

Important Dates in June

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- 3 1848 The Swiss government issues a decree expelling the Steinerberg Adorers. They are ordered to leave within eight days.
 - 5 1902 The Rev. Neuhaus blesses St. John's Academy in Wichita, Kansas. It becomes the central house of the western missions of the Precious Blood Community of the Ruma Vicariate.
 - 6 1902 The first Mass is celebrated in the central house in Wichita, Kansas.
 - 6 1936 St. Joseph Academy in Columbia, Pennsylvania, receives state accreditation.
 - 7 1961 Sisters in Ruma open the Puerto Rico mission.
 - 9 1909 Sisters make first vows and are received into the community in Alton, Illinois.
 - 9 1940 The Reverend Emil Kapaun (chaplain-prisoner-martyr of Korean War) is ordained in the Wichita Convent Chapel.
 - 9 1993 Adorers testify before Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Liberia civil war and the deaths of their sisters during that war a year earlier.
 - 10-14 1985 Eight provinces and general administration of Precious Blood communities meet in Ruma, Illinois.
 - 12 1954 St. Gaspar del Bufalo, who inspired Adorers founder Maria de Mattias' ministry, is canonized.
 - 12 1847 Steinerberg Community, by way of a letter from German Catholic priest and spiritual advisor Karl Rolfus, petitions to become part of Maria de Mattias' congregation.
 - 13 1954 Manaus in Brazil, a mission founded by U.S. Adorers, is established as a vice-province with Sister Julitte Elsen serving as vice-provincial.
 - 17 1874 The last of the Precious Blood sisters leaves Baden in Germany.
 - 17 1973 U.S. Adorers provincials meet with General Council in Ruma, Illinois.
 - 18 1926 Adorers mark the 50th anniversary of the Ruma, Illinois, provincial house and dedicate its chapel.
 - 18 1959 The first Mass is celebrated in the new chapel of the Wichita Center. Sister Regina Buchholz, ASC designed and produced its tabernacle.
 - 20 1845 The bishop appoints the Rev. Karl Rolfus as spiritual guide for the Steinerberg Community.
 - 21 1873 Mother Augusta attempts to move the entire community of Sisters from Gurtweil, Germany, to the United States.
 - 22 1896 Sisters sell the Gurtweil Motherhouse. Three remaining Sisters prepare to join Sisters in America.
 - 22 1972 Rome declares Giovanni Merlini, spiritual director to Adorers founder Maria de Mattias, as venerable.
 - 23 1907 Paulina Schneeberger and the Adorers move from Taylorville to Alton, Illinois.
 - 24 1907 St. Vincent's Hospital in Taylorville, Illinois, is transferred to the Ruma vicariate.
 - 26 1994 A memorial sculpture of the five Adorer martyrs who were killed in Liberia is dedicated in Ruma, Illinois.
 - 26 1934 A revision to the Adorers' Constitution is approved.
 - 1980 Adorers offer a summer course on spirituality in Rome, Italy.
 - 30 1974 A mission in Tarija, Bolivia, is founded.

June 20, 1845 -- Soon after the Rev. Karl Rolfus was ordained to the priesthood, he was appointed assistant pastor in the neglected parish of Glotterthal and became the spiritual director of a number of young women who aspired to religious life. Since the government would not permit the establishment of a contemplative monastery in Baden, their desired vocation seemed unattainable. One of these young women, Ursula Behringer, made a pilgrimage to Steinerberg in Switzerland and was invited by a pastor to found a convent there. After the two priests consulted, the convent was established for the young women of Baden and Rolfus was appointed by the Bishop to be their spiritual guide. Rev. Rolfus drafted a Rule for the Sisters, which they observed until it was replaced by the Rule of Blessed Maria De Mattias sometime after the Steinerberg community was joined with that of the Italian foundress.

June 3, 1848 -- Realizing the increasing hostility of the local government to the little community of Steinerberg, Sister Casparina Maise and nine other sisters were appointed to seek a new location for the congregation in French Alsace. The little group donned regular clothes and followed Johannes Ebner, their guide, to Alsace in January of 1848. Rev. Karl Rolfus had previously corresponded with Rev. Philippi, the pastor of Blodeisheim who was sympathetic to the plight of the Sisters and invited them to his parish. Blodeishelm, however, was already over-populated with poor people and Philippi, therefore, induced Rev. Felix Behe to shelter the 10 Sisters in his parish at Ottmarsheim. Successive groups of sisters were subsequently brought to Ottmarsheim by Johannes Ebner and the community was well-established there when the last Sisters were forced to leave Steinerberg.

June 12, 1847 -- The Blood of Christ that embraces all people in the Redemption drew together two religious communities dedicated to the adoration of that Divine Blood. Rev. Karl Rolfus, desiring that the congregation at Steinerberg become part of the better established institute of Blessed Maria de Mattias in Italy, petitioned Rome on behalf of the German Sisters. In July, the Sisters were visited by Precious Blood Missionaries and exhorted to honor St. Gaspar del Bufalo through whose intercession miracles had already been worked. The Sisters were encouraged to say the prayer, "Eternal Father." It is recorded in the Ottmarsheim diary that on September 19, 1847, two sisters from Steinerberg were sent to Seelisberg (a daughter house) with a copy of the document of their affiliation with Blessed Maria's congregation.

June 22, 1896 -- The three remaining Sisters at Gurtweil relinquished their hopes for a future apostolate in Baden and prepared to join their sisters in America.

June 17, 1874 -- During the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), Baden joined forces with Prussia and became incorporated into the German Empire. According to the Imperial Constitution, each state determined its own relations with the Church. The liberal politicians in Baden were decidedly more anti-Catholic than in other parts of Germany. As a result, many schools were closed and many religious communities were disbanded. Our Sisters were dismissed from Donaueschinger, Krozingen, Burkheim and Singen as well as Loerrach in Baden. Eventually, the Gurtweil property was sold and the last Precious Blood sisters left Baden.

June 21, 1873 -- This date marks a difficult transition period in the history of the Gurtweil community. Mother Augusta had discovered the vast apostolate for religious communities in America and determined to transplant the entire Gurtweil community to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Although no chapter was assembled to discuss the matter, it soon became evident that the sisters were not of one mind. They prayed to know the will of God and they sought the advice of their spiritual guide. But Rev. Anton Frassie was himself uncertain of the merits of Mother Augusta's decision and hesitated to advise the members of the community. Some of the sisters feared that the Rule of Maria De Mattias was not being properly observed by the sisters who had already settled in America. Some sisters perceived a tendency in their superior to abandon the affiliation with the congregation in Rome. Sister Wilhelmine went to Italy and later became the novice mistress there. Mother Clementine journeyed to London to investigate the possibility of joining Blessed Maria's foundation there. In England, however, she learned that the prevailing Protestant environment made the future of the community precarious in that country. Mother Clementine returned to Gurtweil with the intention of taking her novices to America but determined to maintain the connection with the congregation of Blessed Maria, with whose spirit she was imbued. Sister Hermina Gantert and a group of sisters who believed that someday the government of Baden would again allow them to serve the needs of the Church in their unhappy homeland, obtained permission from Rome to lease a convent in Feldkirch, Austria. This house came under the jurisdiction of Rome and was joined by the sisters who were too ill to travel to America -- and feared that they were to be abandoned by the community -- and by several postulants. Mother Augusta refused to take postulants to America since she feared that the community would have to bear the expense for their return in case they did not persevere. The Feldkirch community later migrated to Bosnia, which was then part of the Austrian Empire. Many Sisters and postulants after 1873 joined other communities or returned to secular life. These were surely unhappy days for the community. Yet the sufferings of the congregation were superseded by the blessings of a great American apostolate. Mother Augusta Volk and a large number of Sisters eventually established themselves as a separate congregation in O'Fallon, Missouri. These Sisters of the Precious Blood are involved in apostolic activity in the mid-western part of the United States, Finland, Bolivia and Peru. Mother Clementine Zerr and the other sisters who desired to retain the affiliation with the congregation of Blessed Maria de Mattias, established a vicariate at Ruma, Illinois, from which the province of Ruma, Wichita and Manaus in Brazil have come. Besides the apostolic works in which they are involved in the United States, the Ruma and Wichita Provinces opened foreign missions in China (Sisters were withdrawn in 1946), Puerto Rico, Bolivia and Guatemala. One of the postulants (later Mother Pauline Schneeberger) established another American foundation in Columbia, Pennsylvania at a later time.

June 14, 1906 -- During Mother Catherine Pavone's long administration as Mother General of the congregation, the community progressed and expanded. The three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience were pronounced for the first time by the Sisters of our congregation under Mother Catherine's direction. It was this Mother General who first appointed Mother Pauline Schneeberger to found what later became the Columbia Province in the United States.

June 5, 1902 -- St. John Academy in Wichita, Kansas became the central house for the western mission of the Precious Blood Community of the Ruma Vicariate. Mother Clementine died there in January 1906. In 1914, a four-story brick building was erected there and on September 10, 1922, the cornerstone was laid for a new structure, which later became the seat of the new Wichita Province and the site of Sacred Heart College, which is now Newman University.