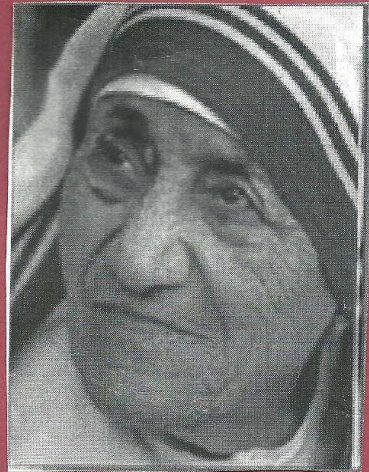


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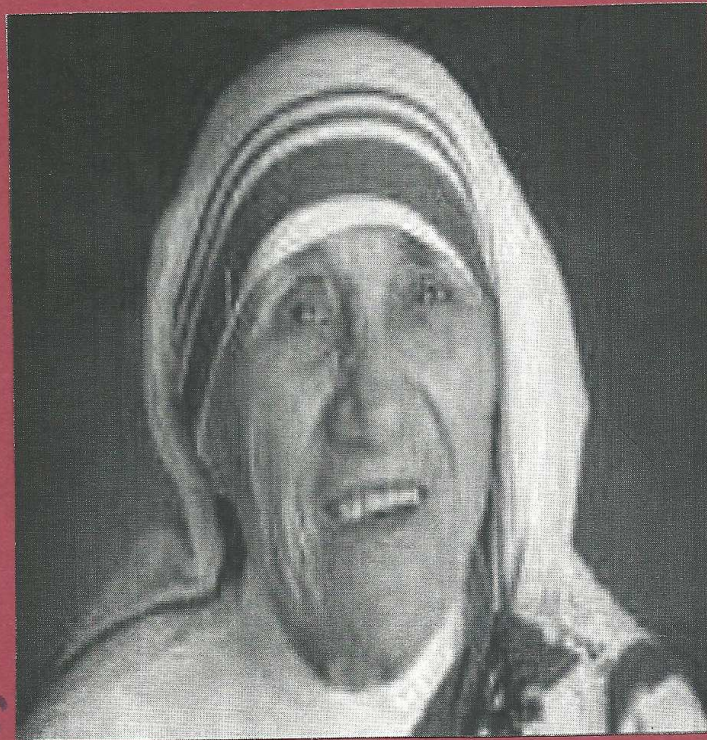


Mother Teresa

Nobel Peace Prize 1979

29/09/15

By
Irene
Kagianni
&
Vasilis
Katsinas



Mother Teresa

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, commonly known as **Mother Teresa** (26 August 1910 - 5 September 1997), was a Roman Catholic religious sister and missionary. She was born in Skopje, Macedonia (then still in the Ottoman Empire) with her family being of Kosovar Albanian ancestry. After having lived in Yugoslavia for some thirty years, she moved to India, where she lived for most of her life.

Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation, which in 2012 consisted of over 4,500 sisters and is active in 133 countries. They run hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's and family counselling programmes; orphanages; and schools. Members must adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience as well as a fourth vow, to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor".

Mother Teresa was the recipient of numerous honours including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. In 2003, she was beatified as "Blessed Teresa of Calcutta". A second miracle credited to her intercession is required before she can be recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church.

A controversial figure both during her life and after her death, Mother Teresa was widely admired by many for her charitable works, but also widely criticised, particularly for her efforts opposing contraception and for substandard conditions in the hospices for which she was responsible.

Early Life

Born Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu meaning "rosebud" or "little flower" in Albanian) on 26 August 1910, she considered 27 August, the day she was baptised, to be her "true birthday". Her birthplace of Skopje, now capital of the Republic of Macedonia, was then part of the Ottoman Empire until 1918, when it became a part of Yugoslavia. Her family continued to live in Skopje until 1934, when they moved to Tirana.

She was the youngest of the children of Nikollë and Dranfile Bojaxhiu (Bernai). Her father, who was involved in Albanian politics, died in 1919 when she was eight years old. Her father may have been from Prizren, Kosovo while her mother may have been from a village near Gjakova.

According to a biography written by Joan Graff Lucas, in her early years Agnes was fascinated by stories of the lives of missionaries and their service in Bengal, and by age 12 had become convinced that she should commit herself to a religious life. Her final resolution was taken on 15 August 1928, while praying at the shrine of the Black Madonna of Letnice, where she often went on pilgrimage.

She left home at age 18 to join the Sisters of Loreto as a missionary. She never again saw her mother or sister.

Agnes initially went to the Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham, Ireland, to learn English, the language the Sisters of Loreto used to teach school children in India. She arrived in India in 1929, and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, near the Himalayan mountains, where she learnt Bengali and taught at the St. Teresa's School, a schoolhouse close to her convent. She took her first religious vows as a nun on 24 May 1931. At that time she chose to be named after Thérèse de Lisieux, the patron saint of missionaries, but because one nun in the convent had already chosen that name, Agnes opted for the Spanish spelling Teresa.

She took her solemn vows on 14 May 1937, while serving as a teacher at the Loreto convent school in Entally, eastern Calcutta. Teresa served

there for almost twenty years and in 1944 was appointed headmistress. Although Teresa enjoyed teaching at the school, she was increasingly disturbed by the poverty surrounding her in Calcutta. The Bengal famine of 1943 brought misery and death to the city; and the outbreak of Hindu/Muslim violence in August 1946 plunged the city into despair and horror.

Declining health and death

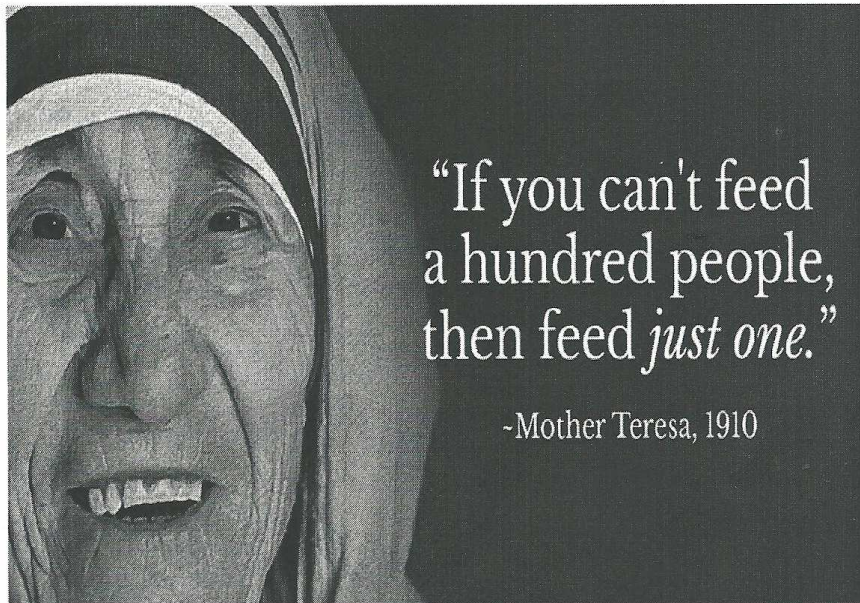
Mother Teresa suffered a heart attack in Rome in 1983 while visiting Pope John Paul II. After a second attack in 1989, she received an artificial pacemaker. In 1991, after a battle with pneumonia while in Mexico, she suffered further heart problems. She offered to resign her position as head of the Missionaries of Charity, but the sisters of the congregation, in a secret ballot, voted for her to stay. Mother Teresa agreed to continue her work as head of the congregation.

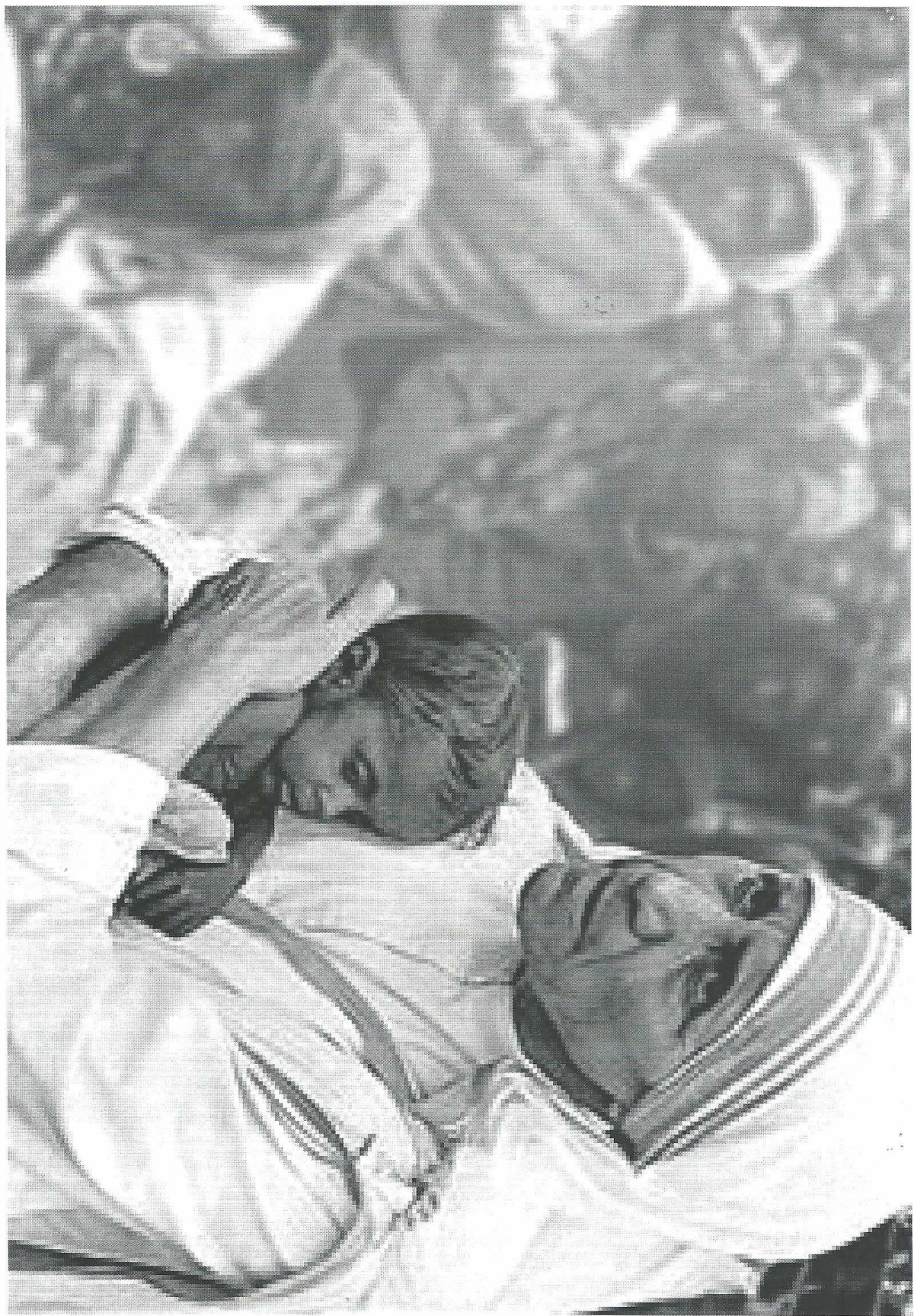
In April 1996, Mother Teresa fell and broke her collar bone. In August she suffered from malaria and failure of the left heart ventricle. She had heart surgery but it was clear that her health was declining. The Archbishop of Calcutta, Henry Sebastian D'Souza, said he ordered a priest to perform an exorcism on Mother Teresa with her permission when she was first hospitalised with cardiac problems because he thought she may be under attack by the devil.

On 13 March 1997, she stepped down from the head of Missionaries of Charity. She died on 5 September 1997.

At the time of her death, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity had over 4,000 sisters, and an associated brotherhood of 300 members, operating 610 missions in 123 countries. These included hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's and family counselling programs, personal helpers, orphanages, and schools. The Missionaries of Charity were also aided by Co-Workers, who numbered over 1 million by the 1990s.

Mother Teresa lay in repose in St Thomas, Calcutta for one week prior to her funeral, in September 1997. She was granted a state funeral by the Indian government in gratitude for her services to the poor of all religions in India. Her death was mourned in both secular and religious communities. In tribute, Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of Pakistan said that she was "a rare and unique individual who lived long for higher purposes. Her life-long devotion to the care of the poor, the sick, and the disadvantaged was one of the highest examples of service to our humanity. The former U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said: "She is the United Nations. She is peace in the world."







Irene Kagianni

Vasilis Katsinas