



### **September - Mother Saint Teresa of Calcutta**

Mother Saint Teresa of Calcutta is one of the greatest humanitarians of the Twentieth Century. She is admired and renowned worldwide for her devotion, service and healing of the poorest of the poor around the world. Agnes Bojaxhui was born in 1910 in Skopje, (North Macedonia). She joined the Loretta Sisters in Ireland at age 18 years old, to fulfil her wish to help the poor. She was posted to Darjeeling and then Calcutta, where she taught at two private schools for about twenty years. She took her vows in India, changed her name to Teresa, to imitate St. Teresa Lisieux, and learned Bengali.

It was during a train ride out of Calcutta that she is said to have a "call within a call from Jesus" asking her to help the poor and destitute she could see in the slums outside.

Teresa then traded her habit for a cotton, blue bordered white sari and began her mission on the streets. Her life was fraught with hardships, as she walked to beg for food and clothing. Having no income, Sister Teresa was constantly doubting her abilities, her faith and was deeply lonely, sometimes tempted to return to the convent. In 1950, Pope XII granted her permission to begin her charities. She then took up Indian citizenship, spent a month in a hospital learning the basics of medical training and with a group of women, opened up the first slum school-in an abandoned temple.

Her fame and hard work attracted donations, which helped her open up the Missionary House of Charity, a religious institute for women, which is now in over 133 countries. They obey vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and service to the poor.

The congregation manages homes for people with HIV/ AIDS, leprosy, and TB.

It also runs soup kitchens, dispensaries, mobile clinics, children and family counselling programs as well as orphanages and schools, from New York, through Africa, South America to Europe. In 1963 the Corpus Christ Movement for priests and Missions of Charity Fathers was formed to invite priests to support her cause.

Mother Teresa was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize (1979), the Ramon Magsaysay and Templeton Award (1962) the Bharat Ratana award, the highest civil award (1980), Nehru Prize for International Understanding (1972) Pope John XXIII Peace Prize (1971), and many honorary degrees from universities for promoting humanity, peace and brotherhood.

Mother Teresa visited many countries to share her empathy with the suffering, including Chernobyl. Albania after the earthquake, and even brokered peace in the Beirut war, long enough to rescue some children from the war zone.

After two heart attacks, failing health and pneumonia, Mother Teresa died in September 1997. She was honoured with a state funeral to which most world-wide dignitaries attended, including from the UN and Papal envoys.

Mother Saint Teresa was canonized on September 4, 2016 and is the Patroness of Missions, co-patron of the Archdiocese of Calcutta with St. Francis Xavier and the patron of World Youth Day.

Do little things with great love.

**Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Pray for us!**

**Feast Day 5 September**