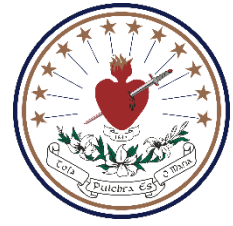


Mission Moment
VMA - December 1, 2021
Theresa: The Foundress



As I stated at our September board meeting, this year's Mission Moment will concentrate on Mother Theresa Maxis so we can get to know a little more of the woman who has inspired our Congregation and whose life can inspire our young women at Villa for years to come. In September we learned a little about Theresa the Pilgrim. Tonight, we will consider Mother Theresa, the Foundress.

Mother Theresa attended a school established for Haitian refugee children in Baltimore. In 1829 the three women who conducted the school along with Theresa formed a Religious congregation. The primary work of the Congregation was to teach children from Haitian and African descent. That Congregation, the Oblates of Providence, still exists today and still considers Theresa a founding member. The mission of the Oblates is to work for the Christian education of children of color. When Mother Theresa entered the Congregation, she was 19 years of age. It was noted that she was "very pious and also very capable of rendering great services to the institution."

The intended work of the new Congregation was applauded by many in Baltimore; the creation of a Religious Congregation of persons of color was not so well received. There were in fact individuals who protested the appropriateness of allowing women of African American descent to

become religious. The sisters were understandably disturbed by reports of these complaints.

Fr. Joubert was a spiritual father and great support for the sisters. He tried to reassure the sisters in the midst of the opposition they experienced. For about 13 years the work and community life of the Oblates prospered under the attentive guidance of Fr. Joubert.

In 1841 Fr. Joubert fell ill and died. Meanwhile paying pupils of the school were in decline. Financially distressed and deprived of the spiritual support of their earlier sponsors, the Oblate Sisters may have seemed to be on the brink of dissolution.

During this difficult time Mother Theresa served as Superior General of the Oblates. In 1845 Theresa left Baltimore and the Oblates at the invitation of Fr. Louis Florent Gillet to establish a religious congregation in Monroe, Michigan. It was there in Monroe that Theresa began the Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Along with 3 other members, Theresa began a school for young women. This path to education resulted in more schools to open in Scranton, Pa , and eventually in West Chester, Pa. The IHM Congregation flourished. By 1872 VMA was founded continuing the legacy of Theresa Maxis who knew that women were destined to hold leadership and service roles in the church and in the world.

Mother Theresa, pray for us as we continue to build on this legacy of grace.