

PRECIOUS BLOOD FOUNDERS HYMN COLLECTION

THERESA

Hymn for Congregation and Keyboard

In Honor of Theresa Weber
Founder of the Sisters of the Precious Blood
O'Fallon, Missouri

Text and Music
by
Rev. Ralph C. Verdi, C.P.P.S.

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Theresa Weber

*Founder of the Sisters of the Precious Blood
O'Fallon, Missouri*

Theresa Weber, born on July 7, 1822, in Glotterthal, Germany, received at her baptism the name of her mother, Magdalena. This happy child eagerly received her mother's religious training.

As a teenager, she attended a parish mission in Blodelsheim on the Rhine where she joined a group of other young women. Father Carl Rolfus was assigned to their parish in Baden where the government at that time was dissolving convents. This group of pious young women longed to be religious. Due to the pilgrimage of Ursula Behringer to the shrine of St. Anne in Steinerberg, the pastor of the shrine, Fr. Leonard Loser, and his assistant, Fr. Meinrad Holdner, were very impressed by the wish of the group of women from Baden to dedicate their lives to God in adoration and atonement in honor of the Precious Blood of Christ. A bond was established with these members of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood and the priests in Steinerberg where the Precious Blood of Christ had been honored for years. Ursula contacted Fr. Rolfus who made temporary arrangements for the proposed congregation with the two priests at St. Anne's.

Twelve women, the nucleus of the new community, arrived in Steinerberg on September 8, 1845. The inn belonging to the parish was to be used by the Sisters for their convent. On September 27, Magdalen Weber and several other women arrived. They were dismayed by the confusion and disorder they found there. Fr. Rolfus came and deposed the provisional superior. Magdalen Weber, 23 years of age, was chosen superior under the name of Mother Theresa. She is considered the Foundress. Followers who no longer fit into the community were dismissed. From this time on unity of mind and spirit prevailed.

Mother Theresa introduced perpetual adoration of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. By day the Sisters prayed in the parish church of St. Anne. At night they prayed from a room in their home from which the flickering sanctuary light in the church could be seen. In very simple words she told the Sisters to stand before the Lord awaiting his movement and permitting him to direct their lives to transform them through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Sisters attested that her ability to direct them "emanated not only from a natural skill but also from the Holy Spirit who dwelled in her."

On June 3, 1848, Fr. Loser was stunned to read: "The Supreme Cantonal Council has decreed the secularization of the women's convent on the Steinerberg." Mother Theresa and the last Sisters left Steinerberg on August 23. Mother Theresa, mortally ill, was too weak to continue. She died at Sattle on August 28 and was buried in Steinerberg with 26 other Sisters. The remaining 42 went into exile.

In 1863 Mother Augusta Volk was appointed Superior of the Gurtweil Community by Roman authorities, and Sr. Clementine Zerr was appointed president. Their roles, delineated by Rome, overlapped. In 1867, Rev. Blaise Winterhalter, pastor in the American state of Illinois, invited them to America. In 1870, forced by circumstances, a group of nine Sisters undertook the pioneer journey to America. The whole Community had been transferred by 1873. Judging that she could not accept the conditions enunciated by Bishop Baltes of Alton, Mother Theresa made contact with the Diocese of St. Louis and was accepted. The Community made its final home in O'Fallon, Missouri.

Difficulties developed between Mother Augusta and Mother Clementine, traceable to the dual governmental structure imposed by Roman authorities. She moved forward with the Sisters of the O'Fallon Community which claims her as their Foundress in America. Mother Augusta returned to Europe in 1883 to dispose of the Gurtweil property. Her stay was prolonged, and in 1893 she was buried in the Gurtweil parish cemetery. Years later, her remains were placed in a small chapel on the former Gurtweil property.

Today the Sisters are engaged in education, art and music, care of the elderly, social services, healthcare, parish and pastoral ministries, and prayer and presence in the United States, Europe, and South America.

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Moderately $\text{♩} = 82-88$
Introduction

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1. The - re - sa, lov - ing la - dy, God's own daugh - ter! _____
2. The - re - sa, who put trust in God's sweet mer - cy! _____
3. The - re - sa, as each per - son is so pre - cious, _____

8

— 1. The - re - sa, full of trust in God's great love! _____
— 2. The - re - sa, for whom God filled ev' - ry need. _____
— 3. As pre - cious as the Blood of Je - sus Christ! _____

12

— 1. The - re - sa, full of rich - es from heav - en, _____
— 2. The - re - sa, who re - ceived gifts from heav - en, _____
— 3. The - re - sa, pre - cious soul to our Sa - vior, _____

16

— 1. The - re - sa, bring those rich - es to all!
— 2. The - re - sa, pray those gifts come to all!
— 3. Please pray we be held pre - cious to all!

To vs. 2-3 Last Time