





## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

# Leonardo, meet Maria Anna

Leonardo da Vinci, that quintessential Renaissance polymath, had hundreds of ideas that were centuries ahead of his time. He filled dozens of notebooks with sketches and diagrams for inventions, from flying machines to versions of the modern odometer and parachute, to name just a few.

The popular (and spurious) recent book and film aside, the real-life Leonardo had a passion not for “secret codes” and intrigue, but for learning and exploring, for developing things that could benefit humankind. But he was also realistic enough to know that most of his dreams would never be realized during his lifetime.

It would be others, coming years and often centuries after him, who would pore and puzzle over his designs and make them work — or not. It was left to others to develop Leonardo’s ideas into entirely new and often more amazing inventions than Da Vinci could ever have imagined.

One of Leonardo da Vinci’s more poignant and recurring quotes, found written in his many notebooks, usually next to a sketch for some futuristic invention, is, “I should like to know if anything were ever done [about this]...”

As I watched the very moving opening ritual of the Precious Blood Sisters’ 175th anniversary year the evening of Jan. 17, I couldn’t help thinking of Mother Maria Anna Probst Brunner—and Leonardo da Vinci’s musing. I wondered if Maria Anna, too, might have said, “I should like to know if anything were ever done” about the dream she cherished and nurtured but which wasn’t brought to completion in her lifetime.

This eighteenth-century Swiss lady—a wife, a widow, a mother of six children, gatherer of a little band of girls and women to serve the poor and adore the Precious Blood of Jesus—had a great deal of faith. But she had no crystal ball, no prophetic or mystical visions (that we know of). She couldn’t see the future.

According to her son, Father Francis de Sales Brunner, who recorded her life and death, she said, “I hope to contribute toward this good work even in eternity.” But that “good work,” at the time of her death in 1836, was still in seed form. The Sisters of the Precious Blood as we know them today were still in the mind of God.

I pictured Mother Brunner looking on her spiritual daughters, the Sisters of the Precious Blood of the past 175 years and today, and murmuring in astonishment, “Amazing! Who ever would have thought?!”

Could she ever have foreseen that in 2009 an American Precious Blood Sister, a medical doctor in Guatemala, would portray her “spirit” in this prayer service? Had Mother Brunner even heard of foreign places like Guatemala and Chile? She could have hardly imagined that Precious Blood spirituality which she so loved would be solidly planted there and in the United States, thanks in no small part to the efforts of her sisters.

From her castle home in Loewenberg, she never could have dreamed of hundreds of Sisters of the Precious Blood, branching out from a small corner of Switzerland to the young “America,” spreading across it to Ohio and beyond to more than a dozen other states and territories. Could she have foreseen that her small “good work” would blossom

and grow to embrace thousands of people in hundreds of places?

Mother Brunner gathered a handful of young women with her to adore the Lord and serve his people. But what a surprise for her in eternity to see the rich range of ministries her sisters have carried out. Praying, educating, homemaking, nursing, caring for orphans and migrants and the poor, serving Native Peoples. Recognizing that the blood of all God’s people is precious as they work for peace, justice, reconciliation.

Like Leonardo’s ideas, it was left to those who came after her, under God’s guidance, to nurture and transform the tiny dream-seed Mother Brunner planted into the amazing reality it has become.

We might imagine her reaction: “My, look what God has done with what he started through me! Praise and honor to the Precious Blood of Jesus!”

—Pat Morrison



## Sharing & Caring

### CPPS Mission Statement

*Urged by the redeeming love of Jesus the Christ and rooted in Eucharistic prayer, we Sisters of the Precious Blood proclaim God’s love by being a life-giving, reconciling presence in our fractured world.*

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# What would Mother Brunner do?

Our 175th anniversary year celebrations have begun. At the opening ceremony we heard the invitation that this anniversary year be a joy-filled celebration of God's faithful love and our faith-filled response in the past, now and always. Our hearts still echo with the words from our opening hymn, "O magnify the Lord. Break forth in songs my voice. Praise God! Eternal praise, unending sung, praise God."

The Sisters of the Precious Blood set four goals for this anniversary year:

1. to recall and appreciate God's blessings over our 175-year history—finding our fire,
2. to let it be known that the Sisters of the Precious Blood are alive and eager to continue our Precious Blood spirituality heritage,
3. to treasure the women and men who have been our partners in living out our Precious Blood charism and mission, and
4. to witness our solidarity with the poor and marginalized, especially in areas where we sisters have ministered.

It is this fourth goal that seems to have significant meaning and challenge right now when more and more people in our families, our local communities, our cities, our country and the world are or are becoming the poor and marginalized. Don't we all know at least one person who has been affected by the economic downturn?

As I read and listen to the news, I hear the gloom-and- doom realities of the country's economy and the

dire effects these are having on the entire world economy. I also hear individual stories of ordinary people and how the economic reality is changing their lives and lifestyles. What has truly inspired me in all this is hearing attitudes like, "I am adjusting my plans, making difficult choices," and "All of us need to work together for the common good." Workshops are being held, lectures given, articles written about

and unconditional love for all, led her to a life of responding to the needs of those around her in the ways available to her in her time.

Reflecting on how Mother Brunner might do this today is a challenge for each of her daughters as well as for all persons urged by the redeeming love of Jesus. Do we pray more fervently? Do we live more simply? Do we give more generously—of our best and not our leftovers?

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***"By living lives of prayer, fasting and giving, we proclaim God's love, the good news of salvation, the hope of the resurrection. Isn't that what Mother Brunner did?"***  
***Isn't that what she would be doing today?"***

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how to cut costs creatively, live more economically and help those affected by the current crisis.

I look at my own reality and that of us, Sisters of the Precious Blood. We are taken care of, have a roof over our heads, food on the table, no fear for the implications of losing a job. We are so blessed. And I ask myself, "What would Mother Brunner be doing today? How would she be responding?"

Our history tells us that Mother Brunner gave daily and generously to families less fortunate; bread baked always included some for the poor, and the best was given away—sometimes to the chagrin of her children. Keenly aware of the needs of her time, Mother Brunner prayed. Her intense devotion to the Precious Blood and its message of God's total

In his Lenten letter, Pope Benedict XVI suggests that "Fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live.... By freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger." By living lives of prayer, fasting and giving, we proclaim God's love, the good news of salvation, the hope of the resurrection.

Isn't that what Mother Brunner did? Isn't that what she would be doing today?

*Sister Florence*

**Sister Florence Seifert, CPPS**



## VOCATION & FORMATION NEWS

### *From California retreats to Ohio coffee shops...*

# Nurturing vocations takes varied approaches

BY SISTER CAROLYN HOYING

CPPS efforts to encourage vocational discernment among young people spanned half the continent in January, with programs in California and Ohio. The formats varied, too, from a day of reflection in Redlands, Calif., to a “coffee shop” in Maria Stein.

Using a casual “café” format, the Life Choices Coffee Shop was hosted Sunday evening, Jan. 11, at the Maria Stein Center in Maria Stein, Ohio. In California, the Day for Single Women took place Saturday, Jan. 31, at Holy Name of Jesus Parish House in Redlands, where CPPS Sister Mary Garcia is pastoral coordinator.

Both programs offered the opportunity for young adults—men and women in Maria Stein, and women in California—to come together with others who are serious about responding to God’s call to love and serve. The vocational paths are different: married, single, priesthood and diaconate, or religious life. But wherever an individual is on the discernment journey, the skills and personal gifts for finding one’s place in God’s plan are the same: self-knowledge, healthy living, faith, commitment.

Young adults and high school seniors were welcome to spend time with individuals committed to one of these life choices. A panel of persons represented married, single, ordained and religious life. Panelists spoke from their personal experience and shared some challenges and joys of their particular vocational choice.

Over a cup of tea or coffee (Maria Stein) or lunch (Redlands), the young participants had the opportunity to share with one another, ask questions of the panelists and gain important insights into their own vocational discernment.

In addition to the vocational panel, the Life Choices Coffee Shop included a keynote speaker, Precious Blood Sister Mary Garke. Director of the Office of Religious for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, she addressed the topic, “Am

I Ready? Assessing Preparedness for Life Choices.” From her years of experience as a religious and a psychologist, Sister Mary had a wealth of material to share with all who attended.

In both programs, some common themes found an echo:

—Whatever vocation is ultimate one’s own, it is never for oneself alone, but a gift and commitment for the whole faith community.

—You must never think that you are alone in deciding your future. And when you are deciding your future, you must never decide for yourself alone.

—No one life choice is “better” than another; what is “best” is answering that vocational call by which a person can best serve God and best

### ***Vocation: Rooted in baptism***

“The promotion of vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life cannot be understood in isolation from the universal baptismal call to holiness and service.

“Vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life—and to single and married life, to lay ministry and Christian witness in a secular society—will flourish in a church where each member can identify and concretely live out the Father’s call to life and holiness, the Son’s call to discipleship and communion, and the Spirit’s call to witness and mission.”

*Conversion, Discernment, Mission: Fostering a Vocation Culture in North America*, page 12; published by the National Coalition for Church Vocations



become the person God is inviting one to be.

—All vocational responses, whether to married or single life, priesthood, diaconate or religious life, all flow out of the common gift and responsibility of baptism—the “putting on of Christ” which is the universal vocation of the Christian.

The Life Choices Coffee Shop was sponsored by the Maria Stein Center along with the parishes in St. Mary’s Deanery, the Sisters and Missionaries of the Precious Blood, as well as the Knights of Columbus of St. Henry. The Day for Single Women was sponsored by the Sisters of the Precious Blood in the Diocese of San Bernardino, Calif.

For more information about discerning a vocation or to learn more about upcoming programs, contact Sr. Carolyn Hoying, Coordinator of Vocation Ministry, at (937) 231-1244 or [Vocations@PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org](mailto:Vocations@PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org).



Check the website for more information on upcoming and/or ongoing vocational discernment programs: Women’s Inner Journey, a Friday evening of conversation, prayer and reflection hosted in Dayton (The Glen at St. Joseph), discernment retreats and more.

Go to [www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org](http://www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org); click on News & Events>News and see the Vocations header.

# A spirituality for a lifetime

By PAT MORRISON

MARIA STEIN/DAYTON—When families gather, in times of joy and sadness, often over a meal, the familiar, cherished “stories” are retold. These narratives become the glue, the connective tissue, which holds lives together over generations.

Precious Blood spirituality is one of these great time-and-place transcending stories that unites the Christian family, but it is more than that, of course. It is a story rooted in the immense self-gift of Jesus—beginning in his incarnation and birth, shared and memorialized at the Last Supper, poured out as his blood in Jesus’ death on the cross, glorified in the resurrection.

Since the beginning of the church, the great theologians, pastors and mystics have explored, articulated and mined the infinite richness hidden in the image and reality of Christ’s blood. Devotion to and expression of this central mystery of Christ’s life changed and deepened over the centuries. It was the wellspring for the foundation of the various religious congregations dedicated to the Precious Blood, including CPPS Dayton.

Sisters of the Precious Blood have been sharing the richness of their spirituality in numerous ways since their founding. But in Dayton and Maria Stein the desire to share Precious Blood spirituality with others beyond the congregation took organized shape in 2002.

The catalyst for the formation of Precious Blood spirituality groups “came from the desire of some of the sisters to do something with Precious Blood spirituality among the laity,” said CPPS vice president Sister Jeanette Buehler.

The time didn’t seem to be right for a formal CPPS associate program, which the congregation had explored at several assemblies. But, Sister Regina Albers said, the sisters’ interest increased in sharing Precious Blood spirituality with the wider church, especially those people the sisters know, live and work with.

Seven years later, several active Precious Blood spirituality groups are in existence, thanks in part to the efforts of the late Sister Jacinta Nearingard.

A core group is so-named both because they were the first group organized, but also because they help to unify the program, provide resources and keep the direction focused.

There’s an individual flavor to each group, and the format is flexible. But all groups have access to a variety of resources—many of them materials developed by Sister Carmelita Monnin for similar groups in Chile. Sister



Photo by Pat Morrison

Some Precious Blood spirituality group members from Dayton and the Maria Stein area gather for a photo in Dayton. From front left, Sisters Regina Albers and Virgine Elking, and Elsie Balster. Back row, Ursula Pierron and Assunta Marshall.

Regina translated many of them, including articles and prayer services individuals and groups can use.

*Sharing & Caring* spoke with core group members as well as members of a Maria Stein area group to learn more about how this experience enriches their own lives.

Interviewed were CPPS Sisters Jeanette Buehler, Regina Albers, Virgine Elking, and Elsie Balster, Assunta Marshall and Ursula Pierron. (Marie Lubeley, a key member and organizer of the MSC group, was unable to attend due to illness.)

For Ursula, a former CPPS member, “you never outgrow that connection [to Precious Blood spirituality]. This is a way to keep deepening that part of myself.”

Elsie agrees. Some of the attraction to learn more about Precious Blood spirituality came from her sister, Sister Verlina Mescher, and contact with the CPPS community. “It intrigued me, and I want to keep learning more, to keep growing... I love it,” she said.

Both groups usually provide advance notes on items

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## Former CPPS president, Sister Rosella Hess, dies

At *Sharing & Caring* press time, the Sisters of the Precious Blood were saddened to learn of the death of **Sister Rosella (M. Anthonita) Hess** on March 7. Among many other ministries, Sister Rosella served as president of the congregation from 1966-1972. Her eulogy is available online at [www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org](http://www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org)>In Memoriam.



# A spirituality for a lifetime

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selected for reading and read a given text before the meeting.

"We're currently reading [Precious Blood Father Robert] Schreiter's *In Water and in Blood: A Spirituality of Solidarity and Hope* (Orbis 2006)," said Elsie.

The meetings begin with a prayer, often with the psalms, then a discussion of the topic and what it means in members' lives.

Flexibility is one of the hallmarks of the groups. There are no specific "practices," (Liturgy of the Hours, rosary, even Precious Blood devotions). "The spirituality is there to feed you; you take and adapt what fits your life," explained Sister Regina.

"It's organic, it grows out of your personal inclination," agreed Ursula, who is

also active in the Schoenstatt spirituality movement. "And it keeps you wanting more."

Lay members especially noted that being with others provides a structure and discipline they find helpful. "I'm doing things—studying, praying—I might not do if I didn't have the support of the group," Ursula added. And of course the group is there to be a supportive prayer network as well.

While there's the risk that groups or movements can become self-focused and closed in, just the opposite seems to be the result here.

Most of the members of the MSC group, for example, take part in Eucharistic adoration at the shrine and also at their home parishes. So Precious

Blood spirituality is rightly feeding deepening hunger for and appreciation of the Eucharist, both at Mass and in adoration outside Mass.

The groups are also careful to complement rather than compete with programs being offered in parishes and by the archdiocese. For example, they've rescheduled their meetings while the adult education program "Why Catholic?" is going on, to encourage greater participation at the parish level. "We want [members] to get as much as they can at the parish," said Sr. Regina. "We're able to pick up when those leave off. There's enough [in Precious Blood spirituality] for a lifetime!"

*Watch future issues for profiles of other Precious Blood Spirituality groups.*

## Precious Blood spirituality on the airwaves

Continued from the back page

teachings of a particular saint or divine mystery, Precious Blood spirituality is totally Christ-centered. As such its richness represents the whole life and mission of Jesus from his birth until his resurrection, and foundational to the church yet today in the Mass.

The programs ranged from explanations of traditional devotions, such as the Precious Blood family's prayers in honor of the seven sheddings of blood in the life of Jesus which are recounted in Scripture, to contemporary theological emphasis on Eucharist and the liturgical year lived through the "lens" of the Blood of Christ.

"Throughout the series," Sister Marty told *Sharing & Caring*, "we used some Scripture readings, taught theology, presented commentaries and shared insights we gained through our life experiences and reflection. We also offered some examples of how to live a Precious Blood spirituality."

Although the two hosts are modest in describing their roles in the program and credentials for it, Radio Maria could not have chosen better presenters for the series.



Sister Martha has extensive background in Catholic education, both in the school classroom, and then as director of religious education in various parishes for 21 years. She also was a parish pastoral associate for almost a decade. Since 2005 she has been manager of the Missionaries' Saint Charles Senior Living Community in Carthage. Sister Marty is also a passionate worker on behalf of vocations and assists with programs hosted at the congregation's Maria Stein Center.

Fr. Ranly was professor of philosophy at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., from 1956 to 1973. He then devoted the next 35 years to missionary work in Peru and Colombia, South America.

Although he moved to Carthage last year, he clearly has not "retired." He celebrates Mass for the area's Spanish-speaking parishioners, especially migrant workers. With the energy of a man half his age, he launched into this radio ministry with Sister Marty, and has more creative ventures in the planning stage.

This dynamic duo said they felt privileged to have the opportunity to share the richness of Precious Blood spirituality—a spirituality which they have lived and made their own—with an international radio audience.

# Celebrating 175 years



**The opening events of the CPPS anniversary year were marked with prayer, celebration, education.... and deep gratitude**

By PAT MORRISON

DAYTON—The refrain of a popular contemporary Catholic hymn describes beautifully what the community of faith does at Eucharist: “We remember, we celebrate, we believe.” (Marty Haugen, “We Remember”) One of the key ways individual families and families of faith commemorate what is most cherished among them is precisely by remembering (telling the stories), celebrating (the persons and the history) and believing (that God is creatively present and active in our histories and in our midst today).

Sisters of the Precious Blood share the richness of both family and community, and they recalled both recently as they remembered, celebrated and gave voice to shared belief. The occasion was the opening of their 175th anniversary year the weekend of Jan. 17-18.

Throughout 2009 and through Jan. 15, 2010, the congregation is marking its 175 years of life with a variety of events for the public and the sisters. One of the ways CPPS sisters hope to share the richness of Precious Blood spirituality is with a four-part lecture series on various facets of this Christian mystery.

## Lecture Series

The anniversary year opened with the first lecture in the series, “Perspectives on Precious Blood Spirituality from a Theology of Eucharist and Adoration,” presented by CPPS Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman. Sister Joyce Ann is director of the Institute for Liturgical Ministry in Dayton and founding editor and columnist for *Liturgical Ministry*. An adjunct professor of liturgy at the Athenaeum of Ohio, she is also a liturgical consultant, speaker and workshop facilitator. She holds a Ph.D, and also a doctorate in sacred theology.

The chapel at Salem Heights was close to capacity for the Jan. 17 lecture. More than 180 persons took part in the daylong program. Missionaries of the Precious Blood, members of Precious Blood spirituality groups, Dayton and Cincinnati-area parishioners and Precious Blood Sisters heard Sr. Joyce Ann’s four presentations and also had the opportunity for small-group sharing and discussion.

With theological insight and also humor, she walked participants through biblical perspectives on adoration, historical perspectives on

Eucharist through shifts in theology and spirituality, and post-Vatican II perspectives with return to an understanding of Eucharist as participatory action. She concluded by looking at the foundations for a theology of adoration.

## Opening Ritual

The opening of the anniversary year drew Precious Blood Sisters from Kentucky to California and points between to the motherhouse. That evening, the community gathered in the chapel again for an intimate and moving opening ritual.

The ceremony began with the reading of the anniversary proclamation (see Winter II issue of *Sharing & Caring*) and a procession that included liturgical dancers accompanying the “spirit of Mother Brunner,” powerfully portrayed by Sister Marggo Young, a medical doctor recently returned from Guatemala. To the powerful strains of Mary’s Song of Praise (*Magnificat*), colorfully robed sisters waved streamers, played tambourines and filled the chapel with clouds of incense for the doxology’s recurring refrain, “Eternal praise, unending sung, praise God!”

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During her Jan. 17 lecture on Precious Blood spirituality, Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman displays a book on Eucharistic contemplation by CPPS Father Ernest Ranly (see the back page). She noted the book as reflecting excellent theology for Eucharistic worship. Right, lecture participants like this foursome had opportunities during the day for small group exchange and sharing of ideas.



Photos on cover, this page and pages 8-10 by Pat Morrison



At the opening ritual, red-robed sisters' graceful movement accompanied hymns of praise, while the spirit of Mother Brunner (Sr. Margo Young, in white) held aloft the congregation's governing document (top) and called them to renewed commitment (right). • Sisters from around the country joined their voices in song during the opening celebrations. • During a break at the lecture, sisters shared news and ideas. From left, Sr. Katie Lett from San Diego, Calif., Sr. Jane Francis Hoffman, Salem Heights; Sister Anne Schulz, Monroe, Ohio.



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After an opening prayer and reading, the spirit of Mother Maria Anna Brunner began a dialogue with her spiritual daughters. She called them to renewed commitment, to loving remembrance of those who have gone before, to prophetic action and efforts to be a life-giving, reconciling presence into the future.

Then, from their places throughout the chapel, different sisters took turns relating the historical milestones of the CPPS past: Loewenberg, Switzerland; New Riegel, Ohio; Maria Stein, the West, Salem Heights, the 100th anniversary, Chile, the Second Vatican Council, CPPS Tonight. After each reflection, the *Magnificat* refrain was accompanied again by streamers and tambourines, reinforcing the joyful awareness of God's action throughout CPPS history.

Following a prayer and Scripture reading, Sister Florence Seifert, CPPS president, offered an opening reflection for the members of the congregation. She urged them during this anniversary year to capture, rekindle and spread the fire that burned in the heart of the foundress. She encouraged them to both reflect gratefully on their graced history and to look courageously at the needs of the present and future they are called to respond to with prophetic, reconciling service.

Celebration

Prayer petitions then reflected the needs of the world—for justice, for the poor and marginalized, for respect for all life and creation, for the empowerment of women, for all deceased CPPS sisters. To each petition the assembly prayed in English, Latin and Spanish: “Lord, hear our prayer.”

The spirit of Mother Brunner then moved to the center of the sanctuary and held aloft the congregation's governing document, *Our Way of Life*, as the sisters renewed their vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. Three scarlet-robed sisters then interpreted the sisters' “Vow of Fidelity” hymn with graceful ritual movement.

After a blessing prayer led by the spirit of Mother Brunner, the assembled community was then invited to “go forth from this place continuing our joy-filled celebration” with a closing song of praise, “City of God.”

### Opening Eucharistic Liturgy

On Sunday morning, Jan. 18, Father Angelo Anthony was the main presider and homilist for the first Eucharistic celebration of the anniversary year. To foster the intimate family spirit of the opening celebration—and also because of the space limitations of the motherhouse chapel—this liturgy was planned primarily for the sisters.

Fr. Anthony is the provincial of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in the Cincinnati Province. Also assisting at the liturgy were two other Missionaries of the Precious

Blood, Father Ernest Ranly and Father Joseph Bathke. Fr. Ranly is a recently returned Latin American missionary who resides in Carthagena, Ohio. It's something of a misnomer to call Fr. Ranly "retired," because of his many apostolic and pastoral interests (see the back page of this issue for one of them). Fr. Bathke is a member of the Kansas City Province currently living and working in Dayton. He was recently appointed director of formation for the province and also director of the Missionaries' joint initial formation program.

During the liturgy, Precious Blood Sisters from various parts of Ohio and around the country proclaimed the Scripture readings and general intercessions and served as ministers of the Eucharist. Another large group of sisters brought the beauty of music to the Mass as they formed the choir, under the direction of John Buehler.

Fr. Anthony linked his moving homily to the powerful themes of call in the day's Scripture readings, the call



Fr. Angelo Anthony makes a point during his homily at the opening liturgy. • Sisters ministered both the Eucharistic bread and cup to one another. Foreground, Sr. Margaret Zureick of Elkhorn City, Ky., receives the cup from Sr. Patricia Dieringer, Salem Heights. • Sr. Helen Theresa Fleischman of Salem Heights enjoys a conversation with Sr. Margery Schroeder of Cincinnati.

# Celebrating 175 years



of Samuel first and later, in John's Gospel account, the call of Andrew and the new name, "rock," which the Lord gave to Andrew's brother, Simon Peter.

Fr. Anthony invited the sisters to think about a name God calls each one of us, beyond baptismal or religious names. "It seems to me that God also chooses another name for us that expresses our relationship with God," he said, and which becomes for both God and the person a cherished term of endearment.

"... I can think of several names that could be given to [Mother Brunner] that are reflective of her relationship of love with God: Guardian of the Precious Blood, Maternal Heart of the Poor, Mother of Prayer and Action," he said.

"For 175 years, you sisters have sought to be attentive to the voice of God calling you by name to be the maternal presence of God reaching out in love with the gift of the Precious Blood of Jesus," Fr. Anthony told the sisters. "In your experience of prayer and adoration, you have heard a call to teach, to feed the hungry, to stand against violence, 'to be a life-giving, reconciling presence in our fractured world' today."

Mother Brunner, he said, "was in touch with the light of Christ and she used that light to guide others along the journey to life.

"Throughout the years you have been bearers of light for so many people," he said.

"Your lives bear witness to the truth that all peoples

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# Celebrating 175 years

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are temples of God's spirit, no matter how unformed, broken, desperate or hopeless that life may seem. We hold in our hearts the truth that our lives have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. We glorify God by telling others the news of this great gift of God's covenantal love."

## The celebration continues

The opening celebration continued after Mass with a community dinner, which gave sisters from various parts of the country and ministry locales the chance to socialize with friends and classmates.



The anniversary celebration was an opportunity for Precious Blood Sisters from across the country to spend time with one another. Above, Sister Paula Gero, who teaches in Flint, Mich., enjoys a game of Scrabble with Sister Consuella Salmon, 98 years young and a member of the Salem Heights community.

Several other celebrations are being planned during the anniversary for different places around the country with a special CPPS connection.

At *Sharing & Caring* press time, the congregation is preparing for another special event, this one marking CPPS presence in the Southwest. A Mass and reception at St. Mary's Basilica in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 21 will both commemorate the 175th anniversary as well as the arrival of the sisters in Phoenix in 1903. From the time of that pioneer venture, more than 300 Precious Blood Sisters ministered in Arizona and New Mexico in schools, parishes and in special outreach to the Hispanic community and Native American peoples.

News of this celebration will be featured after the event on the website News page and also in the Summer issue of *Sharing & Caring*.



An almost-life-size figure of Mother Maria Anna Brunner was a favorite spot for sisters, employees and guests to snap a souvenir photo. Posing with her here are Filomena (Lumen) Johnson of Salem Heights' dietary staff and Sister Lucy Mbuya, a Sister of Our Lady of Kilimanjaro from Tanzania, Africa. The foundress' figure was created by Sister Eileen Tomlinson, Salem Heights' artist-in-residence.



## New on the web! [www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org](http://www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org)

The website now has a "new and improved" News page and a separate page for the 175th Anniversary Year.

If you go to the website and click on News & Events>News, it will open to the News page. It currently features:

- Photos and a story on the opening 175th celebration events,
- Maria Stein Center programs

- "Out and About," listing programs, talks, retreats being given by CPPS sisters, and
- Ongoing and future Vocations events.

If you click on the anniversary logo to the right of the News page, it will take you directly to the **175th Anniversary news page**, where scheduled celebrations and programs are listed

(Coming next: Open House at Salem Heights on April 26.). This page will also include a calendar of planned events for the anniversary year. Details will be added as information becomes available.

These pages will be updated weekly, so check the website often. (You might want to add it to your favorites for quick reference.)

# Precious Blood pen pals

*An eighth-grade English assignment made for some interesting chemistry when students and sisters became pen pals*

By PAT MORRISON

In this age of e-mail, text messaging, Facebook and Twitter, the idea of anyone under 30 sitting down to write an actual pen-on-paper letter may seem like the anachronism of the century. Couple that with the fact that the letter writers are a mix of eighth-graders and octogenarians (and older) and you have an even more unusual scenario. Add another ingredient: the students for the most part are of religious traditions other than Catholic; their senior pen pals are... Catholic sisters!

The students attend class at Precious Blood School, just across the street from the Precious Blood Sisters' Salem Heights mother-house. But in some ways the two groups could seem to be light years apart.

What could contemporary 13-14 year-olds have in common with women up to six times their age? Students of different faith traditions or none with women who have spent their lives dedicated to God and service in the church?

The answers? Quite a lot actually!

Elizabeth Weizman, eighth-grade English teacher at Precious Blood School, knew that there could be wonderful chemistry if her students and the sisters could get to know one another. And getting her students to take time to write a letter about themselves had its own academic benefits: putting pen to paper teaches clear thinking skills, relationship

building, penmanship, grammar and spelling, just for starters.

Learning what the sisters had accomplished in their long and full lives, what their own childhoods were like before many conveniences we take for granted (automobiles, microwave ovens, even in some cases indoor plumbing!) would be a rich learning experience for the students. And the sisters' own vistas would be widened as they learned more about young people's interests and dreams in 2009.

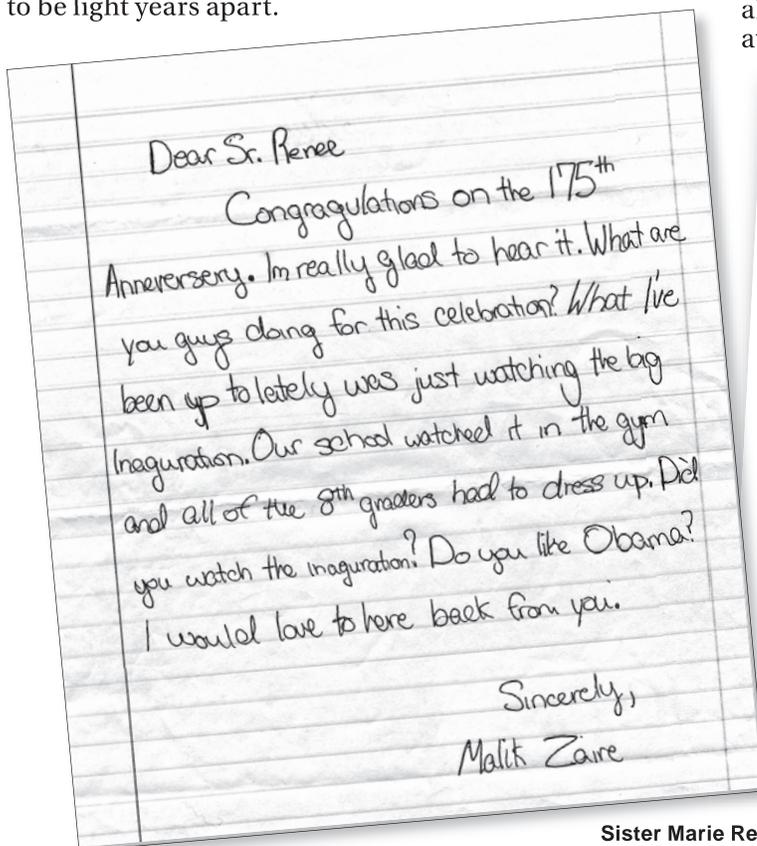
Sister Beverly Bodnar, director of resident life at Salem Heights, extended Mrs. Weizman's invitation to the Salem Heights sisters. A dozen sisters, along with several more at Emma Hall, healthcare

wing at the adjacent Maria-Joseph Living Care Center, agreed

to become "pen pals" with 30 Precious Blood eighth-graders.

Before the project could get underway, organizers knew the best introduction would be to have the students meet the sisters and talk to them one-on-one. After some initial butterflies on both sides (What will I say? What will we talk about?), the class made their first visit to the sisters at Salem Heights on Dec. 10. The two groups clicked at once. Aspiring young musicians talked to sisters who love music and are musicians themselves. Students interested in art learned about sisters who are woodcarvers and painters. Youngsters who dream of life beyond Day-

*Continued on page 12*



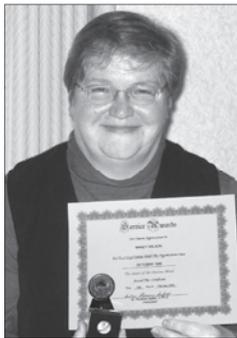
Photos by Pat Morrison

Sister Marie Renee Hoehn and her pen pal, Malik Zaire. His letter is at left.

■ **Employees of the Sisters of the Precious Blood** were recognized for years of service at a dinner and awards ceremony Feb. 16 at Salem Heights. Together the 43 employees represent 267 years of service at Salem Heights, the Generalate, Maria Stein Center and the Maria-Joseph Living Care Center.

Honored for longest years of service was **Nancy Wilson** of the Finance Office (SH). She received a certificate and pin for her 20 years. **Barbara De Los Santos**, Salem Heights administrator, was honored for 5 years of service.

**Sister Florence Seifert**, CPPS president, greeted all the employees, thanked them for their service and then presented certificates to each of the employees, and pin (20 years) or keychain (5 years) to Nancy and



Nancy Wilson

Barbara. Members of the General Council helped distribute the certificates.

Other employees honored for years of service included: 19 years: **Linda Koenig** (MSC); 14 years: **Kimberly Jaynes** (SH Activities); 12 years: **Omer Bertke** and **Diane Dues** (MSC); 11 years: **Sr. Barbara Ann Hoying** (MSC), **Sheree Neumann** (SH Finance) and **William Walters** (MSC); 9 years: **Elton Benson**, **Brenda Gabbard** (both SH Dietary) and **Kimberly Lewis** (EH); 8 years: **Belinda White** (SH Groundskeeping); 7 years: **Linda Hageman** (SH) and **Sisters Regina Albers** (MSC), **Beverly Bodnar** (SH), **Jeannine Kloeker** (EH) and **Janet Winandy** (Generalate); 6 years: **Tammie Bane**, **Ruby Felton**



Barbara De Los Santos

## Precious Blood pen pals

*Continued from page 11*

ton met sisters from the Southwest and California, and others who have lived in Chile and Guatemala.

Current events, too, became ideal ice-breakers and conversation topics. When he learned that the Sisters of the Precious Blood

are celebrating the 175th anniversary of the congregation's founding, Malik Zaire sent congratulations to his pen pal, Sister Marie Renee Hoehn (see page 11). He also wrote about the excitement he felt watching the presidential inauguration.

Sister Renee wrote back, telling Malik about her role in the 175th anniversary and plans for a celebration in her home town of Ottoville, Ohio. She encouraged Malik to pray for President Obama and "ask the Lord to bless him each day of his presidency." The nation's new leader "will do just fine if we all work together with him," she wrote.

During their most recent visit to Salem Heights on Feb. 9, students brought hand-made Valentines and letters for the sisters, and together the pen pals enjoyed Valentine-themed snacks. The sisters gave the students a tour of the convent, including a visit to the

chapel (where all shared a prayer together); students saw a sister's typical room, and learned some CPPS history as they viewed paintings and historical items.

Back in the dining room, over the animated buzz of conversation, a listener could make out snippets of topics: sports, hobbies, confirmation, graduation, high school.

As these Precious Blood eighth-graders look to the excitement of moving on to the challenging world of high school, their sister pen pals will be remembering their young friends and entrusting them to the Lord in prayer.

And years from now some Precious Blood alumni will tell their own children about their unusual eighth-grade English project in Mrs. Weizman's class, when they became pen pals with some pretty cool Catholic sisters.



Robert Norwood looks on as his pen pal, Sister Melitta Barga, enjoys his handmade heart-shaped Valentine card.



The *Dayton Daily News* thought the idea of Catholic nuns being pen pals with a group of eighth-graders pretty newsworthy! The story made the front page of the newspaper's Neighbors section. To read Doug Page's story, go to [DaytonDailyNews.com/archives](http://DaytonDailyNews.com/archives), date: Dec. 18, 2008, keyword: Precious Blood.

# ow that...

(both SH Housekeeping), **Sr. Jean Rene Hoying** (EH), **Sr. Gerri McGeorge** (SH Finance), **Patsy Nelson** and **John Smith** (both SH Dietary); 4 years: **Tamiko Morrison** (SH Housekeeping) and **Sr. Pat Will** (Generalate/Formation); 3 years: **Donna DeCamp** (Generalate), **Filomena Johnson** (SH Dietary), **Michael Quilling** (SH Maintenance), **Denise Shepard** (SH), **Sandra Warner** (SH Dietary) and **Sisters Mary Ellen Andrisin** (MSC), **Mary Ellen Lampe** (SH Computers) and **Mary Lou Schmersal** (MSC); 2 years: **William Caripides** (SH Groundskeeping), **Jean Henderson** (SH), **Patricia Morrison** (Communications), **Timothy Neely** (SH Dietary), **Sr. Nancy Recker** (EH); 1 year: **Rebecca Bruggeman** (MSC), **Christopher Dillon** (SH Dietary), **Susan Gehret** and **Dennis Mescher** (both MSC).

Another eight employees who have served less than a year were also recognized with special mention.

(Legend: SH=Salem Heights, MSC = Maria Stein Center, EH = Emma Hall at Maria-Joseph Living Care Center)

■ **All Souls Day 2008** marked a special tribute to deceased Precious Blood Sisters. Following a Vesper service in the Salem Heights chapel, trees which had been planted on various CPPS properties in Dayton were blessed in memory of sisters who died since the previous tree planting/blessing in 2007 through Oct. 1, 2008.

The 2008 memorial tree planting honored: **Sisters Bernice Kruczek, Gemma Koenig, Helen Marie Zink, Rose Behr, Xavier Schnipke, Petronia Krietemeyer, Mary Louise Ante, Elise Calmus, Marlene Voisard, Vera Heile, Loretta Dauwe, Virginia Beene, Beulah Mae Hayden, Maria de Land, Helen**

**Nartker, Marie Langhals, Mary Bernard Reichert, Kathryn Webster, Margaret Mary Flinn, Rita Frances Klein, Marie Evelyn Moorman, Eileen Monnin, Margaret Mary Imes and Violetta Schwertner.**

■ **Sister Betty Massarek** enjoys a surprise visit from Mother Maria Anna Brunner (AKA **Sister Martha DeBrosse**) at Emma Hall. Each year in celebration of the foundress's Oct. 1 birthday, a different CPPS sister at Salem Heights dresses as Mother Brunner in traditional Swiss garb and distributes small loaves of bread to sisters at Salem Heights and Emma Hall. The CPPS foundress, known for her care for the poor, would personally bake bread to share it with needy people of the village when she would meet them along the road.



## Precious Blood Sisters witness at Fort Benning vigil

Four CPPS sisters from Dayton joined the thousands of participants in last fall's annual vigil, prayer and peaceful demonstration at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.

Pictured outside the gates, **Sisters Mary Ellen Andrisin, Tish Rawles, Mary E. Wendeln** and **Marie Kopin** prepare to walk in the solemn "funeral procession" on Nov. 23. The procession, which lasts over two hours, includes the reading of the names of 20,000 Latin Americans who were killed or are "disappeared" in violence committed by their government's military. (Sisters Mary Ellen and Marie hold crosses inscribed with the names of victims.)



The event, which draws more peaceful protesters each year, aims to call attention to the U.S. military's training of Central American military, many of

whom have been found to be complicit in the murder and torture of their own people, particularly in El Salvador And Guatemala.

Originally known as SOA, the School of the Americas, the Fort-Benning based school has been renamed WHINSEC: the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Protesters hope that public awareness and pressure will eventually lead to the school's closure.

Dayton CPPS sisters joined with Sisters of the Most Precious Blood (O'Fallon, Mo.) and a Guatemalan woman who is a torture survivor and now lives in California.

# LETTERS...

Thank you very much for the Summer/Fall issue of *Sharing & Caring*. We really enjoyed reading the article of Sister Maryann [Bremke] describing her and Sister Regina's [Albers] visit on our 150th anniversary.

It is pleasing to hear that both enjoyed their time among us so well. Also for us it was a great pleasure!

We hope that receiving [*Sharing & Caring* regularly] may help us to deepen the connection between Dayton CPPS and our community. We accept gratefully!

We include an issue of *Vobiscum*, the magazine which appears in our Archdiocese of Vaduz with an article about the image of the Mother and Queen of the Precious Blood which is exposed in our chapel. We hope you will like it.

In the Immaculate Heart of our heavenly Mother and Queen, as in devotion to the Most Precious Blood, we remain connected! God bless you!

**Mother Ulrika Walser  
Schwestern vom Kostbaren Blut  
(Sisters of the Precious Blood)  
Schellenberg  
Liechtenstein**

*Editor's note: The issue of Vobiscum, which is published in German, will be kept in the CPPS Archives in Dayton.*

Our family is grateful for your kind expressions of sympathy in the form of cards, prayers, concern and your presence on the recent death of our father, Clifford E. Wendeln.

We continue to be made aware of how many lives were touched by his presence, especially in the last few years of his life.

**Sister Mary E. Wendeln  
Kettering**

I read in the *Dayton Daily News* that the Precious Blood Sisters are celebrating their 175th anniversary.

This made me think of all the great Precious Blood Sisters who taught me at Assumption School on Kings

Avenue in Dayton from 1959 to 1967. The good sisters were my primary teachers in the first, fourth, sixth and seventh grades. I remember them all with great thanks and their devotion to all of us students.

If it is possible, please relay my great thanks to Sister Mary Emmanuel, who taught me math in eighth grade at Assumption. Sister's immense teaching ability gave me the skills to greatly improve my life.

With great respect,

**Bruce Armstrong  
Kettering  
Assumption School  
Class of 1967**

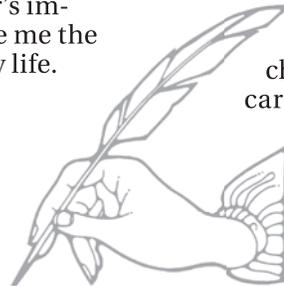
*Received by e-mail*

*Editor's note: Bruce's thanks were indeed relayed to his former teacher, Sister Mary Emmanuel. Today known as Sister Beverly (Bodnar), she is director of residence life at Salem Heights.*

I was just on your website (which is great!) and saw that Sister Sally [Sister M. Ambrosine] Smietanka passed away.

I just had to tell you I had Sister Mary Ambrosine in second and third grade at SS. Peter and Paul in Norwood. She was the sweetest nun I ever had. I am sending copies to several of my classmates who I know were also in her classes.

I also had Sister Marian Miller (Sister Carlina) for sixth grade at St. Pete's and tenth grade (religion) at Regina. That was the last time I was at the motherhouse; I came up for her showing and funeral. I can remember coming to the door and my fifth-grade teacher, Sister Cerona, walked me in. I remember telling her I thought she was mean because she always gave me double check marks on my report card!



I still keep in touch with Sister Rose Ann Winkeljohn (Sister Robert). She was my fourth-grade teacher. Later, I helped her out

at Moeller library while my son went to school.

All the nuns played a big part in my life. It has made me a better Catholic all of these years. Thank you!

**Madeline (Duccilli) Dressing  
Sharonville, Ohio  
SS. Peter and Paul School  
Class of 1955  
Regina High School  
Class of 1959**

Congratulations, Sisters of the Precious Blood! One hundred seventy-five years is quite a long time to persevere in giving honor and praise to God.

## Moving? Please tell us!

Are you planning to move? Do you have a new address? If so, please tell us. The U.S. Postal Service does not forward *Sharing & Caring*, nor notify us of address changes. **You can help us save postage costs by notifying us as soon as you know your new address.**

Please attach your old/current information from the label portion on the back page and send to us (see address on page 2) with your new information below. Thank you!

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I'm grateful for the happy memories enjoyed way back in the '50s.

God is great and continues to love and bless us as we journey one day at a time into the arms of a loving Father.

**Millie Bobofchak**  
(formerly Sister Mary Janice)  
Rocky River, Ohio

I received with great pleasure some issues of the beautiful *Sharing & Caring*, which I had requested from your website. It's a truly interesting publication. Thank you!

You sisters do a marvelous service to the Church in the United States. I'm thankful to the Lord for having let me meet you through your website.

Please continue to send me your newsletter. In exchange, I offer you much prayer.

Best wishes for a blessed [175th] anniversary year to all the sisters.

**Piergiorgio Valetto**  
Levaldigi, Cuneo, Italy

*Received by e-mail*  
(Translated from Italian)

We wish to express our deep appreciation to all, for your support, prayers and cards on the occasion of the death of our beloved sister, Dorothy Sliemers.

Dorothy enjoyed her visits to Salem Heights and Emma Hall in Maria-Joseph Center, where our sister Ruth resided for 10 years.

Our family was blessed to have her among us for 90 years, and now rejoices in her eternal life.

**Sisters Laura and Pat Will**  
Dayton

## A tribute to Sr. Virginia Beene

**M**EISTER Eckhart exclaims that, "Revelation is the essence of everything that is."

*Somehow being able to harmonize Unconditional love into melody Unites us with the "Music of the Spheres."*

*Sister Virginia realized that "All real living is meeting!" The Eastern world would Express it Namaste – The Spirit in me Greets the Spirit in you!*

*One of the five languages of love Is Affirmation. This was Sister Virginia's strength. She discerned the strength in others And helped them celebrate Life!*

*Her Affirmative Love Touched thousands of people From first-grade children To Vietnam vets in amputee wards, And beyond to retired nuns, Allowing their beauty to steal inward!*

*In the middle '60s, The International "Up With People" Youth chorus corps Was positively popular. Her local version (in Alameda, California) Opened many relational doors.*

*Relatedness is what Sister Virginia's life was And is all about, Helping each of us To experience the Sacred In Time and Eternity!*

**Nancy Jean Emery**  
Corvallis, Oregon



Sister Virginia Beene died July 20, 2008. A memorial tribute to her may be accessed on the website, [www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org](http://www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org). Click on In Memoriam icon, scroll to bottom of page and click on link to her name for the full text of the eulogy.

## IN SYMPATHY

*Our sympathy and prayer to the following sisters and to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood who have recently lost loved ones in death:*

**Sister Casilda Obringer** on the death of her sister, Rosemary Metzger, on Dec. 8, 2008, and on the death of her brother, Warren Obringer, on Dec. 24, 2008.

**Sisters Laura and Pat Will** on the death of their sister, Dorothy Sliemers, on Dec. 10, 2008.

**Sister Rita Rogier** on the death of her father, George Rogier, on Dec. 20, 2008.

**The Missionaries of the Precious Blood** on the death of Brother Dennis Rumschlag (Cincinnati Province), on Dec. 29, 2008.

**Sister Rosemary Goubeaux** on the death of her sister, Zita Fullenkamp, on Dec. 29, 2008.

**Sister Eva Roehrich** on the death of her sister, Clara Roehrich, on Jan. 2.

**Sister Mary E. Wendeln** on the death of her father, Clifford Wendeln, on Jan. 16.

**Sister Judy Niday** on the death of her father, David Niday, on Jan. 20.

**Sister Marie Kopin** on the death of her mother, Irene Kopin, on Jan. 21.

**Sister Maureen Mangan** on the death of her brother, George Mangan, on Feb. 7.

**Sister Mary Anne Westerheide** and **Sister Nancy Wolf**, on the death of Charles Wolf, on Feb. 14. Mr. Wolf was the brother-in-law of Sister Mary Anne, uncle of Sister Nancy.

**Sister Rosalie Kastner** on the death of her sister, Helen Kastner, on Feb. 16.

## REMEMBERING...

**Martha Keemer**, sister of the late Sister Agnesine Benanzer, on Dec. 13, 2008.

**MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.**

Sisters of the Precious Blood  
4000 Denlinger Road  
Dayton, OH 45426-2399



# CPPS takes to the waves! *(that's airwaves)*

In Radio Maria's studio in Minster, Ohio, Sister Martha Bertke and Father Ernest Ranly broadcast one of their 10 programs on Precious Blood spirituality.



Courtesy photo

BY PAT MORRISON

They say that if the great Apostle Paul were alive today, he'd use all the latest communications technology to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ. And the same could doubtless be said of those founding Precious Blood "Gospel people" Gaspar del Bufalo, Francis de Sales Brunner and Mother Maria Anna Brunner.

That latter trio (who lived long before Marconi's revolutionary invention) must be happy to know that their spiritual sons and daughters are taking to the radio waves to share the richness of Precious Blood Spirituality.

From November 2008 through January 2009, CPPS Sister Martha Bertke and Father Ernest Ranly, a Missionary of the Precious Blood, were the hosts of 10 half-hour afternoon radio programs devoted to the spirituality of the Precious Blood that aired from Radio Maria's studio in Minster.

An international Catholic radio station based in Alexandria, La., Radio Maria broadcasts live programs from Ohio on WHJM (88.7 FM) in Anna and WULM (1600 AM) in Springfield. Pro-

grams can also be heard online at [www.radiomaria.us](http://www.radiomaria.us)

The 10-part series covered a wide range of topics, beginning with what a spirituality is, and what it means to have a spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Sister Marty and Father Ernie (as each is popularly called) offered insights into the rich imagery of blood in the Bible: blood as life, as sacred, as sacrificial, begging forgiveness and mercy; blood as a call to heaven for peace and reconciliation. They spoke of the powerful themes of blood as the sign of the covenant between God and God's people recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, and of course of the blood of the new covenant—the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and celebrated in Eucharist.

The presenters also noted the uniqueness of Precious Blood spirituality in the life of the church and religious orders. While many other spiritualities honor the life

*Continued on page 6*

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