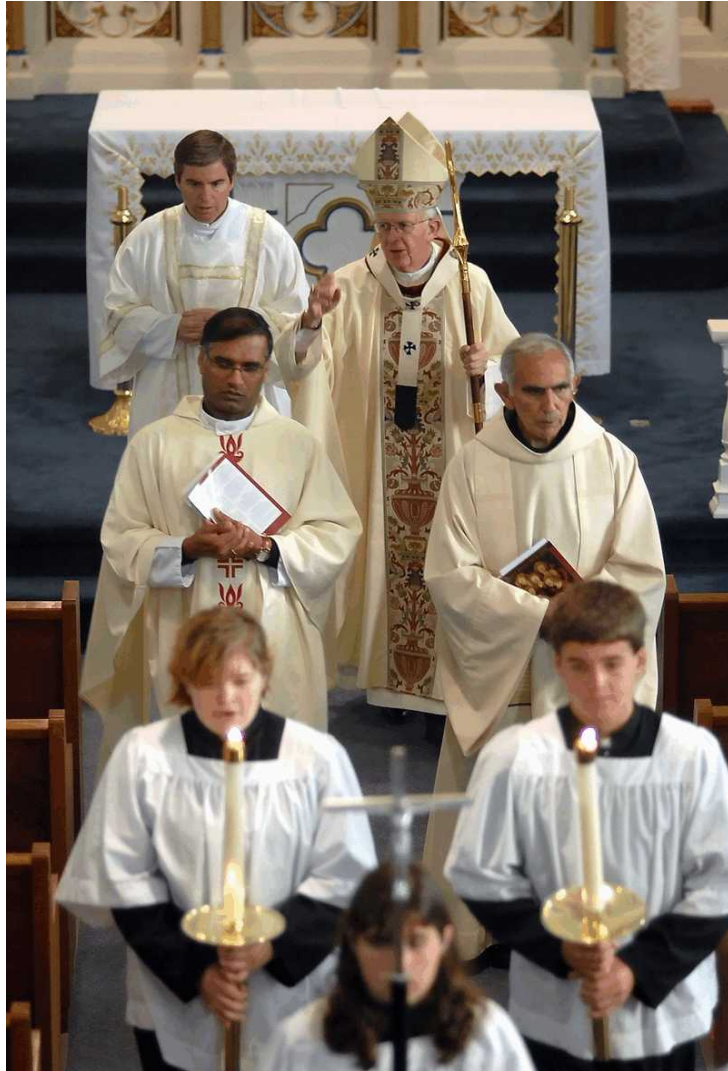


## Catholic Settlers who reached Sublimity considered no place better

(From the Catholic Sentinel in Portland, Oregon, July 16, 2009)



By Henry Strobel  
For the Sentinel

St. Boniface Church in Sublimity celebrated its 130th birthday on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Catholic communities relish these anniversary celebrations. They are good times to remember where we came from, good times to think where we want to go. Folks here need little encouragement to have a good time, and perhaps, having had such a memorable Centennial in 1979 and an exuberant Quasiquicentennial (125 years) in 2004, they couldn't wait for the Sesquicentennial (150 years). Never mind the name - just call it the 130<sup>th</sup>.

On December 3, 1879 Father Peter Juvenal Stampfl had written the first entry in the parish registry, signing it "missionary priest, thus marking the official beginning of Saint Boniface Church.

It was decided not to wait for December but to anticipate the anniversary on June 5, the holiday of St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr, Apostle of the Germans. As might not have happened in December, the evening had fine weather.

Archbishop John Vlazny celebrated a Mass with the people, with Fr. Irudayaraj Amalanathan of St. Boniface as concelebrant along with Benedictine Father Vincent Trujillo. Deacon Steve Tabor assisted at the liturgy.

The Mass included the Knights of Columbus in regalia and the rousing music of the St. Boniface "mixed choir, was followed by a most congenial dinner in the church hall, featuring a fine selection of German sausages and beer, with superb dishes and desserts by ladies of the parish. Across the street St. Boniface Archives was open.

St. Boniface has one of the oldest original church buildings in Oregon, built in 1889, and having survived most threats of nature and modernization. Earlier, in 1857, Sublimity College had been founded by the United Brethren and headed by Milton Wright, father of the famous aviators.

Vacated, it was bought in 1880 by Fr. Stampfl to become the site of St. Boniface' church, schools, and cemetery. Its main building had quite a





At Beaverton in 1916, these Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon are from Sublimity, where the order was founded in 1886. Their last names will be familiar to anyone from Sublimity, from top left: Giebler, Ruettggers, Silbernagel, Boedigheimer, Ruettggers, (Fr. Anthony Lainck, pastor of St. Boniface), Ruettggers, Ritzinger, Ruettggers, Heuberger, Schmid, Hendricks, Silbernagel, Heuberger, Bender, Hassler, Prange, Benedict, Heuberger, Spenner, Lulay, Minden, and Frank. The Ruettggers family contributed four daughters!

history. It was used as a church and rectory, and in 1886 became the convent for a new order of sisters. Later it was used as a parish hall and “immigrant housing. Part of it survived the fire of 1910 and was moved a couple of times, finally becoming the nucleus of the future Marian Home for the old and infirm, which the church opened in 1957.

The college had stood at the site of St. Boniface High School, which closed in 1962 with the opening of Regis High School. Sublimity and neighboring Stayton have always staunchly supported Catholic education.

Many Sublimity settlers of the 1850s arrived by wagon train from the South and Midwest. But the wave of German Catholic farmers and woods people who populated Sublimity as we know it arrived by rail in the last quarter of the century from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, etc.

Some of these had trekked from Germany to Russia, back to Germany, and on to Pennsylvania or Ohio before making the last lap to Oregon. Once here, there was no place better to go!

The writer is a leader of the St. Boniface archives and museum. He says many more “fascinating or inspiring stories” can be found in the history and archives pages of [www.saintboniface.net](http://www.saintboniface.net)