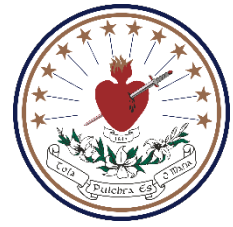


**Mission Moment**  
**VMA – February 8, 2022**  
**Theresa: In Crisis and Exile**



In looking at Mother Theresa Maxis’s life we have considered her as Pilgrim and Foundress. Tonight, I share with you some of the trials Mother Theresa experienced in different crisis situations and in exile.

As we continue to get to know Mother Theresa we do so in light of her qualities of strength, courage, stamina, integrity and prayerful perseverance; qualities that we hope our own young women at Villa will emulate. Mother Theresa is remembered for her “Paths of daring and deeds of Hope.”

We remember that at the invitation of Fr. Louis Florent Gillet Mother Theresa went to Monroe Michigan and together they founded the IHM Sisters. The congregation grew and became well known for its educational works, drawing the attention of bishops in different dioceses, notably Bishop Saint John Neumann, who invited the Sisters to come to Pennsylvania in 1858.

When Mother Theresa received the inquiry from Fr. O’Reilly and a corroborating message from Bishop Neumann, she saw the invitation as solving the dilemma with which she had been faced. “For my part,” she stated, “I was very much pleased with this opening and saw it to be Providential as we then would have a chance to get our Rules completed by a Redemptorist Father, Bishop Neumann, being himself a Redemptorist.” There were some additional advantages. The intervention of the Detroit Bishop and his director would be counteracted. Furthermore, the more rapid growth of numbers would be assured, since Mother Theresa had been informed by the Redemptorist missionaries that there were many potential candidates in the East who had been deterred by the distance to Monroe. This proved to be no empty promise; in

the first eighteen months of the Pennsylvania establishment twenty-five candidates entered the congregation.

Almost from the beginning of the foundation, Theresa's life was one of struggle, separation, and challenge, largely due to episcopal interference and intrusion into the affairs and administration of the congregation. Through it all Theresa demonstrated extraordinary trust, strength, and daring. Examples of the episcopal meddling in the life of the congregation abound. To single out just one: A jurisdictional dispute about the congregation arose between the bishops of Philadelphia and Detroit in 1860 following the death of John Neumann. The bishop of Detroit held Theresa responsible for the dispute, deposed her as General Superior, and sent her to her IHM Sisters in Pennsylvania. In 1871, the Philadelphia archdiocese, which then included the entire state of Pennsylvania, was split. As a result, two branches of the IHM community were born: Scranton and Philadelphia. Some Sisters remained in what became the new diocese of Scranton. Others remained in the Philadelphia archdiocese, thereby becoming a separate branch in southeastern Pennsylvania – first in Reading, then in West Chester, now in Immaculata.

As a consequence of such friction, disruption, and dispute, largely from outside the congregation, Theresa later spent 18 years in exile with the Grey Nuns in Ottawa where she kept firm in her faith and love for her IHM Sisters. In 1885 Mother Theresa was allowed to return to the IHM community in West Chester.

In our next segment we will talk a little more about Mother Theresa's "Homecoming" to West Chester.

Let us continue to pray that we can carry on Mother Theresa's legacy of daring deeds, courage in the face of obstacles and trust in Divine Providence.