

**Venerable Magdalen of the Sacred Heart
(England) 1832-1900**

Volunteer nurse in the Crimean War.

Converted to Catholicism in 1885

Founded the Poor Servants of the Mother of God in 1872.

Set up shelters for prostitutes, homeless women and children.

Founded the Providence Free Hospital in St. Helens, Lancashire, England.

Wrote "Eastern Hospital and English Nurses"

exposing the terrible conditions of soldiers in the Crimea.¹



Frances Margaret Taylor (Mother Magdalen of the Sacred Heart) was born on January 20, 1832, in Stoke Rochford, Lincolnshire, England. Her father was an Anglican clergyman.

As a young woman, she nursed casualties in the Crimean War alongside Florence Nightingale. She converted to Catholicism in 1855, after she was impressed by the faith of dying Irish soldiers.

In 1872, at age 40, Frances founded the Poor Servants of the Mother of God taking the religious name of Mother Magdalen. With three companions, she set up refuges for prostitutes and homeless women and children. She established the Convent of Our Lady of Pity in 1874 as a base to serve the poor. Mother Magdalen founded the Providence Free Hospital

in St. Helens, Lancashire, and also took over running the St. Joseph's Asylum in Dublin. By the time of her death in 1900, the Sisters were responsible for over 20 houses and institutions.

Mother Magdalen was a prolific author and journalist, often campaigning for the rights of the poor. Her book, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses* exposed the neglect of soldiers and the injustice and indignities they suffered. She advocated for better treatment. In addition, she worked to reform the character of paid nurses, whom she often found to be drunk, immoral and insubordinate. The sick and dying deserved much better care.

The Apostleship of Prayer was started in France in 1844 at a Jesuit training college in Vals where the young Jesuits were eager to start their missionary activities abroad. Since they had several years of preparation pending, Fr. Francis Xavier Gautrelet SJ suggested they devote themselves to the mission immediately by simply offering to God everything they were doing in their everyday life. This devotion spread quickly. In 1861, Fr. Ramiere SJ published a magazine for the Apostolate, the Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. By 1941, there were 72 Messengers in 44 different languages. In the late 1800's, Mother Magdalen convinced Fr. Dignam, SJ to change the Messenger of the Sacred Heart from being an expensive literary magazine into a popular penny-worth magazine which quickly circulated freely among the poor. For Dublin, Ireland, she convinced Fr. Cullen SJ to circulate the magazine there. Within a year the Messenger of the Sacred Heart reached a circulation of 73,000 and is still published in Ireland today.

Sister Magdalen of the Sacred Heart died on June 9, 1900, in the Mother House, the Convent of Our Lady of Pity, across from St. Patrick's cathedral adjacent to Soho Square in London, England, from natural causes. She was buried in the chapel of the Maryfield Convent in Roehampton, London, England.

In 2014, the Poor Servants of the Mother of God had over 200 sisters working in Kenya, the United States, Venezuela, Italy, Britain and Ireland, working among the poor and providing care to the elderly and people with learning disabilities.

Sister Magdalen of the Sacred Heart was declared venerable with the promulgation of the decree of heroic virtue on June 12, 2014.²

*Say to our dear Lord: "I bear this for love of your dear Heart.
You were worried and harassed on earth for me,
so I will bear it for you."*

Prayer for the Beatification of Mother Magdalen:

*Heavenly Father, you gave to Mother Magdalen Taylor a profound insight into the Mystery of the Incarnation and a great love and compassion for the poor and needy. We pray that her life of deep faith and loving service may continue to inspire us and that, one day, she may be beatified to the glory of your name. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*³

References:

1) "Venerable Magdalen of the Sacred Heart". CatholicSaints.Info. 10 March 2020. Web. 8 December 2021. <<https://catholicsaints.info/venerable-magdalen-of-the-sacred-heart/>>

2) Hagiography Circle: An Online Resource on Contemporary Hagiography. Frances Margaret Taylor (Mary Magdalen of the Sacred Heart). Accessed 21 April 2022. <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/year/1900.htm#Taylor>

3) Poor Servants of the Mother of God. Beatification. Accessed 21 Apr 2022. <https://www.poorservants.org/our-beginning/beatification/>

4) A Lady Volunteer [aka Frances Margaret Taylor]. (1856). Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses; The Narrative of Twelve Months' Experience in the Hospitals of Koulali and Scutari. London: Hurst and Blacket Publishers. Available online at <https://archive.org/details/easternhospital01taylgoog/page/n1/mode/2up>

Note: This biography is for all desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI address to 2000 nurses assembled at Castel Gondolfo on August 27, 1935 for the II World Congress of Catholic Nurses (www.ciciams.org / www.nacn-usa.org): *to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients, bring salvation to souls.* May it also help nursing students with your Nursing History course. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka