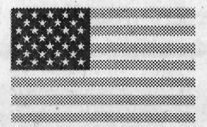


THE MERCER COUNTY



CHRONICLE

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175th Anniversary Celebration planned in Maria Stein

The Sisters of the Precious Blood (CPPS) are celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of their religious congregation. Various celebrations are taking place throughout the year, which runs from Jan. 15, 2009 through Jan. 15, 2010, at various sites where sisters presently serve.

A special celebration will take place at Maria Stein Center/Relic Shrine (MSC) on Sunday, Aug. 16. The event includes an outdoor Mass at 4 p.m. Precious Blood Father Kenneth Schroeder will preside. (Those attending the Mass are invited to bring a lawn chair.)

Following the Mass, all are welcome to enjoy a picnic-style meal provided by the sisters. The picnic will be in the center's patio area, where tables and chairs are available.

The MSC building will be open from noon to 7 p.m., except during the Mass. Visitors will be able to visit the Shrine of the Holy Relics, the Adoration Chapel, Heritage Museum and Pilgrim Gift Shop. A special display portraying a history of the Sisters of the Precious Blood will be on exhibit on the first floor.

Mother Maria Anna Brunner founded the congregation in Loewenberg, Switzerland, in 1834. The first Sisters of the

Precious Blood came to the United States in 1844 and settled in Peru, Ohio, to serve the growing numbers of German Catholic immigrants in Ohio. In 1846 the Sisters and Missionaries (priests and brothers) of the Precious Blood came to Maria Stein. From there they branched out to numerous other places in the United States and internationally. Today the sisters' motherhouse is in Dayton..

CPPS: Who they are, what they do

The Sisters of the Precious Blood are an apostolic religious congregation rooted in Eucharistic prayer. Motivated by the great love of Jesus, who shed his Precious Blood for the redemption of all people, the sisters are urged to be a life-giving, reconciling presence in our fractured world. Community, personal prayer and Eucharist are central their life. As a vibrant community celebrating 175 years since their foundation, they strive to bring hope and redeeming love to a thirsting world.

Today, CPPS sisters serve across the United States, in Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio. Sisters also minister in Latin America, in Chile and Guatemala. They serve in diverse ministries, including education, pastoral ministry, counseling and spiritual direction. Some sisters serve people in prisons, health care facilities and retreat centers, as well as in outreach to the poor and underserved. You can find them in rural, urban and inner-city settings as they strive to respond to both the spiritual and temporal hungers of our world.

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175th Anniversary Celebration

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Cluster: a way of living community

Each year, Precious Blood Sisters are commissioned for ministry and sent forth by the congregation's leadership to the various places where they serve. Whether sisters live in larger community settings, in small groups or singly, they are connected with one another through small regional groupings called clusters. As a cluster member, each sister recognizes that she belongs not only to the total congregation, but also is in relationship with her sisters in cluster, with responsibilities and enrichment that flow from that.

Cluster gatherings provide an opportunity for sharing and study of community topics and ministry as well as for socializing and praying together.

In the Mercer and Auglaize county area, nine sisters form a cluster: Sisters Regina Albers, Mary Ellen

Andrisin, Martha Bertke, Barbara Ann Hoying, Amy Junk, Maureen Mangen, Lou Ann Roof, Elizabeth Westgerdes and Nancy Wolf.

Symbols of dedication

Sisters of the Precious Blood wear two signs of their vowed commitment. One is a special cross which can be worn as a lapel pin or as a necklace. The cross represents the life-giving power of redemption and resurrection. The stream of light coming from the center of the cross and spreading outward alludes to the spreading of the Gospel. The letters CPPS are on a diamond-shaped design. In heraldry this background was used as a symbol for women. The square shaped halo was also used in early Christian art for the saints living yet on earth. The four corners of the design represent the corners of the world.

Another important common sign for all CPPS mem-

bers is a ring. This gold ring with the engraved letters "IHS" is worn by all vowed members of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The "IHS" symbol is derived from the first three Greek letters of the name of Jesus.

What does CPPS stand for?

Sisters of the Precious Blood are officially known as the "Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood." In Latin this is Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinis, from which the initials CPPS are derived. These initials are often used behind a sister's name.

Other coming events

Mark your calendar for two other coming events relating to the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

Sept. 26 and Oct. 17 — Precious Blood Sister Karen Elliott will present the Fall Women's Days at Maria Stein Center/Shrine. The



Nine Precious Blood Sisters are members of an area cluster, a form of local community in the Mercer-Auglaize County area. They are (seated from left): Sisters Nancy Wolf Regina Albers, Maureen Mangen and Amy Junk. (Standing) Sisters Lou Ann Roof Barbara Ann Hoying, Mary Ellen Andrisin, Martha Bertke and Elizabeth Westgerdes Photo courtesy Sisters of the Precious Blood.

daylong Saturday program is repeated on the two dates and runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and includes lunch. Suggested donation is \$15. Women of all faith traditions are welcome. (For more in-

formation and or to register, see the website below.) Saturday, Oct. 3 — Precious Blood Father Barry Fischer, former moderator general of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, will

present the third in the 175th anniversary year lecture series in Dayton. His presentation will be "Precious Blood Spirituality: Wellspring of Our Mission."