

SODALITY OF CHARITY NEWSLETTER

In the soul, like sun, reigns Charity alone

2/2021 August ▪ www.sodalityofcharity.net ▪ 4900 Rialto Road, West Chester, OH, 45069

Dear members and friends of the Sodality of Charity,

I write to you on the First Wednesday of August. I remember our Sodality members always especially on First Wednesdays and on the feasts of St. Joseph. His patronage has brought us and all the members of St. Gertrude the Great so much grace and protection in our trying times.

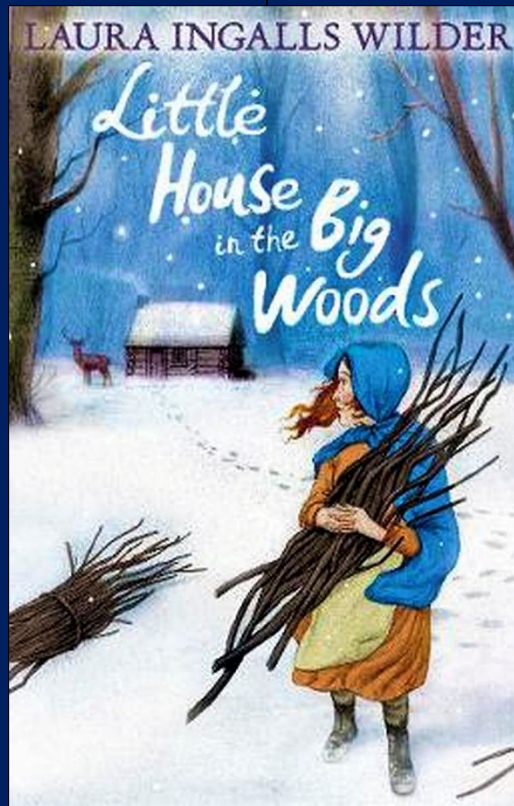
I had little time off in July, and one of the places I went to visit was Stockholm, Pepin County, Wisconsin. It was established in 1854 by Swedish immigrants, and it is now known as the place where the famous author Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867. At her birthplace there is now a wayside cabin, which is constructed exactly in the way it was described in her writings. This tiny cabin, which now is surrounded by fields, was then in the midst of a thick forest, and Pa and Ma Ingalls shared it with their three girls Mary, Laura, and Carrie. It really shows the bravery and endurance of the old pioneer families, and the hard but happy life of the Ingalls family was charmingly described by Laura in her first book *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932).

One of the memorable scenes from that book is how Laura and her Ma Caroline, on one dark night, met a bear!

Laura was surprised to see the dark shape of Sukey, the brown cow, standing at the barnyard gate. Ma was surprised, too.

It was too early in the spring for Sukey to be

let out in the Big Woods to eat grass. She lived in the barn. But sometimes on warm days Pa left the door of her stall open so she could come into the barnyard. Now Ma and Laura saw her behind the bars, waiting for them.



Ma went up to the gate, and pushed against it to open it. But it did not open very far, because there was Sukey, standing against it. Ma said:

“Sukey, get over!” She reached across the gate and slapped Sukey’s shoulder.

Just then one of the dancing little bits of light from the lantern jumped between the bars of the gate, and Laura saw long, shaggy, black fur, and two little, glittering eyes.

Sukey had thin, short, brown fur. Sukey had large, gentle eyes.

Ma said, “Laura, walk back to the house.”

So Laura turned around and began to walk toward the house. Ma came behind her. When they had gone part way, Ma snatched her up, lantern and all, and ran. Ma ran with her into the house, and slammed the door.

Then Laura said, “Ma, was it a bear?”

“Yes, Laura,” Ma said. “It was a bear.”

Laura began to cry. She hung on to Ma and sobbed, “Oh, will he eat Sukey?”

“No,” Ma said, hugging her. “Sukey is safe in the barn. Think, Laura – all those big, heavy logs in the barn walls. And the door is heavy and solid, made to keep bears out. No, the bear cannot get in and eat Sukey.”

Laura felt better then. “But he could have hurt us, couldn’t he?” she asked.

“He didn’t hurt us,” Ma said. “You were a good girl, Laura, to do exactly as I told you, and to do it quickly, without asking why.”

Ma was trembling, and she began to laugh a little. “To think,” she said, “I’ve slapped a bear!”

In the town of Pepin one can find Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum and the town also hosts the annual Laura Ingalls Wilder Days in September. This year's event is cancelled but they hope that the festival will be held again next year; it's scheduled for September 10 and 11, 2022.

I also stopped at the town of Bloomer, which has made itself into America's "swinging-est" town. This because it has, since the year 1960, hosted the annual rope jump contest. Each year students from Grades 1 through 8 train hard and come to Bloomer to compete. Many schools are sponsoring speed jumping contests and sending their winners to the big world championship in Bloomer, which has been called the "jump rope capital of the world". In Bloomer I visited a local farm to watch how shrimp is grown. The gentleman who owns the farm used to have cows, but when he got older, he chose to move to shrimp business. In his fields he still cultivates berries, tomatoes, potatoes, and many other things, including popcorn.

Besides vacationing, I also went to say Mass at Fr. McKenna's mission at Park Falls, WI. This little town has about 2,000 inhabitants, and the director of its only funeral home is the coordinator of our mission. Because he is a funeral director, the mission is dedicated to St. Joseph of Arimathea, the saint who arranged the burial of Our Lord. His daughter also comes to the mission. She has two young daughters of her own, and the older one is named Laura because she liked the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder so much when she was a child that named her own girl after the author (and supposedly also after St. Laura of Cordoba, who was martyred by the Muslims in 9th century Spain). She also liked very much my Laura Vicuña book and the heroic story of this brave young girl.

You can see some of my travel photos below. I also put more Girls Camp photos in a separate

post on our website.

Friday, August 13, will be our lucky day. St. Gertrude the Great Church will again have her monthly Rosary procession at West Chester. Plan to attend, if you are able. Father Robert Hugh Benson, whose father was a Protestant bishop, and who was a Protestant minister himself before converting to the Catholic Faith, gave a beautiful explanation of the Rosary in his first novel *By What Authority?* (1904). An old nun was trying to tell about it to a young Protestant girl named Isabel. The girl asked: "How can prayers said over and over again like that be any good?" The nun said: "I saw young Mrs. Martin last week with her little girl in her lap. She had her arms around her mother's neck, and was being rocked to and fro;



and every time she rocked she said 'Oh mother'." "But," said Isabel, "she was only a child." The nun answered: "You see, my Isabel, we are nothing more than children with God and His Blessed Mother. To say, 'Hail Mary, Hail Mary,' is the best way of telling her how much we love her. And, then, this string of beads is like Our Lady's girdle, and her children love to finger it, and whisper to her.

And then we say our

Our Fathers too; and all the while we are talking, she is showing us pictures of her dear Child, and we look at all the great things He did for us, one by one; and then we turn the page and begin again."

Of course, the greatest feast of the summer will be the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady on Sunday, August 15. Our next Sodality meeting will be on Saturday, August 21. It is the day of the apparition of Our Lady of Knock, and with Her appeared also St. Joseph, making one of his few appearances in visions.

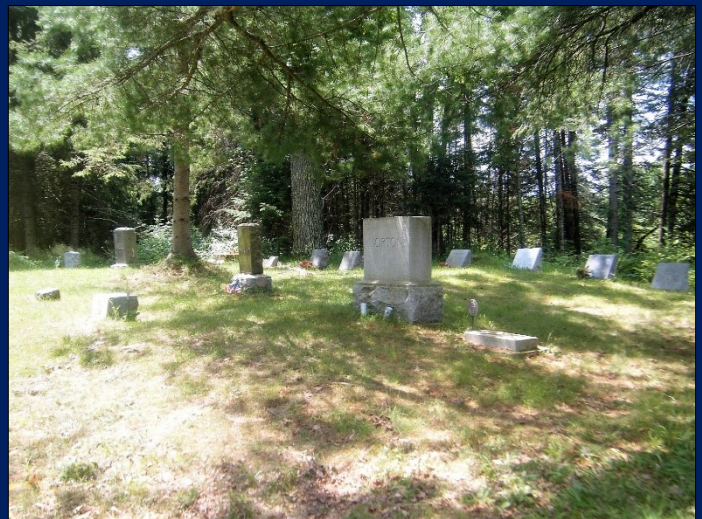
Yours in Christ and Mary,

Fr. Lehtoranta



Our mission is located at Birch Street Funeral Home in Park Falls, WI. The altar is in the visitation room, and there's a little shrine of St. Joseph of Arimathea on the Gospel side.

→ Brantwood, WI was once a bustling hub of Finnish Americans, and many people with Finnish names, like Hannula, Suomi, and Maki, lived there. The remote, wooded areas resembled their homeland. Finnish was spoken in public, and cross-country skiing was a way of life.



An hour away from Park Falls there's the small village of Tripoli with its non-denominational "Log church". Behind the church is what is called "Pioneer cemetery", though there are no real pioneers buried there; the oldest graves are about 100 years old.



← Our Park Falls mission coordinator's granddaughter Laura with her younger sister Jillian. Their mother was a big admirer in her childhood of both Laura Ingalls Wilder books and the TV show based (loosely) on them. She therefore named her first child after the famous author.

LITTLE HOUSE WAYSIDE

Birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder

