



# STONE

A publication of the Ursulines of Brown County  
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## CORNER

### *Ursulines to celebrate 175th Anniversary with local deanery parishes*

Covid 19 put an abrupt halt to the 2020 plans for a joyous public celebration of the 175 Anniversary of the founding of the Ursulines of Brown County. Several virtual events took place throughout the year, but none satisfied the desire to bring together the many people who represent all who have been a part of the life of the community for almost two centuries. 2021 offers us such an opportunity.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is celebrating its bicentennial this year. As part of the year-long prayers, pilgrimages and Masses, the Eastern Region, also known as the St Martin Deanery, will be hosting a day in the Fall to honor the contributions made by the Catholic parishes and organizations to the life of the five-county region. The Ursulines of Brown County are a significant part of the history of the archdiocese in this area. For that reason, the event will be held in St. Martin, Ohio beginning at the St. Martin Church and hall. St Martin parish is the second oldest parish in the

Archdiocese having been founded in 1831. The event will then move across the road to the former property of the Ursulines now owned by Chatfield College where the rest of the day's events will take place. The pioneer cemetery and tomb of Archbishop John Purcell are visible signs of the role the region played in the history of the local church. The Ursulines served most of the parishes in the region through religious education, schools, and parish ministry. Chatfield and Hope Emergency, founded by the Ursulines, continue to serve the region with values set forth by the Sisters 176 years ago. The parishes will be honored for their contributions of service and charity in their communities and counties.

The Sisters look forward to marking our 176<sup>th</sup> year with the celebration of the persons and places who have been a part of our lives for two centuries. Check our website and Facebook page for further information.

The day is being planned by the St. Martin Deanery Catholic Rural Life with the support of the Catholic Social Action Office and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.



# Alleluia

***The Easter Alleluia is a reminder of Jesus' Resurrection from death and our invitation to live in Christ. May we experience the Alleluia of this Easter Season! May each of us be blessed with the Peace of Christ alive in our hearts, homes, and lives.***

# *Where we come from and where we are going . . .*

This time last year, the world turned upside down. On March 11, 2020 the Coronavirus was declared a national emergency and we began the seemingly endless series of challenges: quarantines, suspension of Church services, closing of businesses, schools, restaurants, entertainments; almost every kind of service became off limits. A pandemic had taken control of our every-day lives. The pundits and philosophers and most of the general public have spent the intervening days discussing the whys and wherefores of this new experience we share with the entire world. One question asked by many is what is to be learned from this suddenly imposed way of life. The answers are many.

As we look back over the stories of our own history, we chose one perspective: God has a way of bringing good things out of the difficulties in our lives. As is often quoted, “God writes straight with crooked lines.” We are going to share one story as an example.

At the boarding school in Boulogne, France in 1844 the steady course of the school year was suddenly disrupted by a deadly disease that the medical community had trouble curing: Typhoid. It had become an epidemic. Many students were dying and another child was close to death. Sister Monica writes in *CROSS IN THE WILDERNESS* that Mere Ste Ursule was beside herself. “It seemed the whole school would go. And those delicate young sisters, her special charges, what would happen to them? . . . Mere Ste Ursule knelt in the chapel twilight. “Mother of God,” she pleaded, “I will give you all; I will give you anything. I will give you sisters for the (Ohio) mission . . . Our nuns will go out in the wilds anywhere, if only you will save this child, Mother of God!” The child did not die and no one else in the house contracted the illness. The English doctor, who had asked the sisters to pray, was astounded. The answer to prayer brought about the decision to respond positively to Archbishop Purcell’s request for sisters for Ohio.

The die was cast. Sister Julia Chatfield, who felt a deep desire to answer the call to the mission in Ohio, was chosen as the Superior and the three Boulogne sisters were joined by the group of eight Ursulines from the Beaulieu Convent. God chose to make use of the frightful Typhoid epidemic in Boulogne to bring about the founding of Brown County.



Fr. Tom Connell  
with Betty and Dorothy Hershede

The dire effects of the recent pandemic prompted us to explore what happened at Brown County during the Influenza epidemic of 1918. According to the diaries, the school year began in typical fashion. The first mention of the illness came early in November with the diagnosis of Father Tom Connell, the beloved Chaplain. Throughout the month of November there are diary entries expressing concern. “We are most anxious about Father Connell and think that he should come home. We don’t think that he will get well at that hospital. He must have country air and be away from the constant intercourse with suffering.” On the second of December “Father Connell returned home on the noon B&O . . . He is going to stay at our priest’s house for awhile so that we can look after him.” Evidently the sisters care was just what he needed because several days later he was able to officiate at Sister Catherine Kullman’s reception ceremony and resume his other duties,

Concerns about influenza had intensified in the school by December 5<sup>th</sup>. The diary says “Today the children were told to write home and notify their parents that the ban is again placed on visiting – that no visitors will be received at the Convent until December 21<sup>st</sup> when the children will be allowed to go home for the holidays. We took this precaution at the request of some of the parents. There has been a decided increase of flu cases in the near cities, especially among children. The Cincinnati schools are again closed, except the High Schools and Colleges and they must close when 5% of the students are taken with influenza.” By December 10<sup>th</sup> reports were that the situation

# ***FOR THOSE DWELLING IN A LAND***



## ***OVERSHADOWED BY DEATH*** *Matthew 4:16*

was worsening. Classes at Ursuline Academy on Oak Street were dismissed. The students were advised not to return after Christmas vacation if they were ailing in any way or if there had been a recent case of influenza in their home. Although there is no indication in the diaries that any of the students were infected, February and March brought numerous cases of sickness and death among the sisters and staff.

Now we are beginning to experience the slow process of return to normalcy from our Covid Pandemic. As Ramona Payne, current President of Ursuline Academy says in a recent issue of Rapport, the school newsletter, "What a difference a year makes! This week last year began a year unlike any other for our UA community and all our nation . . . We have come so far from the uncertainties of those first weeks of shutdown last year and it is reassuring to see that we can return to some of our cherished traditions even though some of them are somewhat changed."

What have we learned? What will the new normal be? What questions are still unanswered? How much longer will we feel constrained? As we take to heart the loss of life, of togetherness, of time, of opportunity, let us go forward in this Easter season remembering that a ***LIGHT HAS ARISEN*** on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death. The God who loved us enough to send His only Son has strengthened and supported us through many crises in the past and is with us now.

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*“Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted Him.”*

Letter to the Philippians: 2: 5-9