-deserved standing ovation. How blessed we are to have her still with us!

The day ended appropriately with the Balloon Lift. Chairs had been placed outside to accommodate the Camilla and Pacis sisters and those from the missions who wished to attend this first-time event. Chris Chalmers’ second-grade daughter was dressed in the “old habit,” representing Mother Camilla, and before being boosted into the balloon, she graciously walked among the spectators, talking to the sisters, as I suppose Mother Camilla would have done! (Her mini-sized habit, by the way, was made “from scratch” by one of our professional seamstresses, S. Thomasine Etzel.)

And what is a birthday party without presents? Much to our delight, we each received a lovely sterling silver Miraculous Medal and chain! The many flowers, cards, greetings, and gifts from the missions gave an added touch to the perfect day. Thank you!

On Saturday, June 5, Cardinal Justin Rigali celebrated a special Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the public and formal opening of Camilla’s Fiftieth Anniversary Year. The beautiful liturgy, Cardinal Rigali’s inspiring homily, the voices of Camilla’s very own Choir (organized and trained by the amazing musical talents of Sister Regina Cecilia and Sister Loretta Therese), and the stirring volunteer instrumental accompaniment – all contributed to the glorious prayer of gratitude offered to our provident God. Following that unforgettable

Mass, the IHM's and their priest-guests gathered for hors d'oeuvres and enjoyable conversation in the dining room and the community room. What a perfect curtain-raiser to Camilla's Fiftieth Anniversary Year!

The third Anniversary event of June was held on Saturday, the 26th, when members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and their families, IHM's from Camilla, Pacis, VMHS, and many of our missions, together with relatives and friends of our deceased sisters, walked or rode in reverent procession to the Congregational Cemetery. At this resting place of so many sisters who had lived out their final days on this earth peacefully, joyfully, and gratefully at Camilla Hall, all those gathered at the cemetery offered Vespers, raising their voices in prayer and song for our sisters who had gone before us. Members of the AOH, as they do every year, showed their love and respect for our sisters, adding a touch of grandeur to the simple ceremony as the sounds of their majestic music thundered across the valley. The evening services ended at the community room with a delightful social hour, the ideal setting for meeting and greeting old and new friends.

The 18<sup>th</sup> of the month was christened **Sister Margaret Gradl Day**, and gave all of us an opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to Margaret for her twelve years of 24/7 service as administrator here at Camilla Hall. The day started off with a surprise to the celebrant, but not, of course, to us! In a discourse over the loud speaker, Margaret's contributions and accomplishments during her years at Camilla were enthusiastically praised. On the day's schedule were also a mouth-watering Gradl Lunch generously sprinkled with German favorites, an original and super-creative "musical comedy" entitled *Hats Off to Margaret*, the presentation of beautiful and practical gifts, more "thank you's" than we could count, a "few words" from Margaret that evoked lots of grateful smiles and more than a few tears. Margaret told us she would miss us; we told Margaret we'd miss her. And we were all telling the truth. The **Sister Margaret Gradl Day** was one we'll never forget!

As we all know, many generous benefactors have made memorial contributions to our nursing home in order to help Camilla financially or to keep alive the memory of a loved one – or, in most instances, for both reasons. Because of George Buehler's interest in and love for Camilla, his sister (Sister Anne Philip) and family decided to donate to Camilla in his memory a set of outdoor Stations of the Cross. During May, George's sons, Shawn and Scot, placed in the ground outside the dining room the beautiful Stations which they themselves had assembled. On Saturday, June 12, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Father Robert Finamore, a friend of Anne's and of the family, officiated at the blessing of the Stations. The ceremony was attended by a large number of sisters, some seated on chairs in front of the chosen area while others shared in the ceremony from the dining room windows. During the simple service, Father Finamore asked God's blessing on George, his family, and all who would pray at this special spot on Camilla's grounds. We know it will be well used.

Although the Anniversary celebrations, the blessing of the Stations, and *Sister Margaret Gradl Day* occupied most of our attention in June, that doesn't mean that nothing else happened./ We celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi, for example, with a special Vespers followed by a procession led by our Pastoral Ministers through the second and third infirmary floors./ Our good friends, Gene and Judy, hosted an Hawaiian Luau, complete with leis and refreshments, in the Immaculate Heart Solarium on the second floor./ On the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, we honored those celebrating June birthdays. (The committee in charge of the affair consisted of Sisters Miriam Irene, Thomasine, Loretta Michael, and Marian William.) / On June 9<sup>th</sup> we were treated to *The Education of Little Tree* and on June 22, we saw *Amelia*, both of which were part of Marge Reher's summer movies schedule. (The next film is scheduled for July 14<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.) / A noted author, Sophie McNellis, presented material on a coming workshop entitled "A Time to Remember," / Monthly local assemblies were held on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at which event Sisters Loretta Mary, St. Kathleen, Miriam Michael, and Ann Whyte won an all-expenses-paid trip to the Dairy Queen./ Many generous sister-volunteers are already busy writing out chances for the Oktoberfest./ Sisters Pat McGuigan and Anne Veronica left on June 26<sup>th</sup> for a workshop in Dallas, PA./ On June 29<sup>th</sup>, one of our very favorite singing groups, the Notables, joined us for 5:00 p.m. dinner, followed by a 6:15 entertainment in the community room./ Our newly-installed front elevator took its "maiden voyage" on June 5<sup>th</sup>, and work has already begun on the replacement of the back elevator. Talk about progress! / Confessions (June 1); Anointing of the Sick (June 15). **It's not the end, but I have no room!**