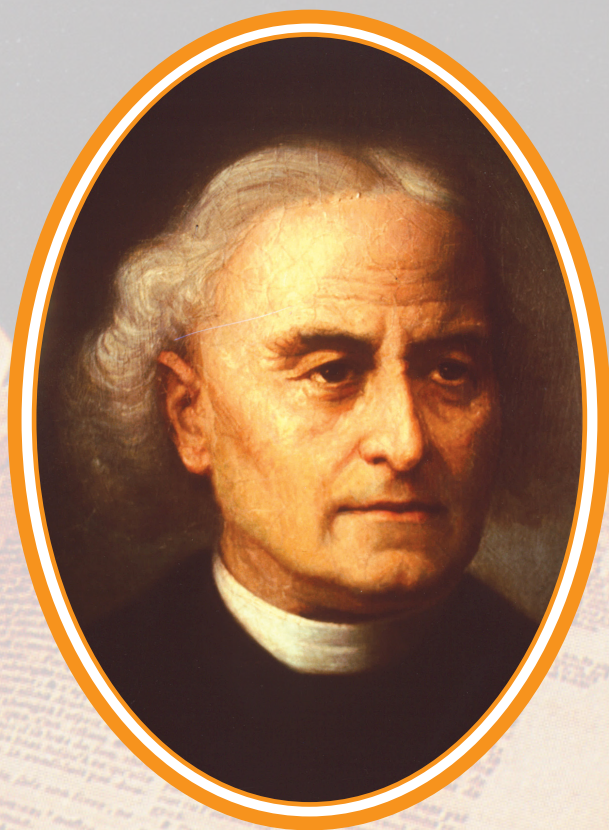


*Journey by
the light of the Word of God*



Theodore Ratisbonne

1802 - 1884



An Extraordinary Life

Theodore lived in very different times from ours. He was born in France, in 1802, just eleven years after the French Revolution. As a boy, he would have heard of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815. Subsequent political and social upheavals were rife in his country. Elsewhere in Europe: Germany, Austria and Italy were all facing bitter conflicts in their quest for national unity. The potato famine in Ireland had killed one third of the population with another third immigrating to distant lands. A terrible civil war raged in the United States from 1861 – 1865 and the discovery of gold in Australia brought massive migration there. The 19th Century saw a world in turmoil but also in remarkable transition. The Catholic Church too faced its own forms of crises. Significant personalities emerged to confront the pressing societal needs, some establishing religious Congregations. One such person was Theodore Ratisbonne.

Theodore was born a Jew in Strasbourg, France. Searching for truth and life's meaning, he was directed to read the entire Bible and discovered its pervading message, "God is Love", which he saw personified in Jesus of Nazareth. At the age of twenty-five years, he was baptized Catholic by a woman and three years later, ordained a priest. Events led him to Paris where he was able to fulfill his dream: to inspire others to pray and to be a welcoming presence in the Church for Jewish People, if they desired baptism. Just twenty years after becoming Catholic, without much knowledge of the intricacies of the Vatican and Church Law, Theodore journeyed to Rome to seek the Pope's approval for his 'Work'. Thanks to the 'sign' from God and to the women assisting him', the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion came into existence. When the trend of Jews asking for baptism in the Catholic Church, became minimal, the Sisters moved into education. Sion soon became known for the high standard of its schools and its care of the poor. Whether Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish or Muslim, pupils were taught to respect the faith belief of the other; any form of proselytism was strictly forbidden. At Theodore's death in 1884, the Congregation had already spread to eight countries and to Jerusalem.

This extraordinary man had also envisaged a Contemplative Branch of Sisters and a Sion Congregation for men; both exist today. The family of Sion is now also enriched by many lay people, attracted to its spirituality and its works.

Theodore's Early Years: Born on 28th December 1802, Theodore was the second of ten children of Auguste and Adelaide Ratisbonne: six boys: Adolphe, Theodore, Gustave, Henri, Achille, Alphonse, and four girls: Zelig, Elisa, Pauline and Ernestine. The Ratisbonne family took its name from Regensburg in Germany from where it had emigrated in the 18th century to settle in Strasbourg, France. Auguste, with his brother Louis, founded a bank which quickly prospered due to *"their competence and reliability"*. Theodore's mother, Adelaide, was a grand-daughter of Naftali Cerfbeer, a pioneer of the emancipation of the Jews at the time of the French Revolution. She was, in Theodore's own words, *"one whose memory remains blessed among the poor of Strasbourg, both Jew and Christian."*

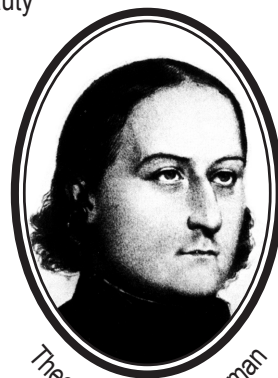
Unfortunately, little is known of Auguste Ratisbonne except that he was an honest, upright man, greatly concerned for the welfare of his Jewish confreres. Surrounded by many poor and uneducated Jews, Auguste and Adelaide devoted themselves to a kind of *'social Judaism'*. Like many of the post-Revolution generation, the parents sought, above all, assimilation into French society. They seemed to have lost sight of their spiritual origins, paying little attention to Synagogue observance and ceremonies.

Theodore grew up surrounded by a loving and happy family. *"My father"*, he wrote, *"always loved me, and on all occasions I had his complete confidence"*. It was his mother, however, a woman of great kindness, completely given to her family, who seemed to have had the greater influence on Theodore. Years later, he wrote, *"If I was not raised in the Jewish religion, I was at least brought up according to Jewish traditions and moral values. I received no other training than the example of a virtuous mother whom I loved very much"*.

Theodore spoke little of his early childhood, although he did recall *"wondering about the reason for his existence, even from a young age"*. He first attended school in the Lycee of Strasbourg where he was completely cut off from Jewish circles. When he was twelve years old, he ran away from home *"to seek solitude"*. He was quickly returned! At age fourteen, Theodore was sent to boarding school in Frankfurt. He recalls how unhappy he was, suffering from *"an unbearable homesickness"*. His mother came and took him home. At this time, he also speaks *"of a deep attraction to recollection and of being seized with a profound spirit of prayer"*.

Theodore goes to Paris: After a year with private tutors, Auguste decided his son should go to Paris to be initiated into the intricacies of banking in the Maison Fould (Fould Banking Co.), owned by an uncle. Theodore was then just sixteen years old. He had no sooner arrived in Paris than he learned of his mother's death following childbirth on 8th December 1818. This totally unexpected blow had a profound effect on the adolescent; he became withdrawn, shy and depressed. By 1820, the Fould family, concerned with Theodore's continued low spirits, advised his father to take him home to Strasbourg. Tired of being rich and idle, Theodore reacted by asking his father to allow him to live alone in the country town of Robertsau near Strasbourg. There, he undertook an austere and stoic form of life. *"How can I describe the sadness and inner void which is causing me to wither up?"* he wrote at that time. *"I am twenty years old and I do not know why I am in the world. What is this strange thing we call life? What is my purpose on earth?"*

Hoping to find a solution to his doubts, Theodore avidly studied the 18th century philosophers, among others, Rousseau and Voltaire. His love of the mysterious drove him to probe Freemasonry. But it gave no further light than did the philosophers! *"A void full of sadness was growing in my soul"*, he wrote at the time. As a child, Theodore had been attracted by the mystery and beauty of created things. Now, it was his only source of solace. He recalls how one night, after lengthily contemplating the beauty of the stars, he cried aloud, *"O God, if you really exist, make the truth known to me and in advance, I swear that I will consecrate my life to it"*. Frozen with cold, he let himself fall *"on a dung heap, the exact picture"*, he later said, *"of my inner life"*.



Theodore as a young man

Second Journey to Paris: At this point, in 1822, Theodore decided to return to Paris to study Law, hoping that he might find something there to satisfy his heart and soul. Alone and without many friends, he fell in love with a young actress, Mlle. Duschenois, later to become quite a celebrity. Instinctively distrustful of the world of theatre, he refused a proposal of marriage and instead, immersed himself in the social world of Paris. His yearning for meaning and purpose in life, however, intensified. He felt irresistibly drawn back to Strasbourg where he was able to continue his studies in Law.

On 13th May 1823, a chance encounter at the University with a Jewish student, Jules Level, was to be pivotal in Theodore's life. Jules suggested that his friend might like to follow a Philosophy course being given by Louis Bautain, a renowned young University lecturer. Louis had been recently suspended from the University for his views on Rationalism and was giving private courses to a small group in the home of a certain Louise Humann, a learned and wise woman, then nearly sixty years of age.

Having regained his Christian faith through her assistance, Louis Bautain now had only one objective in life: to communicate the truth, as he saw it, to others. The group included an Irish Catholic, a Russian Orthodox and two Jews, Jules and Theodore; *"I accepted the invitation on the spot"*, he wrote, *"I knew philosophy was the only hope left to me. I had a horror of all religion, my own included"*. Theodore was spontaneously delighted by Bautain's simple, vibrant words. *"His teaching was like no other I had heard; it was an initiation into the mystery of the human person and of nature. We listened to the development of universal truth which the master derived from the living source of Sacred Scripture. This teaching did more than enlighten my intelligence; it warmed my heart. The influence of Christianity was fortunately enveloping me in every part of my being, otherwise I would not have had the courage to face it"*. Theodore had to struggle against his childhood prejudice towards religion. He recounts how, strangely, he believed in Jesus Christ yet was unable to understand the distinctive identities of Judaism and Christianity. Nor was he able to pronounce the Holy Name or to pray.

In the summer of 1825, while staying in a hotel in Switzerland, Theodore became very ill and thought he was about to die. *"My soul was engulfed in dark clouds. I did not know which God to pray to. I feared offending the God of Abraham but finally, grace won the day. The name, 'Jesus' came from my heart as a cry of distress"*. He returned to Strasbourg to finish his studies in Law. He was called to the Bar in Colmar but renounced his status as a barrister, just as he had renounced anything to do with Commerce. Instead, he devoted himself to the study of natural and medical Sciences so as to put his knowledge freely at the service of the poor. Meanwhile, his father, already concerned about the poverty of the Jews in Alsace, had founded schools for them which he put under his son's direction.



Louise Humann, aged 36 years.

Theodore meets Louise Humann: Along with a growing number of students, Theodore continued to attend Louis Bautain's courses, given in Louise's house in Strasbourg. Although she kept in the background, her extraordinary radiance did not go unnoticed for long. *"Her dignified and kindly manner made a deep impression on me"*, Theodore confessed. In the meantime, his family, anxious to see their son happily married, introduced him to a young Viennese lady whose name, family, fortune and other qualities greatly impressed him. After three months, however, Theodore could not bring himself to make a decision. He

recalled how one evening, feeling stifled inside, he went out for a walk, not looking in what direction he was going. Suddenly, a brilliant star seemed to detach itself from the sky and travel in the direction of Louise's house. He took it as an inspiration directing him there. *"I've come to ask your advice"*,

Theodore said to her, *"I am being urged to marry which would make me very happy but I cannot come to a clear decision"*. Her reply was simple and direct, *"Never make an important decision when you are unsettled and troubled. Ask for a further three months' grace. When you are calm again, you'll be able to decide"*. Theodore followed her advice.

Theodore is baptized. A new stage was opening in Theodore's life - a deep spiritual friendship between himself and Louise. Earlier in her life, this remarkable woman had taught herself both Hebrew and Greek in order to understand better the First and Second Testaments of the Bible in their original languages. Extremely cultured, she had already drawn Louis Bautain back to the faith. And now, Louise guided Theodore in a reading of Scripture, refusing to let him read the Gospels before he had finished the entire First Testament. *"Once I had"*, Theodore recounts, *"I opened the New Testament and could not stop until I had devoured the whole of Matthew's Gospel, in one sitting"*. Two years later, his dearest wish was granted on Holy Saturday, 14th April 1827. With the Bishop's consent, Louise herself baptized Theodore privately, without witnesses or any special ceremony. His family suspected that he had become Christian. Confronted by his father, the newly baptized gave a frank answer. Auguste was grief-stricken but later became reconciled to the reality. *"I had often written to my father and talked about Christianity with him. He had always listened with great interest, respecting my convictions"*, Theodore wrote in his Memoirs. His younger brother, Alphonse, however, remained hostile to his brother while his uncle Louis refused to speak to Theodore.



Studies for the Priesthood. From the moment of his baptism, this ardent young man felt a call to devote himself exclusively to the service of God and of others, by becoming a Catholic priest. He began his formation at the seminary, established by Monsignor de Trevern, Bishop of Strasbourg, in his own house at Molsheim, just 19 kms from Strasbourg. The Bishop wanted a dozen University men, chosen by him to complete their theological studies there. In this way, some able priests would be formed, he thought, capable of entering into polemics with Alsace's numerous Protestants. The group he singled out consisted of Louis Bautain and his disciples, including Theodore. This was a twofold error. The Bishop dispensed these young men from going through the senior Seminary of Strasbourg which made them suspect by the clergy of Alsace, themselves mostly from country areas, and the group themselves missed out on some important stages preparatory to ordination.

On 18th December 1830, Theodore was ordained a priest in the beautiful cathedral of Strasbourg. Unfortunately, illness prevented him from celebrating his first Mass until 6th January 1831. The Bishop offered Louis Bautain and his disciples the direction of the junior Seminary of St. Louis in Strasbourg, which is how they came to be known as "*Priests of St. Louis*". Theodore was put in charge of the younger students in the Junior Seminary. Soon after, he became responsible for the girls' catechism class at the Cathedral. Knowing his preference for pastoral ministry over teaching, the Bishop appointed Theodore as his curate, a plan, not regarded very favourably by Bautain. If Theodore suffered from this, on the other hand, he found great fulfillment in his parish duties.



Louis Bautain

The Priests of St. Louis are suspended. Just four years later, on 6th October 1834, a staggering blow struck the Community. Bautain and his group had their priestly faculties removed, except for the right to celebrate Mass. Some of the local clergy had lodged complaints against Bautain's philosophical teachings in which he played down the place of reason in the quest for God. Theodore had never taught philosophy so could have dissociated himself from the group. His fidelity to his 'brothers', however, would not allow him to abandon them at this time of trouble. To keep themselves occupied, the group founded schools in Strasbourg. Theodore gave himself wholeheartedly to the elementary class confided to

him. The group's disgrace was to last six long years. During this time of exile, with Louise's guidance, Theodore's trust and hope in God and his love of the Church never faltered. This period was made even sadder with Louise's death on 19th September 1836. Eventually, reconciliation came, thanks to the diplomacy of the new co-adjutor Bishop, Mgr. Raess, and the wise advice of two theologians who suggested that Bautain agree to retract some of his more extreme statements. He complied and the sanctions against the priests were withdrawn in September 1840. The group advised to leave Strasbourg and go to Paris where they were offered the direction of a College at Jully.

Turning Point for Theodore. Just as in Strasbourg, Theodore's pastoral enthusiasm needed more than the work in the College. On his arrival in Paris and with Bautain's agreement, Theodore accepted a pressing invitation from Fr. Dufriche-Desgenettes to become assistant director of the Archconfraternity of Mary at Notre Dame des Victoires parish, in the heart of Paris. Theodore was overjoyed to have an apostolate that expressed special devotion to Mary for whom he had great love. A year later, Fr. Desgenettes asked him to assume the responsibility of chaplaincy to an Orphanage of three hundred girls which the former had established. This house was run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The work responded to Theodore's love for the poor and for

children. *“La Providence was for me the school which provided the experience which until then I had not had”*, he wrote in his Memoirs. He was happy in the work, yet with the heart of a convert, his deepest yearning was always to work for his own People. The miraculous Apparition of Mary to Theodore’s younger brother, Alphonse on 20th January 1842 in Rome was a key moment for both brothers. Alphonse was brought to instant faith in Jesus Christ and within days was baptized Catholic. He urged his older brother to do something for poor Jewish families whose plight he had witnessed in Strasbourg and in Rome. Theodore accepted Alphonse’s idea as a confirmation of his own deepest wish but refused to undertake anything unless commissioned by the Church. A few months later, Alphonse began his training to become a Jesuit priest. Accompanied by Fr. Desgenettes, Theodore traveled to Rome to pray in the Church of St. Andrea delle Fratte before going to see the Pope. Gregory XVI confirmed him in his interpretation of the ‘sign’, and blessed the apostolate that the Church was confiding to him for his own Jewish People. According to the theology of that time, this apostolate meant prayer that they would accept Jesus as Messiah. Less than two months later, Theodore received a letter asking him to welcome the two young daughters of Madame Wurmser, a Hungarian Jewess, to Providence house. Her dying wish was that her little girls be reared Catholic. Needing some assistance, Theodore invited two women, Sophie Stouhlen and Louise Weywada who had assisted him in his parish work in Strasbourg, to join him in Paris for the new ‘Work’. Several other Jewish families also confided their children to Theodore, asking that they be baptized Catholic.



Alphonse Ratisbonne

The Beginnings of the Congregation. What name would Theodore give this ‘Work’? One thing was certain. It was Mary’s ‘Work’ and must be consecrated to Our Lady. Towards the end of this same year, 1843, while praying one morning in the Providence chapel, Theodore’s eyes fell on a book of the Psalms. Opening it, the first word that struck him was *‘Sion’* – the biblical name for Jerusalem. The name of the ‘Work’ would be *“Our Lady of Sion”*. Under Sophie’s direction, the women undertook the education of the young Jewish girls confided to them by their families. Very soon, these women were asking to make a commitment as religious. Theodore refused, feeling that he was not called to become the founder of a women’s religious Congregation. *“It had never occurred to me to found a community because I knew very little about religious Congregations”*, he wrote. Finally, he yielded to the women’s repeated requests and the first consecration, without vows, was made on 30th May 1846. In February 1847, the Brief arrived from Rome with an apostolic blessing *“for the members of the community properly established in Paris”*. Sixteen years later, in 1873, the definitive approbation of the Congregation was granted, to the great joy of Theodore and the Sisters.

The year, 1847 began with a heavy blow. The new founder was robbed by a dishonest lawyer of all the money he possessed, intended for the purchase of a property in Rue de Regard for the rapidly increasing family. For these women, financial hardship was a touchstone. It rooted their vocation in stringent poverty. Several others joined immediately which made extension of the Sisters' activities possible. The idea then arose of founding a boarding school for girls from Christian families. Theodore was concerned that the young neophytes were in danger of being too separated from Christian society. This venture, however, was not established until 1855. Although Theodore was being urged to send sisters to other large towns, both in France and beyond, he accepted one invitation only: to send a small community in 1847 to Thann, in Alsace. The school had been opened by a rich Protestant industrialist for the children of his factory workers, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. Theodore saw here the possibility of building up a connection with the Jews of Alsace. Unfortunately, this plan did not succeed and the house was closed two years later. The Sisters subsequently opened a day school in the Marais, the Jewish quarter of Paris. Soon however, Theodore realized that a larger place in Paris was vital to accommodate the growing number of sisters and children.



Theodore

Theodore's vision for the new Community. In 1853, a suitable property was purchased at 61 Rue Notre Dame des Champs, close to the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. There were now fifty-seven Sisters, distributed in three houses, and eighty neophytes. For Theodore, contemporary religious life was no more than the Christian life, lived in truth and perfection. This response to the Absolute was for him best summed up in the "*Sh'ma Israel*" which he loved to repeat. "*Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength*". He envisioned Sion's vocation simply as one of love. "*Above all, we must love the people of Israel*". His fundamental intuition was that Sion was called by the Church to keep alive, in a tangible way within the Church, God's continuing love for the Jewish people. He reminded the Sisters repeatedly of the Jewish roots of Christianity, and that Jesus, Son of Abraham, was born a Jew. "*The Old Law is to the New as the root is to the tree with all its branches, leaves and fruit. You cannot say that the crown of the tree disowns the root and the trunk. They are all one*".

It must be acknowledged that Theodore, in line with the Church theology of his time, was a long way from believing in the permanent vocation of the Jewish People and its significance for Christians. The Vatican II text, '*Nostra Aetate*', in 1965, has confirmed Sion in its vision to witness in the Church to God's faithful love of the Jewish People and to work for improved relations and dialogue between the two faith communities.

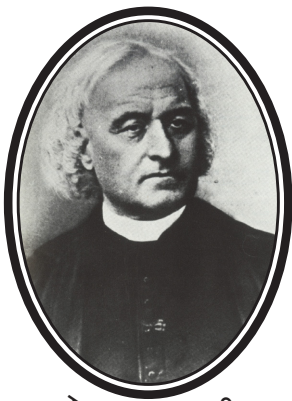
God is Love. Hardly any vocal prayers were asked of the Sisters. *“Pray to your Heavenly Father who knows better than you what you need... Repeat the words of the Our Father. Pause over each word. Nothing is as fruitful as the Words of Jesus Christ”*. Theodore’s direction was clear. Love of the Word of God led him to single out prayer of praise and of blessing. With his insistence on blessing, he called to mind the Jewish tradition which invites a person to bless God a hundred times a day for everything: every event and every encounter. To unify their prayer and action, he asked the Sisters to live in continual thanksgiving. *“All that matters is to love and give thanks all the time”*. Since blessing and thanksgiving are united in the Eucharist, Theodore wanted it to be central to the community. He directed the Sisters, right from the start, to study the First Testament, to learn the Psalms by heart and to honour Mary, as *the Daughter of Sion*, par excellence. The Sisters’ prayer, he believed, must be above all, biblical and the characteristic of life at Sion, ‘love’. Theodore would often repeat, *“To pray is to love. One can never love too much”*. Once, he exclaimed to the novices, *“I want you to have hearts bigger than the whole world. The heart expands in the flame of love and this flame must set other flames alight”*.

Jerusalem and Other Foundations: There was one place where Theodore wanted to send Sisters – Jerusalem. *“This holy place, chosen by God, is like a book where all the events of Sacred History are inscribed in living characters”*. ‘Next year Jerusalem’, was Theodore’s prayer, year after year, from the Congregation’s foundation. In 1852, in his eleventh year with the Jesuits, his brother, Alphonse, now an ordained priest, felt God’s call to join Theodore in the newly founded Sion Congregation. Alphonse willingly placed himself under Theodore’s direction. Two years later, he spoke to Theodore of his strong calling to spend the rest of his life in Jerusalem. Discerning God’s action in the request, Theodore agreed. Alphonse arrived in the Holy Land on 12th September 1855, to be followed on 6th May of the following year by four Sisters. Without any preparation or knowledge of the East, they had few material resources. Living in an unhealthy house in the souk, they were often ill. A month later, Alphonse left Jerusalem to go to Europe in search of money urgently needed to buy the ruins of *Ecce Homo* which had been discovered earlier that year. Theodore kept up constant correspondence with the four Sisters, and in November 1858, came himself to visit them. After Jerusalem, foundations in other countries followed.



Alphonse in Jerusalem

By preference, these were where there was a Jewish population: Jerusalem, Turkey, Romania, England, Hungary, Egypt, Tunisia, Austria-Hungary. Of the twenty-one foundations made in Theodore's life-time, several were in countries with a significant Moslem population. *"After Israel"*, according to Theodore, *"Ishmael had a privileged place in Sion"*. Foundations were also made in other countries with different Christian denominations. To the Sisters in England, he wrote, *"Reconciliation takes place according to the measure in which people draw closer to one another. Get to know and appreciate the other"*. The sisters also traveled far to establish schools in countries, such as Costa Rica, where there was urgent need for Christian education.



Theodore in 1878

Theodore's Final Years: The older he grew, the more Theodore loved to stay in the house in Grandbourg, an outer suburb of Paris, on the River Seine. There, he would contemplate nature. *"Prayer is everywhere in the grounds; each tree is a sermon, each blade of grass recounts some marvel"*, he wrote. He never lost his love of music. *"To find out if a person is good, it is important to find out if s/he loves music, flowers, birds and little children"*, he remarked one day. His unquenchable faith gave him a serenity which was probably the most outstanding characteristic of his personality, the older he grew. On the evening of 6th March 1876, when Theodore was a little more than seventy-three years old, he suffered a slight stroke that affected his left side and his speech. For some time, he was unable to celebrate Mass which was a great suffering for him. *"Illness is a visit from the Lord, it is a meeting, a communication with God. Fully accepted, it unites us to the cross, and the cross unites us to Jesus Christ"*, he told the Grandbourg community. After about four years, he recovered sufficiently to speak a little, celebrate Mass and move about, although his health had been impaired. On 27th December 1883, he received the first vows of Sr. Magdalena, in the Mother House Chapel in Paris and left early the next morning, saying he felt very tired. Serious difficulty in breathing gave cause for anxiety. On 5th January 1884, he received the Sacrament of the Sick and on 10th January, just before he died, he whispered his last words, *"Your Will be done, with love"*.

Theodore's tomb in the small cemetery at Grandbourg is a place of pilgrimage for Sisters, Brothers, Students and Friends of Sion who have come to love and admire this

holy man and want to learn more about his teachings, spirituality and wisdom. Sion now exists in twenty-two different countries in all six continents, with Sisters and Brothers working in various fields of education: theological, biblical, catechetical and pastoral, to recall to the Church the Jewish roots of Christianity, and that Jesus, Mary and the first Disciples were all Jewish, formed by the personalities, teachings and prayer of the Hebrew Bible. Members of the Sion family are also involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue, work for reconciliation and other ministries to combat any form of anti-Semitism, prejudice or injustice in society.

*“The older I get, the more I am convinced that
the Work of Sion is a pressing need for the present day”.*

Theodore Ratisbonne
1859

Patricia Watson, n.d.s.
Sisters of Our Lady of Sion
Australia/Philippines Province

March 2010

* Texts in italics have been taken from Theodore's 'Memoirs' and Other Writings,
edited by Sr. Marie Carmelle.

Chronology of Significant Events in Theodore's Life

- 1766, Sept.29 *Birth of Louise Humann*
- 1802, Dec.28 *Birth of Theodore in Strasbourg, France*
- 1818, Mar *Theodore goes to work in the Fould Bank, Paris*
- 1818, Dec. 8 *Theodore's mother dies*
- 1820 *Theodore returns to Strasbourg*
- 1823, May 13 *Theodore joins Louis Bautain's Philosophy Course*
- 1825 *Theodore is named Director of the Jewish Schools*
- 1826 *Theodore prepares for Baptism*
- 1827, Apr. 14 *Louise Humann baptizes Theodore*
- 1828, Oct *Theodore begins his Training to become a priest.*
- 1830, Oct. 31 *Theodore's father dies*
- 1830, Dec. 18 *Theodore is ordained to the priesthood in Strasbourg*
- 1831, Jan. 6 *Theodore celebrates his First Mass*
- 1836, Sept. 19 *Death of Louise Humann*
- 1840 *Priests of St. Louis move to Paris*
- 1841 *Theodore is given charge of the Arch-confraternity of Prayer*
- 1842, Jan. 20 *Alphonse has an Apparition of Mary in Rome*
- “ Jan. 31 *Alphonse is baptized Catholic*
- “ Jun. 20 *Alphonse enters the Jesuit Novitiate in Toulouse, France*
- “ Jun. *Theodore travels to Rome to see Pope Gregory XVI*
- 1843, Apr. *Sophie and Louise arrive in Paris to help Theodore*
- 1847, May *The women take vows as Religious of Our Lady of Sion*
- 1852, Dec. *Alphonse receives a dispensation from the Jesuits. He asks to join Sion and lives with Theodore in Paris.*
- 1855 *Alphonse goes to Jerusalem, followed by Sisters the next year*
- 1876, Mar 6 *Theodore suffers a stroke and is unable to celebrate Mass*
- 1884, Jan. 10 *Theodore dies in Paris, France*

*Thanks to Elizabeth Losinski, n.d.s. for her
assistance in compiling this chronology*



