

PRECIOUS BLOOD FOUNDERS HYMN COLLECTION

MARIA ANNA

Hymn for Congregation and Keyboard

*In Honor of Maria Anna Brunner
Foundress of the
Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood
Dayton, Ohio
One Hundred Seventy Fifth Anniversary*

Text and Music
by
Rev. Ralph C. Verdi, C.P.P.S

PRECIOUS BLOOD FOUNDERS HYMN COLLECTION
MARIA ANNA BRUNNER

*Foundress of the
Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood
Dayton, Ohio*

Maria Anna Brunner was a married Swiss woman and mother of six children who lived in the nineteenth century. Her life was a witness to holiness for those who knew her.

After her husband of twenty years had died and her children had become independent, at the age of sixty-eight, Maria disposed of her house and property and set out on pilgrimage to various shrines to find out what God's will was for her. At the urging of her son, Father Francis de Sales Brunner, she went to Castle Loewenberg where he had begun a school for boys.

Maria had long nurtured in her heart a devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. During a nine month pilgrimage to Rome, the zeal of Gaspar del Bufalo and Francesco Albertini, cofounders of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood, gave her a new sense of spiritual urgency to spread devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. She enrolled herself in the Archconfraternity and with new impetus returned to Castle Loewenberg, eager to make the Precious Blood of Christ known and loved.

At Castle Loewenberg, her example attracted other women to a life of prayer and service. With the permission of the Bishop of Chur, she introduced among her spiritual daughters a form of community life under the direction of her son, Father Francis de Sales Brunner in 1834. Known as the "Poor Sisters," they were all enrolled in the Archconfraternity, wore no distinctive garb, made no public vows, and lived a common life without a written code.

Maria Anna converted the castle into a home for the training, education, and support of orphaned girls. After Mother Brunner's death in 1836, the Sisters continued their life of prayer and service. In 1844, in response to the invitation of Bishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Sisters, under the direction of Father Francis de Sales Brunner, began missionary work in America by ministering to the many German immigrants living in Ohio. Here the community increased in membership, established houses for Eucharistic adoration, and undertook additional ministries, including religious instruction, domestic work in seminaries and Episcopal residences, care of orphans, nursing the ill, and the education of children. Through the years, the Sisters have continued to diversify their ministries and have expanded geographically throughout the United States, to Guatemala, and to Chile.

In 1933, the remains of Maria Anna Brunner were exhumed from St. Mary's Church in Sagens, Switzerland. Maria Anna's hands folded in prayer were found intact. Maria Anna is now buried in the convent cemetery at Salem Heights in Dayton, Ohio.

In 1946, the Congregation became a formally recognized pontifical institute, known officially as the "Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood," with the initials C.P.P.S. (Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinis).

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Joyfully ♩ = 86 - 96
Introduction

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1. Ma - ri - a An-na, we come to you! Teach us to
2. Ma - ri - a An-na, we trust in you, whe - ther we're

