STADTAMHOF is a small town on the Danube River in the south of Germany. Here, a little girl named CAROLINE was born, June 20, 1797.

Her eyes were clear and blue, like the Danube water. Her Father, a Ship-master, ran his boat up and down the river for trade.
At home, her mother raised fruits and vegetables in the back yard and kept the accounts for her husband. Little Caroline grew up in the gentle nature of the Danube and in the loving care of her good parents.
"Oh, Papa look - the Cathedral tower! And the bishop's house too. Where do these waters come from? Where do they go? I want to go there on your ship. Please take me with you. When I get big? Promise me!"
Across the Danube River is the largest city of Regensburg with its magnificent Cathedral, its seminary, and many tall buildings.

The ancient stone bridge between Stadtamhof and Regensburg is 300 meters long. Remaining just as it was ages ago, it speaks to the people of this city’s history.
Besides her father and mother, there was another person Caroline loved very much. This was Father Wittmann, pastor of the Regensburg across the river. He was a professor at the seminary and a close friend of Caroline's father.
Caroline used to go to chapel for prayer, led by his hand.  
She knew he had a great love for children. He always helped the poor and the weak.  
She wanted to be just like him.
When she was six, Caroline started grade school. At that time, black-veiled Sisters used to teach at the Notre Dame school in Stadtamhof. Caroline was happy to get so many new friends all at once. She loved studying and playing together.
In those days, pupils who learned easily were quickly moved to upper grades. Caroline was one of those. She received her First Communion at age nine, along with her classmates who were three years older.
It was the night of April 23, 1809. Napoleon's army, in pursuit of the Austrian troops, bombarded Regensburg and burned the city. Caroline and her father watched from their attic window. She was not quite 12 years old when she saw these horrible scenes. They became engraved in her heart for the rest of her life.
She saw the ugliness of war so clearly. With people hating each other, attacking and destroying each other, there could be no peaceful world. What could be done? It was really a big problem for young Caroline.
A storm of violence spread over Europe while Caroline was growing up. Terrible events like the French Revolution and Napoleon’s wars took place one after then other. People’s hearts became wild. Churches and all their properties were seized, while monasteries, convents and schools had to close.
At Stadtamhof, too, the Notre Dame school was shut and the Sisters sent away. It was August 30, 1809, just before Caroline graduated.

"Why did the townspeople drive the Sisters away? Will they never come back? What will happen to the school now? Who will teach?" Caroline's heart grieved. But it was Father Wittmann who worried most. "What could be done?"
He thought and prayed over and over, until an idea struck him. "We can train some graduates! Then, as soon as a new, free age returns, these teachers can begin a new order of school Sisters for educating children."
Caroline was one of the three chosen by Father Wittmann. When she heard about this from her father, she said: "No, Papa, I have no wish to become a teacher. Please, do not spoil my dream!"
"Well, then, what is it you want to be?"
"After graduation, I will be your helper and go everywhere with you. Up the Danube River there are beautiful mountains and forests I want to see. Down the Danube, I can visit the homes of noble women and go to the Cathedral consecrated to our lady. I will help Mama too, with the cooking and gardening and bookkeeping. I don't want to be shut into a dark classroom, Papa!"
"Caroline, please listen to what I am going to say. I am sure you still remember well the sight of burning Regensburg. People all over the world suffer very much in these times. To make a better world, we have to give good education to the young. But little children have no school to go to in this town. That is why Father Wittmann took charge and is asking your help to make the world better. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Papa is proud of you, Caroline."
"But - how about our trip...?"
"Trip? Ah, we can go on trips together many times, even if you become a teacher. You can help your Mama, too.
Yes, let's go on a trip right after your graduation. The world is big, Caroline, and your dream, too, will grow bigger because it is God's work to make the world better."
After graduation and coming back from a pleasant trip with her father, Caroline started teaching little children. Her preparation for becoming a teacher was under the guidance of Father Wittmann. Soon, the classroom they were using in an old convent building was taken over by the government. Then they got the use of one room in a hospital. There, with a goat bleating away in a corner, classes were held.
The children loved this little teacher, only 12 years old. They called her "Miss Caroline" and obeyed her well. After three years of practice teaching, Caroline took the government examinations along with the other girls. They all passed successfully, receiving public certification as "Royal teacher in the King's school for girls." It was 1812, when Caroline was 15 years old.
Although she was young, Caroline was an excellent teacher. She understood Father Wittmann's words, and practiced them: "A good teacher finds wonderful points in children and helps them to discover these good points in themselves, so that she can help them grow."
Father Wittmann was happy for her success and often he brought visitors to her class. Even people at a great distance would send their children to the school. They had heard about its firm religious and moral education.
When she was 18 years old, Caroline made a resolution to offer her life to education, so she started her preparation for the religious life. She also made plans for a new order and school according to Father Wittmann’s ideal. But people in the town opposed the plan severely, afraid of its expense. They even abused Caroline and her friends by throwing stones to show their opposition.
"God's work will be accomplished without failing." Saying this, Father Wittmann would always encourage Caroline. But after he became Bishop, he died.
Losing the director she had depended on, having no money, receiving resistance from the townspeople -- how could she ever make a new religious order and school? Was it only a beautiful dream? Her friends who had started with her left at this time.
Caroline was left alone, but she still prayed that the work which Bishop Wittmann had left for her would be accomplished if it was God's work. The person who helped Caroline at this hard time was Father Sebastian Job.
A good friend of Father Wittmann’s, he was in the service of the Austrian court. Young girls whom Caroline had taught came and joined her as new members. In this way a new Notre Dame convent and school were born through Father Job’s aid in Neunburg vorm Wald, his native town.
In 1835, Caroline solemnly promised to serve God all her life. The Church accepted her vows, and she received a new name -- "Mary Theresa of Jesus." Since then she has been called "Mother Theresa."
Around this time the Industrial Revolution, which had started in England, spread out over all of Europe.
The new congregation of Notre Dame, founded according to Bishop Wittmann's plan, met the needs of this new age. Instead of the old ways of teaching children in convents, Sisters went out in twos and threes to small villages and poor country areas far apart. They tried their best to see that orphans, children whose mothers were working, and girls who had to work all day in factories, could receive warm care and good education.
Girls came to enter the order, knowing the works of this new Notre Dame which Mother Theresa had founded. Mother trained these girls to become good teachers, as Father Wittmann had trained little Caroline.
So the number of Sisters increased, and the order spread out over all of Europe.
In 1847, Sisters traveled over the ocean and came to America. In those days, the children of many German immigrants were left without education. Especially for orphans and the poor, it was very difficult to find teachers. The church in America had a growing desire to have German Sisters for these children’s education. In answer to the need, Mother Theresa set out for America with four Sisters and one Novice.
Quite different from now, sailing to another continent was a very long and painful trip in those days. They met storms several times. People felt more dead than alive. Finally, the ship arrived in New York harbor. More than a month after they had left Germany, the Sisters set foot in America.
At that time much of the land in America was still wild and uncultivated. The Sisters suffered much from the severe climate, from insufficient food and clothing. Moreover, people were often rough and harsh from their daily labor or from their own struggle to live in a new land. The Sisters were often misunderstood, sometimes even persecuted and deceived.
Yet Mother Theresa worked cheerfully with her Sisters. They taught reading and writing to those too poor to study. The Sisters also took care of the children who lost their parents. When asked, Sisters went to remote villages traveling miles by covered wagon. Mother worked an entire year with her Sisters in America. Then, having established these new ways of serving children and the poor, she went back to Europe.
It was not long after the end of World War II, in 1948, when Mother Theresa’s dream was carried all the way across the Pacific Ocean, to Japan. Even then, Japan was still in the agony of defeat. But fortunately, the ancient city of Kyoto had been spared the heavy damages of war.
Four sisters from America arrived in Kyoto and started working there. They devoted themselves to the rebuilding of the country, cooperating with the Japanese people.
When Mother Theresa was 82 years old, she went back to God, whom she had loved and served all her life. The Dream of little Caroline, born near the Danube River, had spread out over all the world. Its fruits were thousands of Sisters, all working to make children happy. Mother Theresa had said: "Let's go wherever God calls us." Inheriting her heart, her Sisters today are in 32 countries all over the world.
It was Mother Theresa's wish that all children on earth should receive warm care, be happy, and grow up to be loving persons. She made every effort to make this wish come true, overcoming many difficulties to sow her seeds of love. So the Church recognized and honored her, proclaiming to the entire world that Mother Theresa is a model for all people.
Today, we can call her "Blessed."