

THE KOLPING CANADA NEWSLETTER

Christmas 2010

REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL PRAESES

The external circumstances of the birth of Jesus are familiar to us; it certainly wouldn't be necessary to talk about them. But the internal essentials of this event are really important for our faith. They reveal what God the Father intended with the incarnation of his divine Son. God bridged the gap between heaven and earth. The way is free! God's glory shines now from heaven upon this earth and everything that is living on it. Since that time of Christ's birth the whole cosmos enjoys, again, the friendship with God. Redemption dawns!

This is the good news of the divine Christchild, born on Christmas Eve: heaven is open now! We may still have our pains and sorrows, our sufferings and setbacks, but at the end, there is a redemption, a way out for us. We see that already in the martyrdom of the deacon of St. Steven. He sees heaven open, and Christ at the right hand of God the Father.

The message of the open heaven is a reminder where we can find our joy in life.

May Christ's grace and joy fill the hearts of all the members of the Kolping Society on this feast and all year long!

This is my wish for all of you!

Fr. Karl Hoeppe, C.Ss.R

REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

"Let's practice more and deeper love towards people. Let's show Christian living in ever more practical ways and the present will be better and the future brighter."

- A. Kolping

As Kolping members we have a role model in our founder, Blessed Adolph Kolping. His life, his work, his guiding principles, his thinking and writings are like beacons of light illuminating the way out of the darkness and uncertainty. Father Kolping's aims and principles are as relevant today as they were 150 years ago. Role models such as Adolph Kolping are what we need for the Church today.

Christmas is the right time to thank everyone especially the people who work for Kolping Canada. Thank you to Fr. Hoeppe, our National Praeses, to our National Editor, Regina Knoll, to our National Treasurer, Inge Baumstark, as well as all those who work on the local level. May God bless them and grant them their proper reward!

To everyone - let the Christmas spirit enter your home and your hearts, to give you peace and good health.

Treu Kolping - steve Salb

NEWS FROM KOLPING EDMONTON

We got back to our monthly meetings in September. October was busy with the annual Thanksgiving Fundraiser dinner. Again, many hands worked to make the evening a success. Also we celebrated Mass for Kolping World day of Prayer. Our Kolping Members in those far away countries are a source of encouragement.

Due to our work with a casino this summer, our group now has the pleasure of deciding which charities will benefit from the large amount of money raised. Now that is a real Christmas treat... Giving!

Christmas blessings to all of you, and much health in the new year.

Treu Kolping - Donna Novak

NEWS FROM KOLPING HAMILTON

This is just a brief update since our last report.

Our Fall program started on Oct. 16th, with a Holy Mass followed by a regular meeting. On Oct. 25th our Ladies held their Craft Group meeting. In November our regular meeting was once again cancelled due to the absence of too many of our members. However, we visited, individually, the graves of our departed Kolping members.

In closing we like to wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas. May the spirit of the Season be with all of us now and throughout the New Year.

Treu Kolping,- Winfried Klaas

NEWS FROM KELOWNA

There is not much news out of Kelowna. Their quasi-president, Henry Wehnert, is currently under the weather with several health issues, and their reporter, Gisela Howald, has just returned from Africa and Europe and has not had time to put something together for us. Overall the group is still alive and kicking and looking forward to renewed energy and more activities in the near future.

NEWS FROM KOLPING TORONTO

The annual summer picnic at the Wensing's farm took place on June 20th. A beautiful summer day at a beautiful place.

We went on a very pleasant walk along the Humber River in September. I lived in this town for over 50 years, and I never knew that we had salmon in our rivers. Well, it was salmon running time, and it was quite interesting to watch the big fish trying to jump the rapids. The following lunch at a nearby restaurant was delicious.

Again this year we offered a memorial Mass for our deceased members. The long list of names was read during the Mass, and our memories took us back more than 50 years.

The Kolping International World Day of Prayer went well, we all attended the weekly Mother of Perpetual Help Mass at St. Patrick's at noon. After a small lunch a number of readers outlined details about Uruguay. It is astonishing to hear about the success Kolping is having in South America, and how well the Kolping program suits the countries down there.

The future of Kolping Toronto looks a lot better right now. We invited Fr. Miller as our speaker at our Seniors' meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 25, and to our surprise we could not believe how much he knows about Kolping. He knew about our situation and he gave us specific ideas on how we could expand and attract new members. But, best of all, he is willing to become our new Praeses. Fr. Miller is the head of the Redemptorists of the Toronto-Edmonton Province, and it goes without saying that he is a very busy man. What a great Christmas gift for us!

We wish everyone a wonderful Christmas with family and friends, and may God bless you all!

Treu Kolping - Steve Salb

NEWS FROM KOLPING VANCOUVER

As we observe the tranquil Lenten Season in these days of waning light, we send warm greetings to our Kolping brothers and sisters near and far.

Since the beatification of Adolph Kolping in Rome on October 27, 1991, Kolping members around the world commemorate this event every year on the World Day of Prayer. On October 23rd, we celebrated Mass with Father Deprey, building a bridge of prayer and solidarity with the work of the Kolping Society of Uruguay, which was founded in 1985 and now has over 1250 members. Our hosts, Delmi and Romero and Telma Ayala, had prepared a luncheon with a bicultural twist - we were treated to enchiladas in addition to the customary sausage and cheese sandwiches. Our president, Horst Zimmermann, spoke about the work of Kolping Uruguay and gave us an update on the El Salvador project, stressing the importance of Christianity in action.

On December 4th, exactly 145 years after the untimely death of our founder, we observed Kolping Memorial Day with a Mass celebrated by Father Geddes, who in his homily encouraged us to emulate Blessed Father Kolping. Gathering in the festively decorated hall afterwards, we enjoyed the luncheon prepared for us by Barbara, Heidi and helpers. Horst spoke of his work as president during the past four years, the challenges facing him in a time of change, as well as his hopes for the future of Kolping Vancouver. In keeping with the season of Advent,

three of our members then shared stories with us. Horst began by relating a light-hearted family anecdote. Christian Rumpf, who has retired after visiting the children of Holy Family Parish as St. Nicholas for some forty-odd years, read the story of "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus", the message being that one has to have faith. Pat Buckley shared a personal experience when he worked in a day care centre in Loreto, Texas, years ago. He had been invited to Christmas dinner at a ranch. Unfortunately the rancher's son, who was to pick him up, lost his way and could not find the day care centre, leaving Pat to settle for a grilled cheese sandwich instead of the anticipated Christmas dinner! This experience made him focus on the deeper meaning of Christmas.

On a sad note, Gerda Dolinski, a member at large, passed away on November 16th due to complications of the devastating illness of dementia. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to her husband Andreas and daughter Mary.

Two of our members have been hospitalized recently. Hanna Bierhaus, our treasurer, had to be rushed to emergency after suffering a heart attack. She has since had angioplasty performed on her arteries and is resting at home. Lorenz Chavez had to undergo surgery after enduring great pain due to a herniated disc. Our good wishes for a continued and complete recovery go out to both.

On behalf of all of us in Vancouver, I wish you all the peace and joy of Christmas.

Treu Kolping - Rose Vetter

NEWS FROM KOLPING WINNIPEG

Winter is finally here and Christmas is fast approaching so it's time for a short review of our activities. Our meeting on October 5 was not very well attended, only 38 people. Our president told us how disappointed he was, until he was told to stop preaching to the choir and cheer up!

Father Kevin had the parish caretaker clean out the parish library and there are now boxes and boxes full of German books of all kinds standing in our meeting room. The parish needs the space and there were very few people using the library. Everyone is being encouraged to take some of these books home, free off charge, but only a few have done so at this point. Some of these books are more than a hundred years old, and there is a little bit of everything - lives of the saints, books by Karl Mai and Ganghofer, modern novels, poetry etc. etc. One would need the time to check them all out, but it's impossible at this time of the year. The parish secretary is threatening to call the recycling trucks - a thought that could curl the hair of every devout reader. We are hopeful that the Mennonite University and/or high schools will take at least some of them.

The Schlachtfest, our BIG event and only fundraiser, took place on October 30. The decorating of the hall started the evening before with a Thanksgiving theme. A beautiful "Erntekranz" (harvest wreath) was hung from the ceiling in the center of the hall by Frank Strauss and his patient assistants. The tables were arranged and decorated with beautiful fall flowers still from our own gardens. On Saturday at noon many members came out to help with the preparation for the evening.

Magda and Wolfgang Kubisch were in charge. The chefs were busy clattering around in the kitchen, but as always everything stopped for coffee and cake at 3 O'clock. Missing on this day was Barbara Broder, who has been our chef-in-charge for years (Barbara had somehow broken a bone in her foot while working in her flower bed at the cottage in Hnausa), but everything worked out perfectly anyway. At 6 pm we members had our meal, and it turned out again to be very delicious. Then the guests arrived and they enjoyed the Sauerkraut, Bratwurst, Leberwurst, pork roast and mashed potatoes. The bar was busy all night, and the Band was outstanding. The evening was a great success.

On November 2, after the evening mass we had our monthly meeting. Our president Joe was happier this time as he informed us how successful the Schlachtfest had been. We then talked about our Adventsfeier on December 6, and were told to prepare songs and meaningful poems and readings for it.

Sunday, November 28 our Communion Breakfast was very well attended with more than 60 people signing in. Some guests were present, including many children. The day marked the 145th anniversary of Blessed Father Adolph Kolping's death at the age of 52. During the Mass the list of our departed Kolping members was read out by the prayer minister, as it is every year on this day. After Mass we sat down in the church hall for brunch with fried chicken, potato- and other salads. George and Barbara were in charge. Ursula Burchuk and Sidonia Michelfeit received their certificates for their 25 years membership of the Kolping Society. Bernhard Teschner, who has also been a member for that length of time, was not present to accept his certificate. A collection was taken up for a good cause, as always.

Our Adventsfeier was another great success. Our guest speaker was Father Glofcheski, who is a retired Air Force Chaplain. He told us about his life, and what a story it is! Born 'in the bush' in Ontario, he served virtually all over the world with the armed forces - Viet Nam, Africa, India, the US and all over Canada, including the Far North. Readings, songs, stories and the Gluehwein made for a very enjoyable evening. We are now looking forward to our Christmas party on the 19th.

We wish all Kolping members and their families a warm and happy Christmas season, and good health, good luck and joy in the coming new year, and to all travellers a safe return.

Treu Kolping - Hans Kessling, Regina Knoll

ED: In her report from Vancouver, Rose Vetter mentions several people who are having health issues. If we were to do that here in Winnipeg we would have to use up a whole page. We have everything right now: cataracts, diabetes, cancers, broken bones, knee replacements, hip replacements, dementia, fibromyalgia, lymphoma, cardiac problems, osteo- and rheumatoid arthritis, Parkinsons, depression and/or anxiety, etc. etc. etc. But this is what happens when you reach your *Golden Years*!...and what matters the most is how you deal with it.

The worst you can do is to concentrate on it, talk about it to anyone who is foolish enough to ask you how you are, whine and feel sorry for yourself and drive your spouse nuts not to mention your poor children, who are already sick with worry about you.

The best thing you can do for yourself is keep busy, do things that you enjoy, get out into the world whenever you can, make a point of cheering up someone who is feeling down and force yourself to dwell on the good things in your life each day. There are many of those left, to each of us - good food, music, a glass of wine now and then, chocolates, memories, the people you love (get out you kids' and grandkids' baby pictures!). We all talk about all the garbage on TV, but there are some wonderful programs on as well, something for everyone. You no longer have to feel guilty, just sit back and relax, take a Tylenol or two and enjoy what is left of the life that God granted you here on this earth. Hug somebody, tell a joke, watch the Comedy channel. You'll never come this way again, but what a ride it has been! And - if you are afraid of dying, go back and re-read Father Hoeeppe's article on page 1. Isn't that it's all about?

In the old days, it was not called the Holiday Season; the Christians called it 'Christmas' and went to church; the Jews called it 'Hanukkah' and went to synagogue; the atheists went to parties and drank. People passing each other on the street would say 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy Hanukkah!' or (to the atheists) 'Look out for the wall!' ~Dave Barry

Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years!

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone,

when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, then the work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make a little music with the heart...

And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.

Then the work of Christmas begins.