

Sister Teresa (Gertrude) Baker, OSU (1873 – 1949)

Gertrude Baker was born on January 3, 1873 in Birmingham, England. Her parents belonged to an upper middle-class English Anglican family. Her mother died giving birth to her fifth child. Gertrude and her young siblings were then cared for by her maternal grandmother. The Baker home was in the vicinity of an oratory recently opened by Father John Henry Newman, who eventually received Teresa's grandmother into the Church, along with her five grandchildren.



Encouraged to develop her talents, Gertrude was sent to a finishing school in Paris, where she acquired fluency in French and studied music, and then continued on at Trinity College, London and obtained a Music Teacher's diploma from the Royal Conservatory. In one of her many trips abroad, Gertrude visited Winnipeg, Canada for the marriage of her brother and later decided to join him in Tompkins, SK where she gave music lessons. It may have been through an ad in the local paper that Gertrude first learned about St. Angela's Convent at Prelate. However, it was during a chance meeting with Sister Margaret, that Gertrude's decision to serve God in religious life was confirmed. She arrived in Prelate in the fall of 1922, barely three years after the sod turning of St. Angela's Convent (1919). On December 27, 1923 she received the religious habit and the name "Sister Teresa." It was evident from the day she entered that she had but one preoccupation: to become a religious after the Heart of Jesus. This showed in her childlike simplicity and spirit of prayer; in her cheerfulness and constant gentle courtesy and kindness to everyone; in her generous self-giving to serve wherever she could whether in menial tasks, as Directress of Novices, teaching in the classroom or giving music lessons.

She was a full-time classroom teacher for only two-and-a-half terms. In 1927 she returned to St. Angela's, becoming fully occupied with music and other private lessons. She remained there for the rest of her life. Towards the end and in failing health, her superior relieved her of all responsibility other than to pray for the Community. Submitting in all simplicity and humility, Sister Teresa spent hours at prayer in the chapel. She died on December 4, 1949, a month prior to her 77th birthday.

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