

# Saint Mother Theodore Guerin

## Sources:

- Indiana Governors' History Website  
(<http://in.gov/governorhistory/mitchdaniels/2569.htm>)
- Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods  
(<http://spsmw.org/saint-mothertheodore/>)

The Saint Mother Theodore Guerin was born Anne-Thérèse Guerin on Oct. 2, 1798 in the village of Etables in Brittany, France. At age 25, her mother gave permission for her to enter the ministry. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Ruillé, France on Aug. 18, 1823 and was first known as Sister St. Theodore. She spent several years as a teacher in France where she received honors for her teaching ability and her ministry to the sick.

In 1840 Sister St. Theodore, now known as Mother Theodore, came to the United States from France to establish a Congregation of women religious in a dense forest adjacent to a remote community known as Saint Mary-of-the Woods near Terre Haute. She and her companion sisters opened an academy for girls less than nine months after their arrival in Indiana (now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College). Soon thereafter, under Mother Theodore's leadership, schools were founded throughout the state before expanding into other areas such as Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.

Mother Theodore suffered from illness most of her life. She was treated for a disease at an early age, and the treatment is believed to have damaged her digestive system. Eventually, her condition overtook her, and she died on May 14, 1856. Her remains rest in a tomb under the floor of the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. A Celtic cross in Mother Theodore's memory stands prominently in the Congregation's cemetery bearing the inscription that reads "I sleep, but my heart watches over this house which I have built."

Mother Guerin was canonized as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church at a ceremony in the Vatican on October 15, 2006. She is designated in the Vatican's official record as Saint Theodora.

*Biography obtained from the Indiana Governor's History website*



*Photo Courtesy: Archdiocese of Indianapolis*