

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2015 No. 161

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT BISHOP'S APOSTOLATE • 4900 RIALTO ROAD • WEST CHESTER, OHIO 45069
SGGResources.org • traditionalmass.org

FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

June, more so than many months, sees us so very busy at St. Gertrude the Great, as our Sunday Bulletin or regular webcasts would testify. The month of the Sacred Heart is especially rich in feast days, octaves, and dear devotions. But I thought the following travelog from one of our young priests would be of interest. After all, so much of our work entails mission travel all year long.

Father Lethoranta is originally from Finland, and is now a teacher at our school, one of the assistant priests at our parish, and a frequent visitor to our missions and churches throughout the country. Our Finnish Father's insights and writing style are unique, but speak well of the younger clergy with whom God has blessed us.

Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

– Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan

FATHER LEHTORANTA'S TRAVEL JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH

St. Gertrude the Great School was on a break during Easter Week, which gave me a chance to make a trip to the southern part of the United States. After spending my Holy Week in Milwaukee at our St. Hugh of Lincoln church, I hurriedly packed my things to depart on Easter Monday morning for the Cincinnati airport.

Together with Kirby and Jean Bischel, I headed down South early Easter Tuesday morning. As we traveled through Kentucky (the Bluegrass State claims the birthplaces of both the Presidents of the Civil War era) on our way to Arkansas to see the Bischel's friend, Mary Anne Evans, we stopped in Fairview. It was the home of Jefferson Davis, the first, the last, and the only president of the Confederate States of America (CSA). Today the town is the home of the Jefferson Davis State Historic Site that features a 350-foot concrete obelisk.

Jefferson Davis, born as a Baptist, educated by the Jesuits, and a converted Episcopalian as an adult, was not so popular among his contemporary Confederates. For example, the CSA press complained that he spent too much time in his Richmond church in prayer, when he should have been planning the victory of the South. In Davis' case he always found time to do both, but this again served as a reminder how the world so often makes a mock-



The Solemnity of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which is observed on the Sunday within the Octave, crowned the season with a splendid outdoor Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. First Holy Communion was administered to several youngsters of St. Gertrude the Great Church at the Mass that immediately preceded the public outdoor homage to Our Lord visible to us only under the humble appearance of a host of unleavened bread. The observance of the Octave continued each day with a high Mass before the Blessed Sacrament exposed and Benediction. Our Lord's Sacred Heart was then fittingly honored on the very day following Corpus Christi's Octave Day.

ery of all devotion, and seeks the answers to problems from everywhere – except from the True Deliverer, God. Also, one of the reasons (of course there were many others), why Jefferson Davis despised the Unionists, was because of their hatred towards the Catholics, so eminently visible during the then still recent Know Nothing persecutions.

After the long car drive, we finally arrived at Mary Anne's house. It was my first visit to the Ozarks area, and the word "remote" took on a whole new meaning, but on the way I saw just how beautiful the state of Arkansas really is. The Ozarks mountain scenery is truly breathtakingly gorgeous. Since this is part of the Bible Belt, I noticed the immense number of protestant churches. Especially numerous were the Baptist churches, of which I saw about thirty, even though we only drove through the very northern part of the state. Mary Anne's house, located in Izard County, is in such a remote place that one cannot find it either with the assistance a GPS or by using MapQuest. But with the good guidance of Kirby and Jean, we made it to our destination.

I was very happy to finally meet Mary Anne Evans, the long-

time acquaintance of the Bischel family and Bishop Dolan. She is the main caregiver of four of her grandchildren. Her family has endured many crosses over the years, mainly the result of Huntington's disease and serious accidents. She has a lovely little chapel in her basement, where Father Gregory Drahrman, CMRI, comes regularly to say Mass.

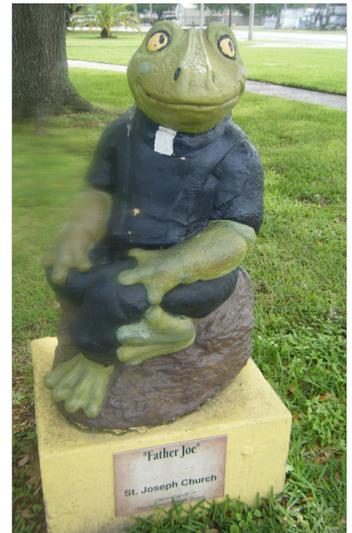
She also has a remarkable monument of her life's crosses in her backyard – a family cemetery containing the graves of her husband, five sons, and one daughter. It was a sight like no other, seeing five tombstones of five brothers next to each other, and behind them the graves of their father and their sister. And all this next to the house where the mother, a brother, and four grandchildren live. A trip to that cemetery would be for anybody a good way to set the priorities of life – and especially death – in their correct proportions.

After another long drive north, and then a flight back down south, I arrived to our Our Lady of the Rosary Mission in Shuteston, Louisiana. On Easter Saturday our coordinator Michael Romine drove me to visit the Berchmans Academy in Grand Coteau. One of the four remaining Sacred Heart Sisters showed us the church. You could still see the choir seats of the Sisters where they once chanted their Divine Office, but our guide said they stopped doing that sometime in the 1970s. In fact, the Sacred Heart Sisters used to be cloistered nuns, taking care of the school and dormitory that housed girls. Fifty years ago we could not have even visited the place. Nowadays they have dormitories for both boys and for girls. They also host many exchange students from Asia, including, incredibly, ten girls from Communist China!

Our guide also showed us the shrine dedicated to St. John Berchmans. At Grand Coteau, this saint appeared and cured Mary Wilson, a girl preparing to become a Sacred Heart Sister. In 1866 she became very ill and was sent to the infirmary of the convent. She was on the verge of dying when St. John Berchmans appeared to her and cured her. We also learned that this is the only place in the entire United States where the Church has officially approved both a miraculous cure and certified that a true apparition took place at the same time. The shrine, by the way, includes the Way of the Cross with the same Holy Face images featured in St. Gertrude the Great's 2015 All Saints Roman Catholic Calendar.

Besides Grand Coteau, I visited the city of Rayne, Louisiana, the frog capital of the world. Its buildings are decorated with impressive murals. And as in Glendale, Ohio, a city near St. Gertrude the Great Church which is dotted with numerous squirrel statues, the streets of Rayne feature frog statues from all corners of life. While there, I also saw the parish cemetery of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, with its Louisiana style above ground level graves. At one time this cemetery had the unique distinction of being the only one in the Christian world that faced north-south rather than east-west. This was a mistake, which the poor parish priest noticed only when it was too late. You can read the whole story at www.rayne.org/other-attractions.php

After the Low Sunday Mass in Shuteston, it was time to head back to St. Gertrude the Great and begin the final quarter of the school year. Traveling in three states in the span of just five days had been a great experience in the, historical and contemporary, secular and religious, life of the South.



(Above) St. Gertrude the Great's own "history detective," Father Lehtoranta, poses at the Jefferson Davis State Historic Site located in Fairview, Kentucky. Rayne, Louisiana's, "Father Joe" looks content on his "presider's chair" of stone! On a more serious note, Father Lehtoranta offers the true Mass in the Evans home chapel. The sobering reminder that life's road back to God is strewn with crosses is a daily reminder in the Evans family cemetery located adjacent to the family home.