

At Ephesus



Our procession on
Easter Sunday morning

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

We are a bit late in getting this issue of our newsletter out, and many of you are already aware of why that might be so! Our Abbey has suddenly become the pilgrimage destination for thousands of souls, journeying to see the incorrupt body of our beloved foundress, Sister Wilhelmina. It was certainly a shock to find her intact body inside the coffin, along with her perfectly preserved habit! Word got out a few weeks before the planned transfer of her remains to our Abbey church. What was not planned, was the turnout that we had for Memorial Day weekend. Amazingly, upwards of 15,000 people descended upon Gower! There were so many blessings, and those blessings continue, as reports of favors and miracles flow in each day. Everything is being documented for the time when an official investigation commences.

Many wonder, what is the Lord trying to say to us in giving us this extremely rare and beautiful sign? I dare say, He is telling us that He loves us, He is with us, and He wants us to be with Him in heaven: body and soul! This little black Sister shows us visibly, that death is not the end. She has resisted the effects of the Fall of our first parents in her very body, and she manifests to all the world the beauty of being a Bride of Christ, especially at a time when bridehood has been severely undermined, within both religious life and family life. She points to her Bridegroom as the Resurrection and the Life, Who will raise us up on the Last Day, that those who are faithful may not fear even death. Please thank the good God with us, for having given such a sign in our midst. He is real, and heaven is real. This should give us all great hope in His eternal promises!

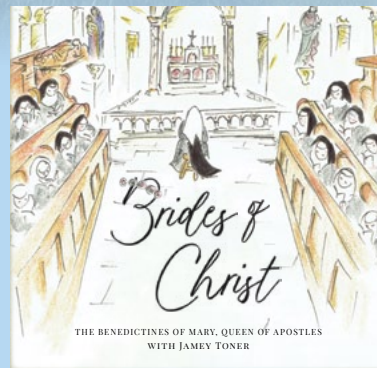
Sister Wilhelmina's legacy goes on, as we continue to welcome more and more young women, both here at the Abbey and at our daughter house in Ava, MO. While construction for our permanent monastery in Ava is moving rapidly, our fundraising, sad to say, is not. We humbly beg of you to support this worthy endeavor so that we might have room for more increasing vocations... already 11 are slated to join this summer! Each gift will literally help to put a roof over the heads of the brides of Christ, who intercede day and night for the Church and the world. May Sister Wilhelmina supervise all of these endeavors, and bring them to a happy conclusion - just as I must conclude these brief words, which are sent with many prayers and thanks to all of you, our dear benefactors. May God bless and reward you!

In His Merciful Heart,

Mother Cecilia OSB



Preparing new beds
in the garden.



Sophia Institute Press just published our new children's book, *Brides of Christ*, with charming illustrations by one of our Ava Sisters.



Mother Abbess carefully pushes posterboard under the dirt to prevent more from falling into the wide crack in the lid, made four years ago by the weight of the dirt just after burial.

"I see a foot!!!" Mother Abbess touches the first visible sign of incorruptibility during the exhumation.

The Sisters bring Sister Wilhelmina from the gravesite to the Abbey, singing her favorite hymns on the way.

On the porch, the Sisters admired the state of Sr. Wilhelmina, noting her perfectly intact habit, even though the coffin lining was completely gone.



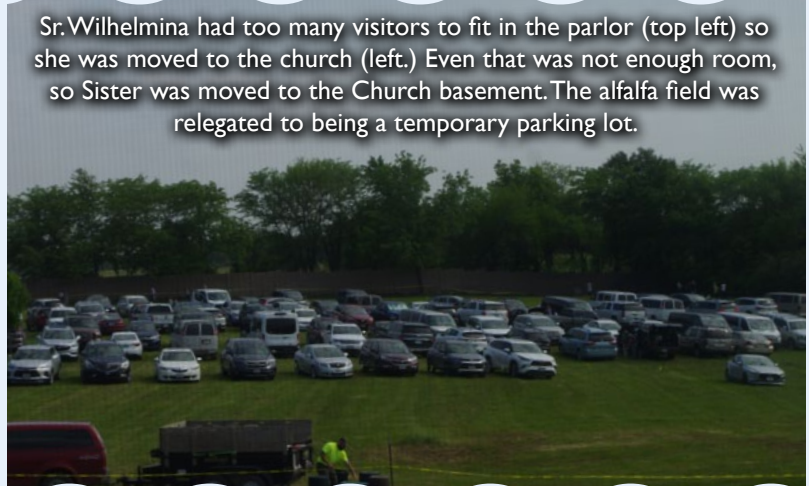
There was up to an inch of mold on Sister's body, all of which had to be cleaned with extreme care. The Sisters prayed Compline around her body once the cleaning was complete.



Andrew Colf (right) and Mark Gabriel of Catholic Customs Company quickly adapted the altar to accommodate an incorruptible!



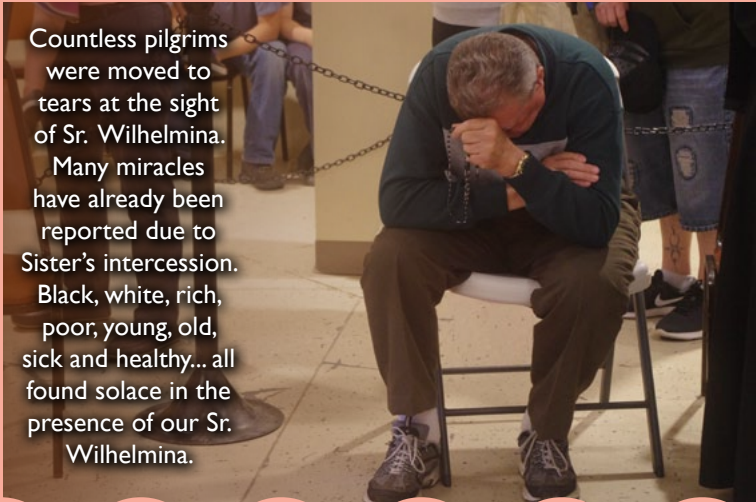
Sister Wilhelmina's first official visitor was Bishop Athanasius Schneider, with Bishop Finn following later the same day.



Sr. Wilhelmina had too many visitors to fit in the parlor (top left) so she was moved to the church (left.) Even that was not enough room, so Sister was moved to the Church basement. The alfalfa field was relegated to being a temporary parking lot.



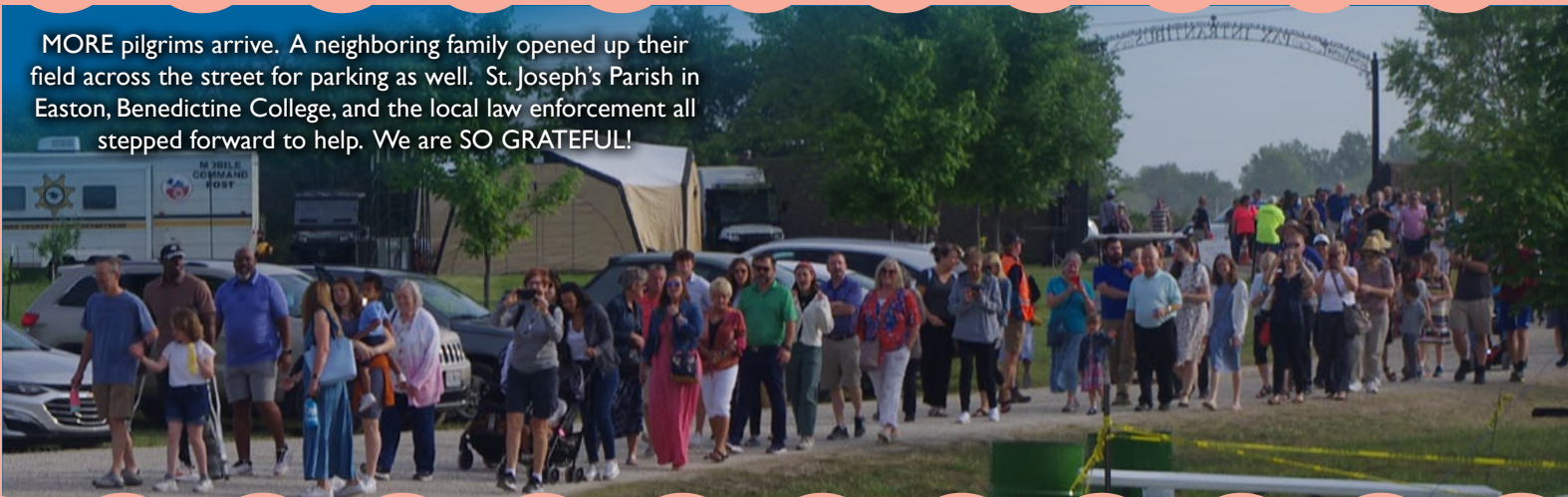
Countless pilgrims were moved to tears at the sight of Sr. Wilhelmina. Many miracles have already been reported due to Sister's intercession. Black, white, rich, poor, young, old, sick and healthy... all found solace in the presence of our Sr. Wilhelmina.



Some waited as long as three hours in the lines that stretched up the driveway, where volunteers handed out fresh fruit and water bottles.



MORE pilgrims arrive. A neighboring family opened up their field across the street for parking as well. St. Joseph's Parish in Easton, Benedictine College, and the local law enforcement all stepped forward to help. We are SO GRATEFUL!





Our favorite pilgrims arrive: the Sisters from our foundation at Ava!



The rosary procession to Sister's grave, ending at her resting place in the Abbey church.





We desperately need your help. The fundraising progress has still been slow in the current financial climate, but the work is going quickly! The concrete is poured and the framing continues. Please help us pay our bills and meet our goals so that a new house of God may arise to sing the praises of the Lord in southern Missouri!

\$18M
\$16M
\$14M
\$12M
\$10M
\$8M
\$6M
\$4M
\$2M







A splendid watercolor of Sr. Wilhelmina just given to us by artist Ali Cavanaugh.

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