

## Part 1-Saint Mother Theodore Guerin:

**(If you show Congregation Video- open with:)** You've just seen a little of the legacy of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin that is still being lived out by her sisters at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Let's get to know her a bit better.

**Option- show the Saint Mother Theodore Guerin video 30 minutes.**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dELPn595CA4&t=1001s>  
(if less time shows 18:35 to 23:24 on YouTube Video)**

*(Slide 2)*

SMTG was a strong and daring woman of faith who put all her trust in God's Providence as she set out to serve God's people in need.

Born: Oct. 2, 1798, in the village of Etables-sur-Mer in Brittany, France

***(Below are notes that tell her "human story" use any/all that you feel apply to your audience)***

\* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin faced and overcame many hurdles in life. By the time she was 15 she had lived through the deaths of both her brothers by fire and her father's murder by bandit robbers. Her mother was so devastated by these things that Anne-Therese, the oldest in the family, had to care for her and maintain the home for the next decade, putting her own dreams of entering religious life on hold for many years.

\* Soon after entering religious life at age 24, Sister St. Theodore suffered a debilitating illness, the cure for which damaged the lining of her stomach leaving her only able to eat soft foods and in fragile health for the rest of her life.

\* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin proved to be an excellent teacher and leader in France. She often used prizes to gain the children's affection and made learning positive for them. One of her most repeated quotes is "Love the children first, and then teach them".

\*At 41 years old she was asked to lead a small band of Sisters to the United States to serve the need of teaching and caring for the pioneer settlers. Despite her lack of confidence in her own health, she accepted the invitation when she learned the mission would be abandoned if she were not to lead it.

\*She endured a harrowing journey of nearly 3 months by sea and by land to arrive at her new mission. She endured through faith in God and wrote a wonderful journal of her journey. ***(You can read in journals and letters of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin or note that the link to read the journals and letters is provided on the resource page)***

\*Arrived at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to find a wilderness. The house being prepared for them was not ready. Ten Sisters shared two rooms of a farmhouse with a family of six. Despite those setbacks, she began an academy for girls within her first year in America.

\* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin was also a healer. She knew how to use plants and herbs for healing properties and created a pharmacy and helped to care for the sick poor in the surrounding area. She loved the nature of her Woods.

\*Her Congregation grew rapidly with wise leadership. She often wrote wonderful letters to her sisters on mission that still bring inspiration today.

\* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin met opposition from the local bishop and stood up to him with authority and respect. She also frequently conducted business with the community of Terre Haute in a time when women were not permitted to conduct business on their own. She was an early model of women's leadership.

\*Since her death many miracles have been attributed to her, a healing from cancer, healing of eyesight and more.

### ***Facts and Dates on Saint Mother Theodore Guerin***

Entered Sisters of Providence at Ruillé-sur-Loir, France: Aug. 18, 1823

Ministries in France: Served as teacher, school principal and convent superior in Rennes and Soulaines. In Soulaines she also ministered among the sick poor. Saint Mother Theodore Guerin answered the call from the Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, to come to the United States to teach pioneer children.

Missionary voyage from France to New York: July 27, 1840, to Sept. 4, 1840

Sisters of Providence who accompanied Mother Theodore to the United States of America to establish the mission at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind.: Sister Olympiade Boyer, Sister St. Vincent Ferrer Gag , Sister Basilide S n schal, Sister Mary Xavier Ler e and Sister Mary Liguori Tiercin

Date of arrival at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods: Oct. 22, 1840 which is still celebrated by the sisters as Foundation Day.

Opened Academy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods: July 4, 1841 (Now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods-College)

Other establishments opened by Mother Theodore: Schools in Jasper, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Village, Vincennes, Montgomery, Madison, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, Evansville, North Madison, Lanesville and Columbus, all in Indiana, and St. Francisville in Illinois; also two orphanages, one for girls, the other for boys in Vincennes. In addition, Mother Theodore opened pharmacies where free remedies were dispensed to the poor at Vincennes and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She also oversaw the construction of a new motherhouse for the Sisters of Providence and several additions to the Academy, both at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Date of death: May 14, 1856

Opening of the Cause for the Beatification and Canonization of Mother Theodore: Sept. 8, 1909

Received title "Venerable" from the Roman Catholic Church: by Pope John Paul II on July 22, 1992, in recognition of a virtuous life lived to a heroic degree.

Received title "Blessed" from the Roman Catholic Church: by Pope John Paul II on Oct. 25, 1998, during a beatification ceremony in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in Rome.

Canonized: as Saint Theodora Oct. 15, 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI at a ceremony in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in Rome. (Note that Saint Mother Theodore Guerin is the 8th Saint canonized in the United States and the first one in Indiana)

Feast Day for Saint Mother Theodore: Oct. 3.

SMTG lived a life of faith and service.

\* Saint Mother Theodore Guerin is a model for all of us today in her humility, her strong leadership, and her infinite faith in our Provident God.

***Tell of your connection to Saint Mother Theodore: favorite quote, how she has impacted your life, favorite quality or favorite story. Use personal story of what SMTG means in your life. Why is she special to you? Why do you admire her? What is your favorite quote or writing by her?***

***(If ONLY using part 1, add this. Otherwise, it will appear again in Part 3).*** Introduce the Shrine of Saint Mother Theodore Guerin at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Come walk where she walked. Visit the shrine, like a museum walking you in a faith experience through her life, the chapel there is where her remains rest and learn how her mission continues today. Walk the Woods where she walked, feeling the deep sacred peace that resides there. ***Pass out materials about shrine and visiting.***