

# The Community Post

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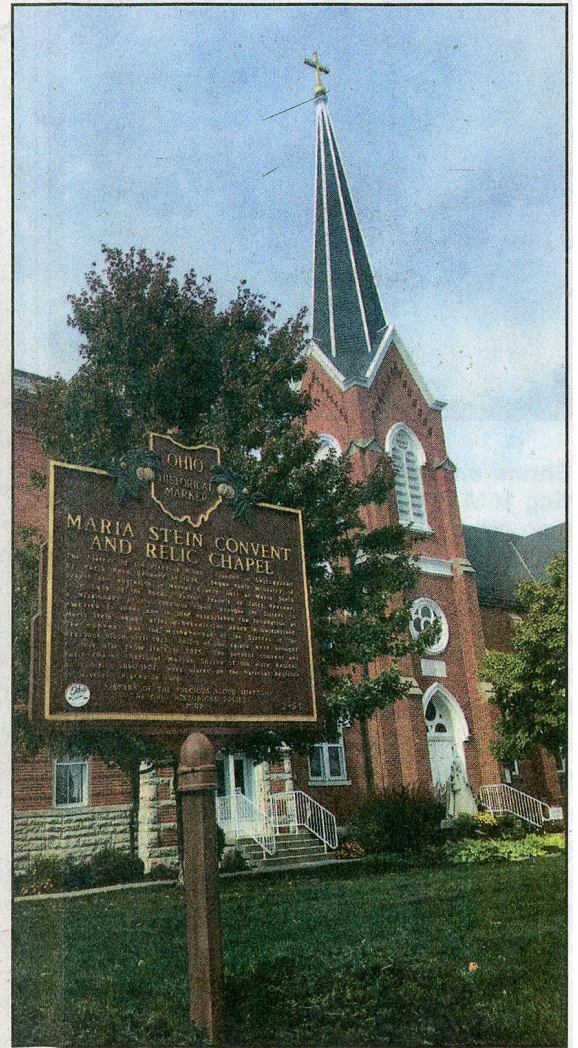


Photo provided

Sisters of the Precious Blood (Top row L to R): Sr. Joyce Lehman, Sr. Ceil Taphorn, Sr. Linda Pleiman; (Bottom row): Sr. Patty Kremer and Sr. Nancy Kinross gather in the Adoration Chapel of the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics on Friday, December 8, for the transfer of the land deed to the laity.

## Sisters gift the Shrine

By BOB BLINDAUER

Staff Writer

MARIA STEIN — On December 8, the Sisters of the Precious Blood gathered in the Adoration Chapel of the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics to sign the transfer of land deed to the laity. That process of turnover began nearly ten years ago and was underscored in October 2016 when the Sisters announced their intent for the future of the landmark Shrine.

"After nearly ten years of planning and with the help of many people from the local area, the Sisters of the

Precious Blood know that the ministry of peace, prayer and hospitality at the Shrine will be able to continue into the future without the direct involvement of the Congregation", Sister Joyce Lehman, C.P.P.S., President of the Congregation said in a statement.

The Shrine dates to 1846 and was the original motherhouse of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. It is the last of ten foundations established by missionary of the Precious Blood Father Francis de Sales Brunner. Many of these were located in what we now call the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches. The

Sisters of the Precious Blood came with Father Brunner from Switzerland in the 1840s to minister to the German-speaking immigrants of 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 the faithful disciples. The finalization of the deed transfer on December 8th held great significance to the Sisters and Shrine staff.

"December 8 is an important date for the life of the

Church. It celebrates the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first follower of Christ. The Maria Stein Shrine is named for Mary of Rock, so it is fitting that an important Marian feast has been chosen to celebrate this unique moment in this Marian Shrine's history", stated Matt Hess, Coordinator of Ministries & Hospitality for the Shrine.

Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, assumed responsibility and operation of the Shrine on December 8, 2017. For generations, many

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Staff photo/Bob Blindauer

**Donor board in the lobby of the Shrine shows donor list. As of Dec. 8 the Shrine was nearing its goal of raising \$6M to perpetuate the Shrine. \$45K is needed (with a promise of a matching gift by year's end) to raise the \$90K to reach the goal.**

## Deed

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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 in Maria Stein and preserve this beautiful, sacred space for centuries to come.

"The letting go of such an important part of our history is difficult but is made possible knowing that the MSS Board of Directors and the administrator and staff at the Shrine are committed to keeping the Shrine a place where the faithful and seekers can find inspiration from the lives of those men and women who lived and died in service to God. The Sisters are grateful to all who have helped make this happen", stated Sister Joyce.

"It is a humbling and awesome responsibility for us to follow in the Sisters' footsteps by accepting the duty of care for the Shrine," said Don Rosenbeck, President of the Shrine. "We will continue to maintain it as a holy place for the faith nourishment and spiritual renewal of

this, they made a plan to divest themselves of the Shrine. Half of the support of the Shrine from the general public and the other half came from the sisters. If there was a deficit in any year, the sisters simply wrote a check. In 2016 the board was expanded to 12. Minster's Orval Homan was voted to chair the board. There's the passing of the baton of the management of the place. Two important committees were initiated – the investment committee and the finance committee. They determined that an endowment of \$6M would be needed to keep the Shrine running in perpetuity "to be able to put the money in and never touch the principal, running the Shrine only on the interest. The sisters made the first donation, \$2 million. An anonymous donor has now made a pledge to match donations received by the end of this year up to \$2 million. Rosenbeck also noted that the sisters were donating the land and properties of the Shrine and retreat center to the newly created organization. "We researched what is it going to take to turn this thing over to the laity.

statutes have to be approved by the archbishop. Canonical statutes are similar to bylaws or guidelines for the institution. You also have to have a rector, who must be a priest. The rector must be on the board of directors." Father John Tonkin has now been named to be rector of the Shrine.

The Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics provides opportunities for prayer, pilgrimage and inspiration from the lives of the saints. People from around the world visit the shrine to explore and enjoy this environment rich in holiness and history.

Beginning with Father Brunner coming to Maria Stein 1846 to build one of ten large convents he built, Matt Hess has given a brief history of the Shrine, particularly referring to the beginnings of the relic collection from that gifted to the priest by the Pope which he had brought with him to America.

Hess said, "In 1875 we were gifted with another collection that had been part of traveling display. The large adoration chapel was built in 1892. When the Sisters of the Pre-



people from near and far”.

Rosenbeck delineated some of the most recent history of the Shrine's change in ownership and its current finance campaign. As the number of sisters has decreased, there are fewer and fewer available to work in the ministry (of the Shrine). Understanding

We had established a civil corporation. We had not researched the canonical law and quite frankly we didn't know much about it. We're getting an education on that. We're talking about church property and the rules change on the value of what your transaction is based upon. Canonical

cious Blood moved their mother house to Dayton, they brought Fr. Brunner's relics with them. In 2002 those artifacts came back to Maria Stein 1,200 relics and established the Shrine as the and how the Shrine's relic collection became the second largest relic collection in the United States.”