

The Luminous Life of Mother Teresa

Name – Not given

Seeing the unwanted children, the old, the crippled and destitute on the streets of Calcutta the Albanian born Mother was really moved.

She was saying to herself that something concrete must be done in order to help these people. She said “The biggest disease is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for deserted by everybody. The greatest evil is the lack of love and charity, the terrible indifference towards one’s neighbor who lies at the roadside assaulted by exploitation, corruption, poverty and disease.

The nuns in white sarees with blue borders are well known throughout the world. They belong to the Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa, the ever smiling and soft spoken old woman with youthful enthusiasm was a symbol of charity. At age 18, she left her family to become a missionary. She subsequently arrived in India where on May 24, 1931, she took her initial vows a nun.

Between 1931 and 1948, she taught at St. Mary’s High School in Kolkata before, moved by the poverty and illness around, she took leave to serve the poor in the city’s slums in the beginning of 1949, she was joined in her effort by a group of young women and laid the foundations to create a new religious community helping the “poorest among the poor”. Her efforts quickly caught the attention of Indian officials, including the Prime Minister, who expressed his appreciation.

Teresa wrote in her diary that her first year was fraught with difficulties. She had no income and had to resort to begging for food and supplies. Teresa experiences doubt, loneliness and the temptation to return to the comfort of convent life during these early months. When in 1996, her health started to fail seriously due to her heart getting worn out by love and action. She expressed the wish not to continue. On March 13, 1997 the assembly of Sisters elected Sister Nirmala to continue the beautiful work, for the love of Jesus. On September,5, 1997 at the age of 87, the best loved women of the century passed away, after her prolonged illness and a heart attack. Her funeral service was held on September, 13, 1997. It was also the 51st anniversary of her receiving her divine. About hundred nuns of the Missionaries of Charity, wearing their traditional blue trimmed sarees, fathered around the

flower covered grave, in a former dining hall of the convent, where Mother Teresa lived.

In 1971, Paul VI awarded her the first Pope John XXIII peace prize, commending her for her work with the poor, display of Christina charity and efforts for peace. She later received the Pacem in Terris Award (1976) and many more Awards for her works. Since her death, Mother Teresa has progressed rapidly along with steps towards sainthood, currently having reached the stage of having been beatified.
