BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN ART IN OUR PRECIOUS BLOOD COMMUNITY
WE CHERISH A LONG TRADITION OF DEVOTION TO MARY
ON THE FEAST OF WHOSE NATIVITY WE WERE FOUNDED....

[CPPS Constitutions, D17.1]

In St. Anne’s Church in Steinerberg are images of Mary as a child with Anne, Presentation in the temple, the Annunciation, and Immaculate Heart. Perhaps the image dearest to the sisters was the painting commissioned by Fr. Rolfus, “Offering of the Precious Blood” which stood above the side altar. Here, Mary lifts Jesus who offers the chalice to God the Father. Fr. Rolfus designates “Mary as Helper because she is the three-fold Bride.”

In Ottmarsheim, after the death of Mother Theresa, the sisters needed to choose a new superior. Fr. Rolfus chose September 8th as the day for the election. The Diary states, "We chose anew the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to be our Highest Superior and the Prioress of the Community." Mother Celestine Maier [1848-1860] was elected as their new superior.

In an account of the departure from Europe in 1870, this is recorded: February 2nd, Feast of the Purification: “The Feast of Mary's offering of Jesus—a very significant day! They could very well unite their own offering to that of Jesus and Mary.”

Once established in O’Fallon, the community incorporated [1878] in the State of Missouri under the title of ST. MARY’S INSTITUTE.

Our official seal depicts Our Lady of Grace.

Our corporation title led naturally to the naming of the two educational institutions St. Mary’s College and St. Mary’s Academy.

Beuron-type statue of the Blessed Mother This statue of Mary—referred to as “Woman of Prayer”—was obtained from Kaletta’s in St. Louis and given to Mother Regine for her silver jubilee in 1933. It was used in the old and new novitiate.

[Many will remember the invocation:
May the Virgin Mary bless us with her holy Child.]

Then it was installed in St. Mary’s Academy. A graduating class of St. Mary’s Academy had the statue repainted as a gift to the school. When the Academy closed, the statue was placed on the third floor of the Motherhouse in the west end corridor. This statue was sold in the auction of Motherhouse goods.

Thanks are due to Srs. Darlene and Marlene Huck who assembled a collection of Mary statues and pictures, “BVM Madonna SS by DAR MAR.” Most of the images in this newsletter are from their collection.

Statue of Mary in Superior General’s room  The white Blessed Virgin Mary statue once sat on a small round table in the Mother General’s room. Mother Borgia told Sr. Lorenza that the table and statue belonged to the Community years ago. It was in Mother Augusta’s office when Mother Wilhelmine was a postulant in the 1880. Mother Borgia said that it was never to be separated or removed from the room. Later a white marble pedestal was used for the statue [from Sr. Lorenza Holtman].

Passed from Superior General to Superior General, the statue now resides in Sr. Janice Bader’s office.

This Blessed Mother Statue above the West entrance to the convent was erected 9/23/1903. It was a gift of the parents of Sr. Salesia Abeln who made her first profession in 1903.

Our Lady of Fatima Shrine  This shrine, erected around May 1950 in memory of Helen Marie Schneider, was given by her mother Mrs. Mary C.R. Schneider, a parishioner of St. Stephen's in St. Louis, Mo. It dominates the lawn between the cemetery and the Mount Carmel Senior Living Retirement Center. Mary’s message to the world is to do penance and to pray the rosary. Sisters are frequently seen praying before the Fatima image of Mary.

In her painting “Madonna and Child of St. Mary’s,” Sr. Mary Beth Kemper says she used motifs from classic and traditional paintings of Mary and Jesus “such as Mary seated on a throne flanked by two guardian figures, and the Child Jesus presenting a flower. The yucca plant (also commonly called Joseph’s staff) is a reference to the chapel’s patron. Animals were often included in early paintings and as seen here, the cat asleep on a cushion.” This painting is located on the wall opposite the window—just beyond the fire door—in the corridor leading from the dining room to Chapel.

Tota pulchra es, O Maria  You are all beautiful, O Mary.
The **Lourdes Grotto**, in Sr. Loyola's words [edited], came about in this way:

Already in 1886 Mother Armella designated a spot within the small wooded area on this property (O'Fallon) for a grotto of our **Lady of Lourdes** and had rocks assembled at the place. However due to the many buildings needed ... her wish was never realized during her eighteen years in office. Mother Wilhelmine decided as soon as she came into office that the grotto should be erected and already on July 21, 1921, ground was blessed and broken. While digging the foundation the workmen came upon a small brick foundation. Upon investigation it was learned that the outhouses of the public school once stood at this very spot. And from the elder members of the parish it was then learned that before our Sisters came to O'Fallon, the church across the street had been robbed. The ciborium was stolen and the Sacred Hosts had been cast into these outhouses. The Reverend Pastor had reverently disposed of the Sacred Species when found. Thus our Blessed Lady of Lourdes now guards the spot where this terrible sacrilege was committed.

Mother Armella did live to see her wish fulfilled and the first torchlight procession to this grotto took place on the eve of her nameday, October 23, 1921, as a mark of reverence to her. When it became impossible to make repairs to the shrine and to insure the safety of those who wished to go to pray there, Fr. Mitch Doyen, pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, O’Fallon, MO, suggested that a new shrine be built in the upper part of the park, preserving the original statues. Parishioners from Assumption built the Grotto which was dedicated December 8, 2015.

**Banner** made in the Ecclesiastical Art Department.

Notice the similarities: the *orans* [praying] position of the hands and the lily with the simplified Chi Rho representing Christ. Sr. Hiltrudis often used this symbol.

**“My soul rejoices in God, my Savior. My spirit finds its joy in God, the living God.”**

Paraphrase by Owen Alstott of the first lines of the *Magnificat* [Mary’s Canticle, Luke 1:46-55]

**Small Mary window** in St. Joseph Chapel.
Our Lady Chapel - Perpetual Help Shrine - Rev. Herman Joseph Untraut of Marshfield, Wisconsin, was the donor of the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. At the age of 82, while chaplain of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, he had to undergo surgery and promised that he would give a Perpetual Help picture somewhere, wherever it was needed, if he would get well. The picture, from San Alfonso, Rome, has touched the original picture in Rome. The oratory was built August 15, 1931 just beyond the door into chapel from the Novitiate cloister walk.

In 1963 the oratory was removed because of the new extension to St. Joseph Chapel at the Motherhouse but the picture was given a place of honor on the south wall opposite the Novitiate entrance to the chapel. Below the picture on several plaques are listed the names of donors who gave substantial amounts to finance our building program.

This painting of the Annunciation which now hangs at the north end of the Heritage (old cloister) Corridor was painted by Sr. Ambrosia Martinez, date unknown.

Madonna and child painting from the Abbey of Maria Laach, Germany. This painting has hung in the former sacristy since 1944 at least. It is backed by a rich red tapestry.