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TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Feast Day: September 5

Canonized: September 4, 2016

Beatified: October 19, 2003

Venerated: December 20, 2002

On August 26, 1910, Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Macedonia. As a young girl she was very involved in parish activities, and her mother told her many stories of missionaries, who inspired her greatly. In 1928, at age 18, Agnes joined the missionary order of the Sisters of Loreto in Dublin, Ireland. There she was given the name Sister Mary Teresa.

As a young Sister in 1929 she traveled to Calcutta (today known as Kolkata), India, to teach at a school for girls. She continued to teach at various schools in India for 20 years. During that time, she was deeply moved by the number of sick and dying people on the streets.



On September 10, 1946, while traveling by train to Darjeeling, Sister Mary Teresa experienced a “call within a call.” She felt called to be God’s love in action: to serve the sick and dying, the hungry and homeless.

She received permission to leave the Loreto convent. Then she sought medical training and became determined to serve the poorest of the poor.

Eventually, she was joined by other women. Some of these women were her former students and they helped her serve the poor. In 1950 she established an order of religious women called the Missionaries of Charity.

Over time the Missionaries of Charity have built centers throughout the world. In 1979 Mother Teresa, as she was known by then, received the Nobel Peace Prize. She captivated the world as few other people have. Her simple message was: “We are put on earth to do something beautiful for God.”

Pope John Paul II chose October 19, 2003, as the date for the beatification of Mother Teresa. The ceremony was a celebration for the entire world. Mother Teresa’s life of holiness is respected on a global scale. Her example of humble and loving service is admired by millions of people.

The process that led to Mother’s Teresa’s beatification was the shortest in modern history. Ordinarily, the cause for beatification cannot begin until five year’s after the candidate’s death. However, Pope John Paul II advanced the cause of Mother Teresa soon after her death on September 5, 1997. The pope explained that he was making an exception because of widespread admiration for the tiny nun.

Mother Teresa’s spiritual vitality can be described with these words. “Don’t search for God in faraway lands. He is not there. He is close to you. He is with you. Just keep that lamp burning, and you will always see him.”