

Province of Lemont- April 2018

On four continents in different cultural ways over 900 School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King are celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of our foundress, Mother Margareta Pucher. Wow!! What a legacy she has left. Here in the United States we celebrated with a community day dedicated to remembering her story and once again being inspired by it.

Our Community Day, March 3, anticipated the actual date of Mother Margareta's birthday, March 6. We began the day with an opening prayer using the theme, "My God and My All," a prayer which Mother Margareta encouraged her Sisters "be ever in your lives and in mine, in your hearts and in mine- hearts consecrated to God." Sr. Patricia, then, using a Power Point presentation focused on the time, place and experiences that influenced Margareta to found a new community. Sisters were asked to personally reflect on words of Mother Margareta in a booklet also prepared by Sr. Patricia. Sisters then shared their ideas both with the small group at their table and with the whole group reflecting how the characteristics of Mother Margareta and her first Sisters are alive in each of us, in our communities and ministries in our time and place.

The reflection on the life of Mother Margareta continued at the liturgy when Father Art Anderson, OFM, spoke about Mother Margareta quoting from her founding letters in which she said that if she did not do it (teaching the children), "the good would remain forever undone." Father encouraged us to continue this good work.

Following the liturgy, we celebrated with an old fashioned United States birthday party. The Alvernia Manor kitchen staff prepared dinner, and after dinner we played games that involved all the Sisters cooperating, laughing, and remembering Mother Margareta's love for the children as that reference was used in one of the games.

The final United States tradition was the birthday cake decorated with an image of Mother Margareta. This was a gift from Sr. Patricia's mother. We all sang our traditional Happy Birthday and enjoyed the delicious cake with ice cream wondering what Mother Margareta would think of her Sisters (here in the United States) and their ministries today in a world so different from the one she was born into 200 years ago.

Our initial birthday party is only the beginning of a two year celebration of Mother Margareta's decision to stay with the children in Maribor and to found our Congregation 150 years ago.

Sr. Kathleen Vugrinovich