

around the county

Maria Stein Center to host Precious Blood Sisters 175th Anniversary

The Sisters of the Precious Blood, whose original motherhouse in the United States was in Maria Stein from 1846 until 1923, are marking the 175th anniversary of the founding of their congregation.

The sisters have proclaimed Jan. 15, 2009 through Jan. 15, 2010 as a year of jubilee, and are marking this historic anniversary with a full calendar of events. Of particular interest to the Mercer County area will be a number of events to be announced later that are being planned for the Maria Stein area.

Leading off the full calendar is a four-part lecture series on Precious Blood spirituality. The first program will be this Saturday, January 17, at the sisters' motherhouse, Salem Heights, Denlinger Road at Salem Avenue, Dayton. Free and open to the public, the daylong program is from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and includes lunch.

Presenter will be Precious Blood Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman, director of the Institute for Liturgical Ministry in Dayton and an adjunct professor of liturgy at the Athenaeum of Ohio. Her topic will be "A Theology of Eucharist and Adoration: Perspectives on Precious Blood Spirituality." Future lectures will be in June and October 2009 and January 2010. For more information on the Jan. 17 lecture, or to register, phone (937) 837-3302, ext. 105. Other special events during this Jubilee year will include an open house at Salem Heights, Dayton, on Sunday, April 26 and a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati at Precious Blood Church, Dayton, in October, as well as other special programs in other dioceses and states where CPPS Sisters also serve.

ORIGINAL MOTHERHOUSE

Precious Blood Sisters have prayed and ministered at Maria Stein without interruption since 1846, and the Center has been the destination of devout pilgrims who have come by the countless thousands from all over the world. In this veritable "holy land," people can find rest and peace, solace and prayer.

Said Sister Barbara Ann Hoying, Director of the Maria Stein Center, "Guests know this is a holy or a sacred place, yet it is a place of excitement and curiosity and learning and joy and beauty where visitors come to pray in the chapel or find someone to counsel with or talk to, or "Many times they just want to pour themselves out to God."

The Center also offers visitors beautiful and peaceful grounds, two unique chapels, a museum and gift shop. There is also the statuary garden and the newly dedicated "Angel Garden" built to offer easing of grief and closure for people whose children are taken from them early in life.

The National Marian Shrine of Holy Relics is also located at the Center. The Shrine was designed to fittingly hold the large collection of relics that is the second largest collection in the U.S.

FROM SWITZERLAND TO 175TH ANNIVERSARY

The Sisters of the Precious Blood were founded in 1834 in Switzerland by Mother Maria Anna Brunner, a widow, mother and grandmother. Filled with a yearning to do even more for God,

she made a pilgrimage to Rome. There she was introduced to the spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus through the preaching of St. Gaspar del Bufalo. She returned home eager to make this key Christian mystery the center of her life and to make it known to others.

Back in Switzerland, Maria Anna spent her nights and days in prayer and was tireless in her outreach to others. She taught orphan girls in her home, cared for the needs of the young seminary students preparing to be priests, and cooked and distributed food for the area's poor. Her passionate love for God became contagious, and soon other women joined her in her life of prayer and good works. This little group became the nucleus of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

The first Sisters of the Precious Blood arrived in Ohio pioneer territory from their native Switzerland in the spring of 1844. Bishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati visited them within a week of their arrival, telling them of the great needs in the region. There had been a request from the German-speaking settlers who were undergoing lots of hardships and sought German-speaking spiritual leadership. On Christmas Eve of that year, the sisters moved into a log convent in New Riegel, Ohio.

The congregation's motherhouse has been located in the Cincinnati Archdiocese since the earliest days, first in Maria Stein (1846) and, since 1923, in Dayton. From here, hundreds of Precious Blood Sisters have reached out to serve the needs of God's people in education, pastoral ministry and health care, and in a wide range of ministries across the United States and internationally.

LOCAL SISTERS' STORES TO BE FEATURED

Today, Sisters of the Precious Blood serve throughout Ohio, as well as in Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky and Michigan, and internationally in Chile and Guatemala.

A number of those sisters serve in the Maria Stein area, and some of their particular ministries will be featured in the *Mercer County Chronicle* as part of this Jubilee celebration, as they, with the hundreds of other Sisters, strive to be "a life-giving, reconciling presence in our fractured world."

For updates on 175th anniversary events throughout the year, see the congregation's web site: www.PreciousBloodSistersDayton.org. Go to News & Events for the 175th Anniversary page.

Things

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