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Maria Stein Shrine welcoming in visitors for prayer and meditation

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By Katie Honigford, Multimedia Video Journalist

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SHRINE OF THE HOLY RELICS

Maria Stein

At the Maria Stein Shrine, history and religion come together to be a place where people can visit and reflect among the over 1,000 relics that are displayed at the Shrine. It's been a part of Mercer County for nearly 200 years, with the Sisters of the Precious Blood first moving to the area in 1846. What started out as Motherhouse for the Sisters in 1887 became the main part of the Shrine, which people can visit today.

Every year events like Countryfest draw in crowds to the Shrine grounds, but one of the biggest draws to the Shrine is the collection of Saint relics.

"Most go to our Relics Chapel which is adjacent to the [Main] Chapel - we are the second largest collection of relics that are completely documented and on permanent public display," said Matthew Hess, Coordinator of Ministries and Hospitality. "They come to see relics of the True Cross, we have the full body of St. Victoria, relics of Mother Theresa, Padre Pio - Saints from the early days, as well as some modern men and women."

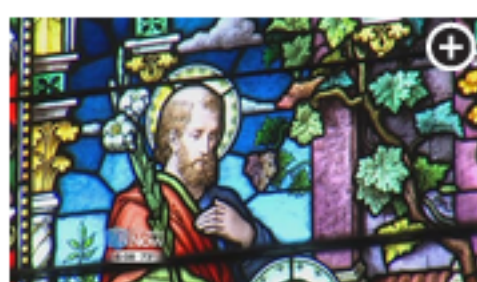
The Shrine welcomes in guests of any religion or background - giving them the chance to light candles with prayer requests and stop into the gift shop - all while possibly taking time to reflect in the Chapel.

"This is a place of peace, prayer, and hospitality, so a lot of folks come in and just want some quiet time in the Chapel, other times we have different groups in here, tours going through, we have a museum that chronicles the lives of the Sisters," said Hess. "A lot of folks come in and just spend time with God or reflect on their ancestry."

Some visitors will also have the chance to take a behind the scenes tour of some of the lesser-seen aspects of the Shrine.



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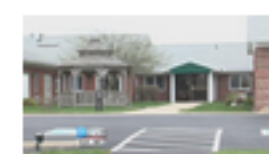
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