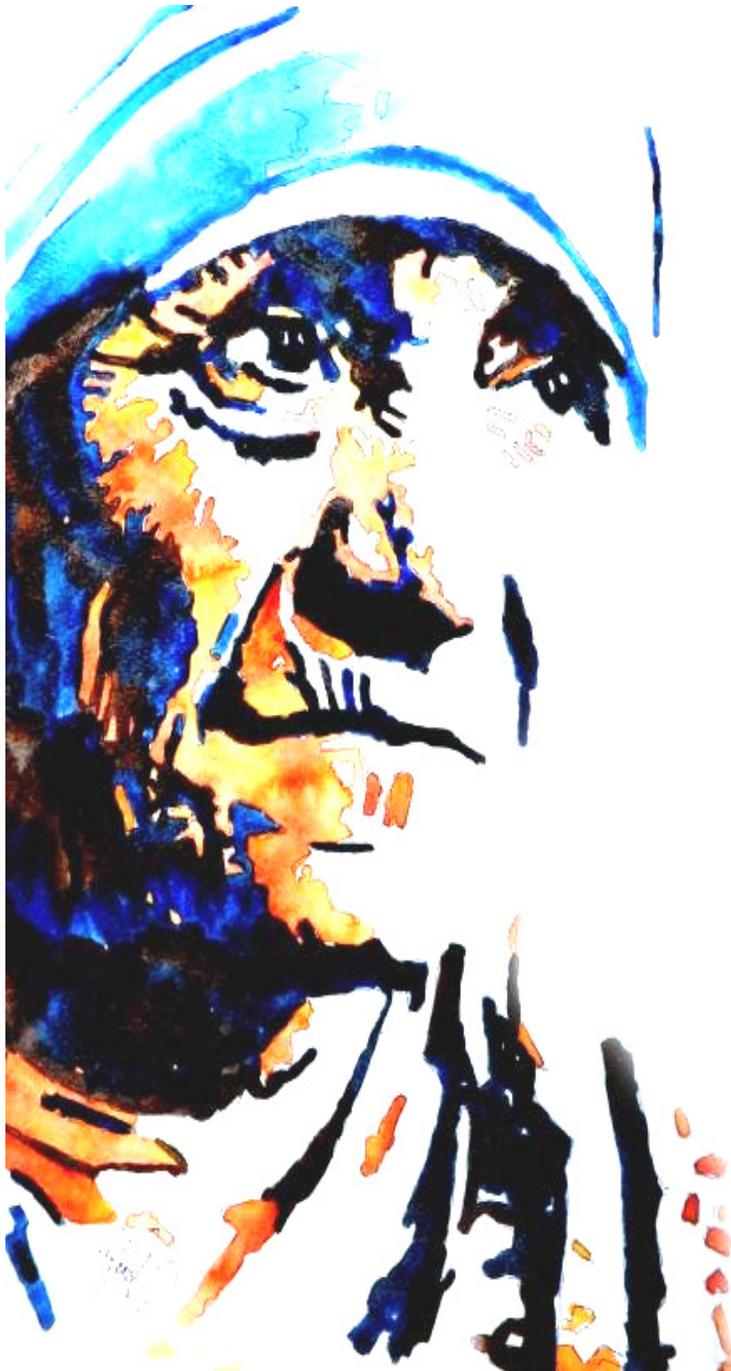




## **Bl. Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)**



**History:** Mother Teresa, born on August 27, 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, was the youngest of the three daughters born to Nikola and Drana Bojaxhiu. She received her First Holy Communion at the age of five and from that day, a love for souls was within her. Her father's sudden death when Gonxha was about eight years old left the family in financial straits. Drana raised her children firmly and lovingly, greatly influencing her daughter's character and vocation. Gonxha's religious formation was further assisted by the vibrant Jesuit parish of the Sacred Heart in which she was much involved- especially the choir.

**Called to Religious Life:** At the age of twelve, during an annual pilgrimage to the chapel of the Madonna of Letnice in Skopje, little Agnes first felt a calling to a religious life. She decided that she wanted to be a missionary and spread the love of Christ. At the age of 18 she left her parental home in Skopje and joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns with missions in India. There she received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Thérèse of Lisieux. She arrived in India in 1929, and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, India. In 1931, Sr. Teresa took her initial vows as a nun and in May 1937 and her final profession of vows at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta India while serving as a teacher at St. Mary's School for girls. Sr. Teresa served there for almost twenty years and in 1944 was appointed headmistress. A person of profound prayer and



deep love for her religious sisters and her students, Mother Teresa's years in the convent were filled with profound happiness. Noted for her capacity for hard work and a natural talent for organization, she lived out her consecration to Jesus. On 10 September 1946 during the train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat, Sr. Teresa received her "inspiration," her "call within a call." Over the course of couple of weeks and months, Jesus revealed to her the desire of His heart -He revealed His pain at the neglect of the poor, His sorrow at their ignorance of Him and His longing for their love. He asked her to establish a religious community, dedicated to the service of the poorest of the poor. After two years of testing and discernment, on August 17, 1948, she dressed for the first time in a white & blue-bordered sari and passed through the gates of her beloved Loreto convent to enter the world of the poor.

**Through the Streets of Calcutta:** After a short course with the Medical Mission Sisters in Patna, Mother Teresa returned to Calcutta and found temporary lodging with the Little Sisters of the Poor. She went to the slums with just five rupees in her pocket. She visited families, washed the sores of some children, cared for an old man lying sick on the road and nursed a woman dying of hunger and TB. She started each day in communion with Jesus in the Eucharist and then went out with rosary in her hand, to find and serve Him in "the unwanted, the unloved and the uncared for." After some months, she was joined by her former students one by one. She found a never-ending stream of human needs in the poor she met, and frequently was exhausted. Despite the weariness of her days she never omitted her prayer, finding it the source of support, strength and blessing for her ministry. On 7 October 1950 the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. They all took the vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. But Mother Teresa added one more vow to her order: the vow to give free service to the poorest of the poor. The order grew rapidly and by the early 1960s, Mother Teresa began to send her Sisters to other parts of India. The Decree of Praise granted to the Congregation by Pope Paul VI in February 1965 encouraged her to open a house in Venezuela. It was soon followed by foundations in Rome and Tanzania and, eventually, on every continent. Starting in 1980 and continuing through the 1990s, Mother Teresa opened houses in almost all of the communist countries, including the former Soviet Union, Albania and Cuba. On February 5, 1952 the Missionaries of Charity moved into the main house of the order given by the Government of India. From here Mother Teresa witnessed people who were dying in the streets, unattended and unwanted. She decided to open a home for these people and located a building close to a temple on the Ganges River and despite heated arguments; the authorities relented and gave her permission to use this building which came to be called *Kalighat*, the House of the Destitute and Dying.

The whole of Mother Teresa's life and labour bore witness to the joy of loving, the greatness and dignity of every human person, the value of little things done faithfully and with love, and the surpassing worth of friendship with God. On March 13, 1997, Mother Teresa stepped down as the head of Missionaries of Charity and she passed away on September 5, 1997, just 9 days after her 87th birthday. She was given the honour of a state funeral by the Government of India and her body was buried in the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity. Her tomb quickly became a place of pilgrimage and prayer for people of all faiths, rich and poor alike. **She was beatified on 19 October 2003 by then Pope John Paul II and was given the title -Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. Mother Teresa left a testament of unshakable faith, invincible hope and extraordinary charity.** She was a soul filled with the light of Christ, on fire with love for Him and burning with one desire: *"to quench His thirst for love and for souls."*





### # Week 1

#### *Quote of the Blessed*

*"By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus."*

#### *Prayer by the Blessed*

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. Amen

### #Week 2

#### *Quote of the Blessed*

*"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love and if we really want to love we must learn how to forgive."*

#### *Prayer by the Blessed*

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellowmen throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love give them peace and joy. Amen.

### #Week 3

#### *Quote of the Blessed*

*"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts."*

#### *Prayer by the Blessed*

(Mother Teresa composed this prayer for the United Nations International Year of the Family)

Heavenly Father, you have given us a model of life in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Help us, O loving Father to make our family another Nazareth where love, peace and joy reign. May it be deeply contemplative, intensely Eucharistic and vibrant with joy. Help us to stay together in joy and sorrow through family prayer. Teach us to see Jesus in the members of our family especially in their distressing disguise. May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus make our hearts meek and humble like His and help us to carry out our family duties in a holy way. May we love one another as God loves each one of us more and more each day, and forgive each other's faults as You forgive our sins. Help us, O loving Father to take whatever You give and to give whatever You take with a big smile. Immaculate Heart of Mary, cause of our joy, pray for us. St. Joseph, pray for us. Holy Guardian Angels be always with us, guide and protect us. Amen.



#### **#Week 4**

##### ***Quote of the Blessed***

*"If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are."*

##### ***Prayer to the Blessed***

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, you allowed the thirsting love of Jesus on the Cross to become a living flame within you, and so became the light of His love to all. Obtain from the Heart of Jesus (here make your request). Teach me to allow Jesus to penetrate and possess my whole being so completely that my life, too, may radiate His light and love to others. Amen. Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cause of Our Joy, pray for me. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, pray for me.

#### **#Week 5**

##### ***Quote of the Blessed***

*"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things. God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try."*

##### ***Prayer to the Blessed***

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, longing to love Jesus as He had never been loved before, you gave yourself entirely to Him, refusing Him nothing. In union with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, you accepted His call to satiate His infinite thirst for love and souls and become a carrier of His love to the poorest of the poor. With loving trust and total surrender you fulfilled His will, witnessing to the joy of belonging totally to Him. You became so intimately united to Jesus your crucified Spouse that He deigned to share with you the agony of His Heart as He hung upon the Cross. Blessed Teresa, you promised to continuously bring the light of love to those on earth; pray for us that we also may long to satiate the burning thirst of Jesus by loving Him ardently, sharing in His sufferings joyfully, and serving Him wholeheartedly in our brothers and sisters, especially those most unloved and unwanted. Amen

