

Mission Moment

Theresa: The Pilgrim

This evening our Mission Moment focuses on Mother Theresa Maxis, co-foundress of the IHM Sisters, so that we can get to know a little more about the woman who has inspired our Congregation and whose life of courage, boldness and trust can inspire us in our ministry of _____.

These thoughts and reflections are taken from the book, **Pilgrim Let Your Heart Be Bold**, which was written by an IHM Sister on the life of Mother Theresa.

So, let us first consider the virtues of a pilgrim:

- **readiness** to risk personal mistakes and failures, insecurities and dangers in searching out God and God's Will
- **caution** in settling down into familiar and reassuring surroundings
- **awareness** of others that prompts encouragement and love for those who share the pilgrimage
- **confidence** in the Lord's power in the future as well as in the past
- **determination** to faithfully follow the vision, knowing the vision is not yet fully defined
- **ready** to respond as the vision becomes clearer through life's unfolding journey

Mother Theresa's life prepared her for her role of pilgrim. One example would be her sense of God's call to mission for her, as well as the misunderstandings and difficulties she experienced in her life. Perhaps, most obviously, her lifetime of constant travel and transplantation reveals the excitement, the insecurity, great pain as well as the fruitfulness of the pilgrim's calling.

Born in 1810 in Baltimore, Theresa was the daughter of a Haitian refugee, Betsy Duchemin and Arthur Howard, a British military officer. Betsy's grandfather, whose name was Maxis was an African-American slave in Haiti. This became the surname that Theresa used. Theresa's parents were not married and she never knew her father.

Theresa was raised in a Haitian American by her mother's guardians, the Duchemin family, who provided education for her as they had for her mother. She attended a school established for Haitian refugee children in Baltimore. IN 1829 the three women who conducted the school along with Theresa formed a new religious congregation. Their primary work was to teach children from Haitian and African descent. That congregation, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, still exists today and still considers Theresa a founding member.

From her early days Theresa was called to risk personal mistakes and failures, to live with insecurities, to have faith in God and confidence that the Lord was guiding her into an unknown future. In the midst of our own risks today, let us pray for the confidence and trust that Mother Theresa had in God's Providential plan. As pilgrims, along with Mother Theresa, we, too, "walk by faith and not by sight!"