This year we mark the 170th anniversary of the death of Mother Theresa, August 28, 1848.

Father Leonard Loser, Pastor at St. Anne, Steinerberg, wrote a letter to the Bishop [Caspar von Karl, Bishop of Chur, 1845-1848] recounting Mother Theresa’s death. Excerpts from his letter follow:

September 11, 1848
Highest Honorable Rev. Bishop,

Since your Honor has always shown the deepest interest in the fate of our Sisters of the Precious Blood, I would like to report to you how they finally ended their stay here in Seelisberg and that blessed Rev. Mother has died....

Rev. Mother had been suffering severely for about a year. Losing more and more strength, she had a very great yearning for the Sisters in the Alsace. So Father Rolfus made arrangements for her departure also, in a wagon which [he] had sent for the infirm. Although I would have kept the Sisters, especially Rev. Mother, back in their house here [in Steinerberg], I could not change the plans for the journey. I even hoped that Rev. Mother's condition might improve after the journey.

It was on August 23, after they had departed from Seelisberg on August 21, that a group of young girls carried the sick and Rev. Mother to a wagon... (She could not walk.) But the journey up to that time had worsened her condition, and saddened that she could not continue on along with the others who went on, she was content to stay at the local parsonage [Sattel] where two other Sisters attended to her. On the following day she received the viaticum. On Sunday the 27 of August she asked for the Holy (?) [Translator could not decipher this word]. During the following night she received the indulgences for the dying, showed much desire for the blessing with holy water, made the sign of the cross, reached for the blessed candle, after she wound her hand with the rosary. She embraced the crucifix with her hands, and softly passed on at 2:30 in the night of August 28.

Rectory at Sattel where Mother Theresa died.
Already during the night of August 25-26 the attending Sisters [had] noticed a setback and thought she would not survive the night, and they wept. "I should be consoling you," said Rev. Mother. Someone remarked, "And we should be consoling you."

She was 26 years, one month and 21 days old. She was born in Glotterthal, County of Waldkirch, Grand Duchy of Baden. She had been in the Community since September 27, 1845, and became Reverend Mother on October 9 of the same year. She had told the other Sisters as long as six months ago that she would not reach the age of twenty-eight. Death claimed her but one found it hard to believe because God kept her living so long, even though she was ailing and because she was believed to be so necessary to the community. Rev. Father Muench from Sattel would have been glad to keep the body in his parish church but honored the fact that Rev. Mother's life and work was at Steinerberg, and allowed to have her brought here for burial to my Joy and that of many of the faithful. She was buried on August 30 in proper peacefulness, with much participation of many women and young girls, also from other parishes....

With the occasion of this report I thank you for all kindness shown to the community and for all goodness and generosity granted by your Eminence to the Sisters during their time here....

... I remain in your episcopal mercy.

Your most obedient Rev. Dr. L. Loser
Steinerberg, September 11, 1848

Translator: Rose Goecker
from Creve Coeur, Mo. 2/1982
In the center of this chapel was buried the first venerable Mother of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Precious Blood founded here, Teresa Weber, from Glottertal Grand Duchy of Baden born July 7, 1822; died August 28, 1848. R. I. P.


1848, August 28—Death of Mother Theresa Weber, foundress, in Sattel, SW

1848, August 30—Mother Theresa Weber buried in Steinerberg in St. Joachim Chapel in St. Anne's Church.

1953, December 25—Received relics of our foundress, Mother Theresa Weber, from the Sisters of Ottmarsheim [No other information is given]

1997, October 13—Sr. Andree Fries and Sr. Janice Bader visit Ottmarsheim together with Sr. Alma Pia ASC of the Schaan, Liechtenstein, province; purpose: to get the skull of Mother Theresa. The box in which the skull rested was too large and, it was feared, would pose a difficulty in Customs. Decision: the larger part of the skull would remain in Steinerberg; the detached jawbone with some teeth and nose would come to O’Fallon, transported in small wooden box from Bosnia, given by the Schaan sisters. [See Sr. Andree’s letter on following page.]

1998, October 31—Mother Theresa Weber’s relics, some of which we had since the 1950s and some of which Sr. Andree Fries brought from Ottmarsheim in 1997, were interred in a memorial grave dedicated to her and to Mother Augusta Volk. This memorial is located right in the front as you enter the cemetery through the west gate [Row 11, grave 7]. Both names are on the marker.

The Precious Blood Sisters who manage the St. Anne Retirement and Nursing Home in Steinerberg honor Mother Theresa. Note the spelling of her name.

Translation:

Buried in our cemetery
1. Upper jawbone of Mother Theresa Weber in smaller cloth bag. Cloth is plain.
2. Lower jawbone of Mother Theresa Weber in larger cloth bag. Cloth is figured.
3. Two small ribs of Mother Theresa Weber in small box
4. Small bone of Mother Theresa Weber in small plastic box
5. Dust from bones of Mother Theresa Weber

The corner in our chapel where we venerate Maria Theresa Weber.

Adoration Chapel in the St. Anne convent

The urn contains relics (bones of the skull) of Mother Theresa.

Photos courtesy of the Sisters at St. Anne [left] and Sr. Barbara Schlatter [right]
Rome October 13, 1997

Dear Sisters,

Greetings from Rome! ...

As you know, this trip had a two-fold purpose. One was to visit Ottmarsheim and follow up on the message Father Pere Lucien Joseph Heitz, chaplain, had given to Sr. Eileen Schieber this past July. He had indicated then that we could have the skull of Mother Theresa Weber which was buried in the Ottmarsheim cemetery. The second purpose of this trip was in answer to a request of Sr. Guisepina Fragasso, ASC, that I do some financial analysis ... I asked Sr. Janice to accompany me, especially to assist in the financial planning in Rome.

Since I don't speak either German or French, I had called Sr. Alma Pia, ASC, of the Schaan, Liechtenstein, province to request her assistance in arranging the trip to Ottmarsheim. Sr. Alma Pia speaks English fluently and has written our common history as part of the ASC history. She graciously agreed to be of assistance and accompany us to Ottmarsheim.

When we arrived in Schaan to meet Sr. Alma Pia, we learned that for many years the ASC Sisters of Schaan had been asking the Benedictine Sisters in Ottmarsheim for Mother Theresa's skull. Fr. Heitz in Ottmarsheim was confused and thought that we and the ASCs in Schaan were the same congregation. He believed that his remark to Sr. Eileen was part of the ongoing conversation with the Sisters of Schaan. In fact, just before we arrived, Fr. Heitz had phoned Schaan and said that he had excavated the box and they could come and pick it up.

Kloster St. Elisabeth, Schaan, Liechtenstein  https://picclick.de/st_elisabethen_institute_schaan

The desire of the Schaan sisters is to bury Mother Theresa in Steinerberg with a memorial marker. At this time we are not sure where the graves of the early sisters are actually located and there is no marker for them in the cemetery. Mother Theresa soon will be among the sisters in Steinerberg again.

I was stunned with this new information. Before I could think through the dilemma, Sr. Johanna, provincial in Schaan, suggested that we should just go get the box and maybe we could share its contents. So Sr. Alma Pia, Sr. Janice and I drove to Ottmarsheim....

When we arrived, all was ready. The metal box in which Mother Theresa's skull was buried was badly corroded. There were holes in the top and the side. I doubted that after all this time anything could have been preserved. However, we took the box and headed back to Schaan. ...

After a little "picnic supper," Sr. Johanna, ASC (provincial), Sr. Matilda, ASC (councilor), Sr. Alma Pia, Sr. Janice and I went to the Novitiate room to open the precious box. Needless to say, I had many mixed feelings! We lit a candle and sang "Jesu Blut" together in German. Sisters Matilda and Alma Pia rather easily managed to open the box. Mother Theresa's skull was still there, in a rather fragile state. I quickly saw that it was too large to fit into our suitcases and would pose real difficulty in passing through Customs. So I said, "Please, just bury her in Steinerberg with the sisters." However, her remaining jawbone with some teeth and her nose were separated from the rest of the skull. The Schaan sisters suggested that I take those pieces to be buried in O'Fallon. They gave me a small wooden box from Bosnia in which to transport these relics home. We took a number of photos of this historic event....

In Jesus' love,

Sr. Andree

Note: Unless otherwise credited, photos are from CPPS Archives.