



ST. MARYS DEANERY
Catholic Parishes of Mercer & Auglaize Counties



St. Aloysius, St. Francis,
St. Joseph (Egypt), St. Anthony, Immaculate Conception,
St. Bernard, St. Henry, St. Augustine, St. Wendelin,
Precious Blood, St. Rose, St. Patrick,
St. Joseph (St. Joseph), St. Teresa, St. Peter, St. Mary,
St. John the Baptist, Holy Trinity, St. Paul, St. Sebastian,
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Holy Redeemer, Holy Rosary,
Mary Help of Christians, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Northern Lights

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God will show his mercy forever and ever to those who worship and serve him. Luke 1:50

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From the Desk of the Dean...

The Maria Stein Shrine

By: Amy Petchs

Sisters of the Precious Blood Entrust Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics to Laity

After 170 years of ministry in Mercer, Auglaize and surrounding counties, the Sisters of the Precious Blood are turning to the laity to secure the future of the landmark Maria Stein Shrine. The sisters are deeding the building and 24 acres of land to the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics, an established 501c3 nonprofit corporation which will assume and operations of the Shrine on Jan. 1, 2017.

The Shrine dates to 1846 and was the Sisters of the Precious Blood original motherhouse. It is the last of 10 foundations established by Missionary of the Precious Blood Father Francis de Sales Brunner. Many of these were located in the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches. The Sisters of the Precious Blood came with Father Brunner from Switzerland in the 1800s to minister to the German-speaking immigrants in west-central Ohio.

Today the Shrine is home to the second-largest collection of holy relics in the United States. The relic chapel, dedicated in 1892, has more than 1,000 relics including those from all four Gospel writers and all but one of the apostles.

"Although education was once the primary ministry, the sisters never forgot the importance of the holy relics housed at the convent at Maria Stein, now the Shrine," said Sister Joyce Lehman, C.P.P.S., president of the congregation, "After more than 180 years of caring for the relics, we realize now that we would need the help of the laity in new ways to ensure the Shrine's future."

The Legacy Fund has been established to help support and continue the ministries at the Shrine for future generations. It was determined that a \$6,000,000 fund will generate the earnings needed to replace the annual gift the Sisters of the Precious Blood made toward the ministries of the Shrine, and provide adequate income for maintenance and operations.

The first \$2,000,000 has been donated by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. An anonymous donor has committed up to \$2,000,000 in matching gifts. Over \$1 million has already been pledged and gifted from area businesses and individuals. The \$2,000,000 match extends to pledges and donations committed by Dec. 31, 2017. Gifts or pledges of \$2,500 or more will be recognized on a donor wall at the Shrine.

For generations, many families have been part of the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches and the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics. This is an opportunity to help keep the relics at Maria Stein, and preserve this beautiful sacred space for centuries to come.

"Maria Stein and Mercer County, God's country, is a very meaningful and important place to the Sisters of the Precious Blood," said Sister Joyce, "It is an honor to know that this historical shrine will be managed by people of this area."

"The German Catholic community, whose ancestors learned much of their spirituality from the Sisters of the Precious Blood, has demonstrated a real commitment to the Shrine," said Don Rosenbeck, president of Maria Stein of the Holy Relics. "Just as local parishes are involving the laity more and more, so too will the Shrine."

Now is the time to unlock the future of the Shrine and keep this rich and rare treasure in the heart of "God's Country."



Sister Joyce Lehman and Don Rosenbeck

For more information about the Legacy Fund please contact Don Rosenbeck, president or Diana Russell, director of fund development by phone at 419.925.4532, or at 2291 St. Johns Road, Maria Stein, OH 45860. To learn more about the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics, please visit www.mariasteinshrine.org