

Day Trip to Vechta



The Chapter delegates left the Kolping Bildungsstätte at 8:45 Thursday morning for Vechta. The two buses traveled to Vechta together, about 2 hours from Coesfeld. Once in Vechta, the first bus went directly to Kloster Marienhain and were greeted by the sisters of the Vechta Community. The second bus went to the Liebfrauenschule (Notre Dame Academy), the first school of the Congregation founded in 1859.

At Kloster Marienhain, we enjoyed coffee and homemade cookies. All went to Holy Spirit Church in Kloster Marienhain to learn the history of the Church, built in 1978, then toured the living quarters of the sisters. The buildings of the original Kloster Marienhain have been sold to the Diocese and the sisters now use only a portion of the building as their home. The large building that was formerly the sisters' residence is now a refuge for Ukrainian immigrants. The former school on the property is now a training school for kindergarten teachers and persons who wish to be certified to work in elder care homes. It was gratifying to hear from the Director how the program is one of the finest in the area for preparing Kindergarten teachers, certainly in keeping with the Congregation's history of teacher preparation. The tour also included a walk on the beautiful grounds and a visit to the cemetery. Both groups met for lunch at the cafeteria of the school building where the sisters from Vechta presented the former and current General Council members with hand-knitted socks made by our sisters. These socks and other knitted items are sold in the area and the proceeds are sent to help support our East Africa delegation.

The day also included a visit to Liebfrauenschule. The school is no longer owned by the Congregation and now serves as a Diocesan school for over 600 young women, continuing the mission started by the Sisters of Notre Dame 163 years ago. Our tour included a visit to the beautifully renovated Chapel, with the original floors restored and natural wood ambo, altar, and chairs. The Chapel also features a large, open prayer space in the rear where groups can gather for prayer and meditation.

It was a blessing to share this time with our sisters in Vechta and visit places significant in our Congregational history.