



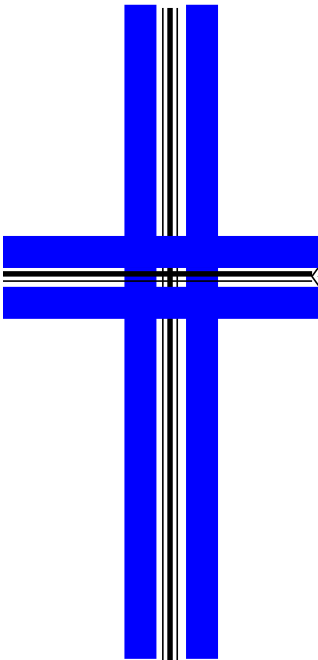
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CORNER

Celebrating during Covid . . .

Causes for celebration don't always come at the best of times. Some would say that 2020 is the worst of times! Life as we know it has been put on hold. The world is dealing with chaos brought on by a serious illness that brings forth more questions than answers. Our Ursuline community anticipated 2020 as a year of celebrating our Foundresses and the 175 years of educational excellence in Southwestern Ohio. As the designated date drew closer we were challenged to consider the obstacles, the disappointments, the setbacks that certainly met our Foundresses in the days, weeks and months after they landed in the wilderness of Ohio. Like Julia Chatfield and her companions, we met our 175th Anniversary with unexpected but graced creativity and ingenuity.



*Joy and happiness
replaced our fear.
We did not know our destiny.
We wanted only the will of God
and to be ready
to make the sacrifices
He wanted,
and not make evident
what we wanted to do.*

The Foundresses

In 1845 Julia Chatfield and her 10 Companions immigrated from France to Ohio. Invited by Bishop John Baptist Purcell to establish schools in the Cincinnati diocese the Sisters were given property in rural Brown County. With money borrowed from France a four story brick building was constructed that became the center of a boarding school incorporated as The St. Ursula Literary Institute, commonly known as the School of the Brown County Ursulines. It was the beginning of the Legacy of the Ursulines in Brown County which includes a day school in the city known as Ursuline Academy, Chatfield College, a two-year Associate of Arts degree institution, and the establishment of Hope Emergency Program, a food and clothing resource for the underserved rural population.

In 2020 we expected to host a celebration with our families and a wide array of companions, friends, former students, faculty and associates. The date was set, the planning committee designated and plans were underway. Then Coronavirus-19 surfaced, shelter in place orders were given, social distancing became the norm and the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Ursulines took on a different look.

On July 21, 2020, 175 years after Julia Chatfield and her Ursuline Sisters arrived on the Brown County property the current 19 Ursulines gathered by Zoom to remember and celebrate the eleven women who founded and nurtured us in that wilderness setting. With the help of our Website designer the prayer was live streamed on Facebook and the recording of the event is on our Website for all to share. Following the prayer, we gathered in small groups to share a lunch prepared and delivered to each group with a bouquet of flowers.

It seems appropriate to share with you the beginning of our Prayer of Celebration:

INTRODUCTION: Welcome to this celebration of Julia Chatfield and her Companions on this the 175th anniversary of their arrival in Brown County. We gather with profound gratitude to God for the constant blessings, and gifts bestowed on the Ursulines of Brown County since July 21, 1845. We welcome not only our members, but our families, friends, associates, co-workers and all who have been on this journey with us as we live and share our Legacy

OPENING PRAYER: God of our ancestors, today we gather into our hearts all those who have gone before us and influenced our lives with their love and goodness. Although they have passed into Your Eternal Life, their lived values and example continue to affect who we are and what we do. The goodness of our foundresses resounds in our lives and nurtures us into the future. We thank You, Loving God, for our ancestors and the bond of love that connects us to them and You. Amen.

It wasn't what we had imagined or expected. But it was a reminder that the courage of our foundresses, their flexibility and skill in adapting to changes and challenges is still alive and well in each of us. Our website www.ursulinesofbc.org has a wealth of information about the Legacy of the 175 years of our Community, including the video of the prayer service. Under the "About Us" tab you can explore Our Timeline, Our Legacy and a little bit about each of Our Foundresses.



THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE SCHOOL OF THE BROWN COUNTY URSULINES also planned a Celebration of the 175 years of the Ursulines at their Annual Reunion for Saturday, September 19th. Meetings of a core committee began in October of 2019 working on the events and logistics for the big day. "Save the Date" postcards were mailed, catering was arranged, a large tent was secured and meetings were held. By the end of May the decision was made to postpone the event until September 18, 2021. Disappointed but not discouraged, the committee agreed to do a virtual reunion on September 19, 2020 in a modified manner. No tent, no class gatherings, but still connected to classmates and friends and the Ursuline Sisters. As a surprise for the Sisters, a gift was designed and presented at a virtual meeting of the Community on August 22nd. The gifts had been wrapped and distributed prior to the meeting and Theresa Herron, Alum president, Jamie Ford Graham and Karin Burwinkel, committee members were the presenters of beautiful wood pens. The note with each pen read:

“A Gift from the Brown County Ursuline Alumni”

“When the trees on the lane were being cut down, I went up there, picked up several pieces and brought them home. I thought they would make great planters since the middle had rotted out. These logs have been in my barn for many years now. I had another idea, but I did not know how well it would turn out until I talked to a local artisan, David Brown. He is one of the vendors at the Quilt and Car show at Chatfield College. He took those oak logs and turned them into pens for you. They are each unique in their grain and unique because we asked him not to make any others that have the same gold inner workings like yours. The gift packaging was made with Oak, Sweet Gum and Ginkgo leaves from BCU and the Sweet Gum balls were from Brescia.” Karin Burwinkel ‘76



The Community members opened the gifts together on Zoom. Some commented that the wrapping was as special as the Pen. Even the box containing the Pen was handmade. What a special way to celebrate 175 years of the Ursulines of Brown County! We deeply appreciate the thoughtfulness and generosity of the Alumni Association.

An additional subcommittee was even ambitious enough to take on the task of submitting an application to the Ohio History Connection for a Historic Marker for the Brown County property. It is an extensive process, requiring verifying documentation of all statements made. Spearheaded by Deb Barber with the assistance of Robin Craig as writer the application was submitted well before the deadline and we are hopeful that our application will be accepted. One side of the Marker would read:

“The Catholic order of sisters which would establish itself as the Brown County Ursulines arrived in St. Martin on July 21, 1845. Ursuline Sisters were known for the quality of education which they provided to young women, and were invited by Cincinnati Archbishop John Baptist Purcell to establish a school in St. Martin. The Archbishop offered the sisters this property, Virginia Military Bounty land donated to the Archdiocese for educational purposes. The first eleven Sisters, from two communities in France, quickly established their convent, and their boarding and day school, originally known as the St. Ursula Literary Institute, here. For 136 years, the Ursulines would educate young people living in their adopted community and those who would come from across the country and world to board with them.”

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BROWN COUNTY ALUMNI REUNION: 2020:

During the 2019 Reunion Jamie Ford Graham '74 inspired the creation of a committee to design a one of a kind event to celebrate the arrival of the Ursulines and the many students who have traveled down the lane in these 175 years. These plans were interrupted by the onset of Covid-19. The idea of having a virtual reunion was daunting, but the determination of the committee was fearless in overcoming the obstacles. Thanks to the leadership of President Theresa Herron '76 and the skills of others involved, a Zoom Reunion was organized and the success of the undertaking was amazing. A business meeting was held and the anniversary classes were announced. There was an opportunity for small groups to meet. It is estimated that at least one hundred and fifteen alumni from across the United States and Latin America signed on. Although it was frustrating to scroll through the photos and to be unable to connect with each woman and process the memories, it was a joy to see so many beloved faces and know we were together at least virtually. The promise is that a real celebration will take place on Saturday September 18, 2021 and the hope is that at least 175 alumni will attend!

