Mother Teresa
A Saint from Skopje

Hiromi Josepha Kudo Ph.D.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Acknowledgements**-9  
**Foreword**-11  
**Foreword to the Digitalized Version of this Book**-13  
**Preface**-19

## Chapter I: Early Life in Skopje-34
- Birthplace, Historical Background, and Youth-34  
- Preliminary Procedure-35  
- Problems and Sources-36  
- Albanians in Macedonia and Mother Teresa’s family background-42  
- Mother’s Relationship to Skopje-47  
- Population and Conflicts-51  
- East-West Religious Conflicts and Discriminatory Political Policies-53  
- Her Mother Drona’s influence and the Love of Neighbors-59  
- Ethnic Conflicts and Language Issues-66  
- The Effect of her Father’s Death-68  
- Regional Conflicts of the Albanians-74  
- Mother Teresa and St. Francis of Assisi-79  
- India and the Jesuits-86  
- Mother Teresa’s Family—Torn by walls between States-88

## Chapter II: Religious Life in India and Mother’s Second Vocation-92
- Living well with differences-92  
- Conducting Interviews and obtaining of Data-92  
- The Loretta Congregation that Mother Teresa joined-93  
- Mother’s Novitiate and the influence of St. Therese of Lisieux-98  
- Saint Therese of Lisieux-100  
- Mother Teresa and the Little Way of St. Therese-102  
- Beatification and Canonization-96  
- The Carmel order and Mother Teresa-108  
- Appropriate Categorization of Mother’s Activity-111  
- Missionaries of Charity as Contemplatives in Action-117
Life at St. Mary’s School and Inculturation-120
The Second World War and Independence of India-125
Mother’s Second Vocation-134
Mother Teresa and the Five Jesuits-140
The Gamble of Archbishop Perrier-141
Beginning of the Missionaries of Charity-147

**Chapter III: Principal Activities-161**
The Mother House-161
Shishu Bhawan-164
Prem Dan-168
Gandhiji Prem Nivas–The Home for Leprosy Patients-170
Shanti Dan–The Comprehensive Institution-172
Nirmal Hriday-172
Criticisms against Mother and her Activities-176
Criticisms against Mother’s Christian Mission-178

**Chapter IV: Mother Teresa and Her Adopted Homeland of India- 183**
The Great Indian Vote-184
Who is an Indian-192
The Indian People’s Feelings toward Mother Teresa-187
The Catholic Church and Hinduism-188
Tolerance and Reconciliation in the Ellora Cave Temples-192
History and the Background of Religious Disputes-193
Trust between a Hindu Believer and Mother Teresa-195
Mother Teresa as an Incarnation of a Goddess-196
Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi-200

**Chapter V: Reflections on the Dark Night of Mother Teresa-207**
The Dark Night-207
Psychology of the Dark Night-209
The Dark Night under the Sway of the Divine Will-211
The Spiritual Directors-213
Ten years of Active Purification-215
Fr. Celeste Van Exem—Mother Teresa’s lifelong Spiritual Director-218
Burning of the Documents of 45 Years-219
Principal Events in the Life of Mother Teresa and Her Dark Night-223

Appendices: 227

Appendix 1. God’s Plan and Mine-227
Appendix 2. The Carmelite Sisters and Myself-229
Appendix 3. My First meeting with Mother Teresa-231
Appendix 4. Mother Teresa’s Letter to Archbishop Perrier-233
Appendix 5. Letter of Mother Teresa to President George Bush and President Saddam Hussein-238
Appendix 6. Two who offered their lives for Mother Teresa-240
Appendix 7. The Baptism of my mother and myself-242
Appendix 8. Ancient Scriptures of Hinduism-244
Appendix 9. Volunteers see Poverty as Richness-246
Letter of Archbishop Thomas D'souza-249
Letter of Fr. Marc Lindeijer, SJ-250
Articles Concerning Fr. Van Exem-251-252

References and Bibliography- 253
Nov. 7, 2005

To Dr. Hireni J. Kudo,
Fr. Cyril Velinth, S.J.
and Dr. Diona Lakinska.

with warmest congratulations,
warmest wishes and prayers
so that the research on Mother
Teresa may be widely read,
deepliy understood and become
the inspiration for a life of
love and service.

+ Joseph Fliton, S.J.
To
The People of Skopje
and Calcutta
And the Mother
Who brought them together
Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, known as the “Saint of the gutters” is well known all over the world. Her simple, poor, faith-filled life and selfless loving work among the poorest of the poor has inspired many people across the world to reach out and help the poor. Mother used to say, “This is why the work for the poorest of the poor is so beautiful and attractive, because it fills the heart with great joy and with great love. And the more we are in love with the poor, the closer we come to the heart of God, the more we come to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him.”

HIROMI JOSEPHA KUDO has done an excellent research on Mother and her works. She had taken a lot of pains to visit Calcutta and meet Mother personally a number of times, and had personally seen the works the sisters do in many places. She also met a number of Jesuit priests in Calcutta and elsewhere who had helped Mother, especially in the initial stages. She had also visited Mother’s native place.

I had the opportunity of meeting Hiromi Josepha Kudo in Tokyo in January 2004, while I was the Jesuit Provincial of the Calcutta Province. She had a mind for details, a desire to do a thorough work, and worked very hard to get as much authentic data as possible. This book is a well-researched work and it will inspire and offer deeper understanding of Mother and her work among the poorest of the poor. I strongly recommend this book for your reading, so that you too may come to know about Mother and the spirit that moved her.

Jerome Francis SJ
Calcutta, India
13-12-2005
Acknowledgements

My research on Mother Teresa has so far carried me to several nations and put me in touch with numerous individuals, all of whom made great efforts to support and encourage me in my work. I realize however that attempting to thank them all in the space of a few lines is impossible. All the same though, it would be inexcusable on my part not to mention at least a few individuals, without whose backing this research would never have got off the ground. To begin, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Kosta Balabanov for his guidance regarding various historical details, to Stojan Trenchevski, Anton Serechi, Vlado Lesnikovski, and Kazu Lesnikovska for cooperating in my fieldwork, and to all who graciously accepted my interviews.

I am also grateful for the backing I received from Trajan Gocevski, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Sadao Kurosawa, President of Urawa University in Saitama, Akira Momiyama, Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Macedonia in Tokyo, Keiji Iimura, Managing Director and Secretary General of the Japan Macedonia Friendship Association, and Akira Imamura, Director of the Central and South-Eastern European Division of the European Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, all of whom assisted in promoting my research with their precious counsel.

I would also like to thank in a special way Fr. Don Lush Gjergji of St. Anthony’s Church in Bincha, Fr. Noel MC of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, Fr. Masakazu Tachibana of Tokyo Cathedral, Fr. Leo Schumacher SSC of St. Anselm’s Church in Tokyo, Sr. Machiko Wada RSCJ of the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo, Fr. Mukengeshayi Matata CICM, director of the Oriens Institute for Religious Research in Tokyo, Fr. Masatoshi Yamaguchi OFMC, Jeffrey D. Trambley of Komazawa Junior College in Tokyo, Biljana Jovanovska of the magazine Zum in Skopje, Djordje Djordjeski, President of Pro Alloy Co. Ltd., Takeshi Ogino of the Central and South-Eastern European Division of the European Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, Tony Josifovski, the nephew of Mother Teresa’s father’s cousin, and Pina Markovska, Mother Teresa’s own cousin on her mother’s side, for their many useful bits of advice.

My gratitude goes out also to Vesna Blazevska who helped me with translations, Aneta M. Cubrinovska and Iskra Petrovska Sesova who taught me Macedonian, and Rita Hemron who was raised in Shishu Bhawan in Calcutta and who
taught me Hindi.

I also express my deepest appreciation for the assistance I received from his Lordship Dr. Kiro Stojanov the Bishop of Skopje and the Jesuits of Sophia University in Tokyo, especially Frs. Anselmo Mataix, William Currie, Koso Toshiaki, José M. de Vera, Arturo Martin, Koichi Matsumoto, Jorg Mauz, Isao Kida, Osamu Takeuchi, Shinzo Kawamura, and John Joseph Puthenkalam.

Last but not least, I thank my guide Fr. Cyril Veliath SJ of Sophia University for his supervision of this thesis, in particular the philosophical and theological aspects, my mentor Dr. Divna Lakinska and others linked to the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius, such as Dr. Kiril Temkov, Dr. Slobodanka Markovska, Dr. Lidija Georgieva, and Dr. Violeta Achkovska for their guidance, and Mr. Navin Chawla of New Delhi for his inspiration. Without the generous assistance of these many kindhearted people, this work might never have been completed. To these and many others including my mother Tomoko Kudo and my father Tadayoshi Kudo, I render my heartfelt gratitude.

Hiromi Josepha KUDO
October 21, 2005
Foreword

Mother Teresa is a lady who by any standards will rank as one of the most saintly and remarkable individuals of all time. This is not merely due to the unqualified benignity and accord she exuded among the poor, the sick, the lepers, and other hapless souls blessed to cross her path, but as Miss Kudo shows in her book, throughout her life, in her dealings with all, she never in any way revealed even the faintest trace of any bias or inequity whatsoever. Utterly heedless of such extraneous factors as race, nationality, or religion she related equally with one and all, regardless of whether they were Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or Atheists, viewing them as cherished sons and daughters of the same Father in Heaven. This sublime disposition was the outcome of her childhood experiences in her birthplace of Skopje, and the diligent efforts of her god-loving parents in raising their daughter into an image of the mother of God.

On going through this book, a point that would never fail to strike the reader is the far-reaching research that went into its composition, a research that took the author to several cities of India and Europe. It is the work of a devoted scholar who has been unsparing in her efforts to seek the truth, and who presents the truth in a way not to wound the sentiments of any group. From what we know of Mother Teresa this is undoubtedly what she herself would have wished, for during the 69 years of her life in India she displayed no intolerance of any kind to the people around her.

Hiromi Josepha Kudo is a person I have known since 1988, ever since the time she was a young University undergraduate. Our first meeting (by a remarkable coincidence) was at the convent of the Mother Teresa Sisters in Tokyo, which I used to visit once a month in order to celebrate Mass. I recall even then how deeply I was impressed by her veneration of Mother Teresa, and by her steady resolve to follow in her footsteps. Since then she has been a regular visitor to India, and as she herself explains, she and her mother were in due course baptized and received into the Catholic Church, with Mother Teresa herself playing the role of their godmother. The passing of years and demise of Mother Teresa did not by any means dampen her devotion, but rather enhanced it ever more. The spiritual experiences she underwent in Calcutta during Mother’s funeral evoked in her a determination to pursue research on the Saint, and make available to the people of the world her invaluable contribution to mankind.

Miss Kudo may well be described as a gifted scholar, one with the potential to make great strides into the future. She is a tenured member of the teaching staff of Urawa University in Japan, and also teaches part-time at Sophia University in Tokyo.
She has written several scholarly articles on Mother Teresa, and as a University professor I am convinced we can expect from her a great deal more in the years to come.

This book is a symbol of Miss Kudo’s devotion not just to Mother Teresa but to the citizens of Skopje and Kolkata as well, both of whom she has come to deeply love. On reading it one cannot help but be struck by her insight into the situation pervading the Balkan states and Turkey, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. She also details the rupture between the Eastern and Western Churches of Christianity, the influence on Mother Teresa by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Therese of Lisieux, both of whom she took as her models, the daily schedules and workings of the various institutions of the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata, and in a series of appendices, she has described some of her deep personal experiences. I am happy to the note that the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje has acknowledged the efforts of Miss Kudo by granting her a Ph.D. for this work, and it is my sincere hope that she continues her research and brings out many more books on the Saint we love so well, namely Mother Teresa.

Cyril VELIATH SJ
Professor of Indian Studies
Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan
2006
Foreword to the Digitalized Version of this Book

Around ten years have elapsed since this book first saw the light of the day (thanks to the efforts of Fr. Cyril Veliath SJ and certain other Indian Jesuits), and my reasons for having brought it out were mainly two. First, I had hoped that it would speed up the process of canonization of Blessed Mother Teresa, and second, I desired to provide an impetus to efforts that would in the course of time lead to the beatification and canonization of six Jesuit priests, all of whom in their lifetime had served as her counselors and spiritual guides. Now that Mother Teresa’s canonization has with certainty been fixed for September 4th 2016, which happens to be ten years since the printed version of this book appeared, one might say that my first desire has indeed been realized, but the second sadly, still awaits realization.

I have presented below a letter I had earlier written to His Holiness Pope Francis, which has not yet been delivered to him. Since 2013 I have dispatched several copies of both this book and this letter to His Holiness, and I did so not just by mail, but also through the personal assistance of several priests, such as Jesuits and Conventual Franciscans. I have also attempted this more than five times with the aid of the Missionaries of Charity Sisters, and yet sad to say, I have to date never received a reply. It is possible that His Holiness is yet to set eyes upon my letter. The thoughtful words of His Lordship Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald however served as a balm to my disillusioned self. He gently reminded me of the incident concerning the Scottish King Robert Bruce and the spider, which persisted in its efforts to scale a wall despite having repeatedly failed. The efforts of the spider however finally paid off, since it ultimately succeeded in ascending the wall and reaching the ceiling. In a similar way he said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try and try again.” These words of the Archbishop truly buoyed me up, and hence I have decided in this digital version of my book both to present to His Holiness the letter he has yet to set eyes upon, and continue my efforts to realize my second aim. I have hopes that a little spider like me will in due time succeed in scaling the high wall and in reaching the ceiling where His Holiness the Pope resides, and I have hopes too that he will in due course set eyes upon my letter.

Fr. Veliath has invested a great deal of time and effort in creating a digital version of this book. I pray that the contents of this book spread far and wide, and that in the course of the coming ten years my second reason for having written this book,
namely the beatification and canonization of those six Jesuit priests, will also be realized. The letter I sent to his Holiness is as follows:

TO: His Holiness Pope Francis, VATICAN CITY

Your Holiness, before I begin I wish to introduce myself as Hiromi Josepha Kudo, a Japanese Catholic woman, a former University Professor, and a researcher on Blessed Mother Teresa. My mother (Tomoko Teresa Kudo) and I are godchildren of the soon to be saint Teresa, and we have spent several months in her company. Along with this letter I wish to present you with two books and an article of mine. The books are entitled: Our Mother and Mother Teresa: A Saint from Skopje, while the title of the paper is Reflections on the Dark Night of Blessed Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa has been a great inspiration to my mother and myself. We have stayed often with her and her sisters in their convent at Kolkata, and as I stated earlier, when we received baptism, she served as our godmother, and in 1991 we received the sacrament of Confirmation from Archbishop Henry D’Souza, in Mother Teresa’s House. In the course of my 26 years of research on her work and mission I was struck by the tremendous influence that two holy Archbishops of Calcutta had upon her life, and
chiefly her on Second Vocation and Dark Night experience.

These Archbishops, both of whom were Jesuits, namely Archbishop Ferdinand Perrier, and Archbishop Lawrence Trevor Picachy (who later became Cardinal), were pivotal in her founding of the Missionaries of Charity congregation, and they were also her spiritual directors at the time of her Dark Night experience, which began in 1948.

With Archbishop Henry D'Souza’s letter of recommendation I managed to receive the promise of an audience with His Holiness Pope John Paul II, wherein I had planned on pleading for the beatification of those two Archbishops. Sad to say however, His Holiness was hospitalized the day before he was scheduled to meet me. Later, Sr. Joseph Michael MC handed over my letter containing this petition to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI when he visited their convent in the Vatican, but when a reply came from Holy See, I noticed that my petition was not answered. Now, I wish to send this same petition to you, His Holiness Pope Francis. I have been sending this petition for their beatification ever since your Holiness became Pope, but I have yet to get a reply.

I earnestly request your support for the beatification of those two holy Archbishops, who were key figures in the life and mission of our new saint Mother Teresa. This would also serve to cleanse the image, restore the honor, and expunge all misunderstanding concerning Archbishop Ferdinand Perrier, who in some places has been unjustly portrayed as a ‘villain’ who forced Mother Teresa to accept secularization, although it was not at all her desire to do so. In particular, in the American TV program entitled “Mother Teresa: In the name of God’s Poor” that was broadcast a month after her funeral by Fox Channel, the Archbishop of Kolkata appears to have been portrayed rather negatively. I as a scholar on Mother Teresa can assure you that this is a total
falsehood, but since that program unfortunately was rated highly, many still harbor misgivings concerning the Archbishop. I believe the beatification of both Archbishop Ferdinand Perrier and Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy, is only way to restore his honor.

Since those two Archbishops were Jesuits, from 2005 onwards I also ceaselessly entreated the Superior General of the Jesuits for help with regard to their beatification. In 2007 I contacted Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach the former Superior General with this request, and though he did give me a positive answer, yet no concrete action was taken. Since then I have been requesting Fr. Adolfo Nicolás the current Superior General, but I have not received any positive reply yet.

Despite this I pleaded with the Holy See for over ten years not just for the beatification of these two archbishops but for that of four other priests as well, as for example Fr. Van Exem, who played a key role in her founding of the Missionaries of Charity congregation. These four Jesuits were also her spiritual directors at the time of her Dark Night experience, which began in 1948. Fr. Franjo Stefan Jambrenkovic was the first to enkindle within her a missionary vocation when she was a child in her hometown of Skopje, Fr. Julian Henry stood by her when she began her work for the poorest of the poor, and Fr. Joseph Neuner was her last spiritual director when she underwent the pangs of the Dark Night. In fact, it was Fr. Neuner who enabled her to view the Dark Night as a spiritual aspect of her mission. That is, from the very beginning I have ceaselessly striven for the beatification of these six holy priests, all of whom were key figures in the life and mission of Mother Teresa.

In November 2015, as a representative of Archbishop Peter Okada of the Tokyo archdiocese I attended the BIRA VI conference in Thailand that was held to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate, and there I was privileged to meet Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald.
Archbishop Fitzgerald advised me to send a personal letter to the Archbishop of Kolkata requesting support for the beatification of those two Kolkata archbishops, and also to send a letter to the Jesuit Father dealing with postulations requesting support for the beatification of the four other Jesuits, namely Fr. Van Exem, Fr. Franjo Stefan Jambrenkovic, Fr. Julian Henry, and Fr. Joseph Neuner.

On 11th January I received a reply from Archbishop Thomas D’Souza, which I have reproduced on page 249, and on 15th March I received a reply from Reverend Fr. Marc Lindeijer SJ who deals with postulations for Jesuits, which I have reproduced on page 250.

I was informed that causes for beatification could be started at the diocese where people were born, as in the case of Matteo Ricci, or the diocese wherein they lived, worked, and perhaps died, or even by their own religious congregation if they happened to be religious. Since the Society of Jesus does not seem keen on presenting its own members for beatification, I once again sent a letter to Archbishop Thomas D’Souza of Kolkata, and this time not just for Archbishop Perrier and Cardinal Picachy, but also for Fr. Van Exem and Fr. Julian Henry. I also sent letters to Bishop Kiro Stojanov of Skopje for Fr. Franjo Stefan Jambrenkovic, and to Bishop Thomas Dabre of Pune for Fr. Joseph Neuner.

I pray for the beatification of these six priests and especially Fr. Van Exem, who offered his life for Mother Teresa. I have included in pages (251-252) an article from a Kolkata newspaper wherein he appears, for I personally consider him a martyr. I feel that if Gongea Boiagi had not met Fr. Franjo Stefan Jambrenkovic in Skopje she would not have become the saintly Mother Teresa, and I believe also that without Fr. Julian Henry, she would not have become a mother to the poorest of the poor.

Fr. Joseph Neuner
With regard to Mother Teresa, I consider Fr. Neuner to be the light in her darkness, for without him I believe she would not have overcome the agony of the Dark Night that she went through.

So, to conclude Your Holiness, I offer my earnest prayers for the beatification of these six holy men, all significant figures in the life and mission of Mother Teresa. Her work for God was the outcome of the efforts of these six Jesuits, and you yourself have brought to a successful end their unfinished task, by making her a saint. Thanking you, I remain your loving daughter in Christ,

Hiromi Josepha Kudo
Preface

My Encounter with Mother Teresa

On September 14, 1988, during my first visit to India, I met Mother Teresa at the Mother House in Kolkata. Her institutions, to which many volunteers from several countries come and work are mainly three, namely Shishu Bhawan, which translates as ‘Children’s Home,’ and where more than 400 orphans live, Nirmal Hriday, which means ‘Pure Heart,’ and which has the English name of ‘Home for Dying Destitutes,’ and ‘Prem Dan,’ which translates as ‘Gift of Love,’ and which is an institution for the mentally handicapped. The volunteers who hailed from both within and outside India were required to freely go and get themselves registered with the Sister in charge of the Mother House, and they were subsequently assigned to one or other of the above institutions.

I personally realized that the road that I needed to follow was to acquire the experience of caring and working for the sick and dying, those who were carried from the streets of the city to the Home for Dying Destitutes.

In April of the following year, with the purpose of conducting research both on Mother Teresa herself and the charitable work that she voluntarily undertook, I entered the Master’s course of the graduate school of Japan Women’s University, which forms part of the Social Welfare Graduate Program, in the Graduate Division of the School of Integrated Arts and Social Sciences. Later on January 29, 1990, I again visited India, and this time I went with the purpose both of receiving baptism at the side of Mother Teresa and thereby becoming a Christian, and of carrying out the fieldwork needed in order to write my Master’s thesis on Social Welfare.

To receive baptism however I needed a letter of recommendation from a suitable person. Accordingly I received one from Fr. Cyril Veliath, a Catholic priest and member of the Jesuit order who at that time was a professor in the Faculty of Foreign Studies of Sophia University in Tokyo, and at one time the director of the Institute of Asian Cultures in the same University. On reading the letter Mother Teresa remarked, “Father has written a very good letter for you, and so you don’t need to worry at all. I shall be happy to accept you.”

This being done she promptly set about arranging some suitable accommodation within Prem Dan, both for myself and for my mother who had accompanied me to Calcutta. As a preparation for our baptism she saw to it that we
followed the same schedule as the Sisters of the congregation, and also gave me the necessary religious instructions.

Finally on March 19, 1990, my mother and I were baptized and received into the Catholic Church, with Mother Teresa herself serving as our godmother. According to the Catholic code of Canon Law a godmother is one “who supports persons who wish to accept Christianity, guides them towards baptism that they might thereby become witnesses to the Catholic community, and after baptism serves as an advisor for their religious life.” This was a role that Mother Teresa amply fulfilled.

Since then my mother and I have never failed to return every year to visit Mother Teresa, who had now become our spiritual mother. Indeed, from the time I first saw her until the time of her death, over a period of nine years, the two of us returned once a year to the Mother House during Christmas time. Our purpose in coming was both to spend some time with our spiritual Mother and Sisters of the congregation, and to participate as volunteers in their charitable works. In particular, from 1992 to 1997 my mother and I gifted of various articles, such as 25,000 injector sets and 2 tons of relief goods, to the Mother House. My visits to India have been as follows:

- 1990, January 27~March 24
- 1990, December 12~1991, January 23
- 1992, November 23~1993, January 18
- 1993, November 21~1994, February 13
- 1995, December 19~1996, January 21
- 1997, September 9~19

**The State Funeral of Mother Teresa**

The incident that ultimately made me decide upon writing this thesis was my attendance at Mother Teresa’s funeral. She passed away on Friday, September 5, 1997 when she was 87 years old, and with the intention of participating in her funeral my mother and I returned to India, which had now become a second home for us.

When we arrived in Lower Circular Road, the main street that faces the Mother House, I was amazed at the sight of the banner hanging above the road that had written upon it the words, “We have lost our Mother.” In female Catholic religious
congregations the superiors are often addressed as Mother.\(^1\) However, my own feeling is that whenever a person referred to Mother Teresa as ‘Mother,’ the maternal feeling of ‘Mom’ as in a mother and child relationship was strong. For the common folk of Calcutta she was a person who transcended religion and race, and thereby became the Mother of Bengal.\(^2\)

On September 7, two days after her death, Mother Teresa’s body was transported and laid out in the church of St. Thomas, some distance away from the Mother House wherein she had lived for about 47 years. The church of St. Thomas is located a distance of 2 kilometers from the Mother House, and public transport being fairly good, the main street (called Park Street), was especially convenient for those who wished to visit and pray over her body, and offer their condolences to the Sisters. Moreover, Saint Thomas Church was located at five minutes walking distance from the house of the Archbishop who had jurisdiction over Mother’s congregation, where the members were referred to as the Missionaries of Charity. Since the Archbishop has charge of all churches in his diocese and also authority over other bishops in a wide area, he is like a prelate with jurisdiction over an ecclesiastical province. The funeral was carried out by the Archbishop of Calcutta namely Henry Sebastian D’Souza, whose term as Archbishop extended from April 5, 1986 to April 2, 2002.

Mother’s body, which was laid out in a coffin of glass and watched over by her Sisters, received the prayers and condolences of the several thousands who visited the church. The coffin of glass was a consideration for her many mourners, since her figure was visible inside. A distance of about 20 centimeters was kept between the coffin and the stand, and cold air was directed into the coffin from four electric fans placed on both sides. Those in charge of the funeral had tried to obtain a coffin with refrigeration, but since it could not be arranged they used heavy air-conditioning instead, and directed cool air over her body using an electric fan. After 9:00 PM, which was the closing time for condolence visits, every night a doctor took appropriate

\(^1\) A sort of hierarchical distinction originally existed in some religious congregations before the Second Vatican Council. However the general public called them all ‘Sisters.’ At present though such differences have been abolished, and all are equally referred to as ‘Sister.’ The term ‘Mother’ is currently used to refer to a superior or a former superior of a congregation, one who occupies an executive position. *New Catholic Encyclopedia vol-3*, Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1998, p. 168.

\(^2\) “It is no wonder, then, that the people of the State call her the “Mother of Bengal.” Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, New Delhi, Gulmohur Press, 1992, p. 197. Navin Chawla is a Hindu and a senior bureaucrat of the Indian government. He studied Economics in Britain and has traveled to many places. He met Mother Teresa in 1975, and later supported her activity as her cooperator. At present he lives in New Delhi.
measures to prevent her body from getting decayed. However the city of Calcutta in early September experiences almost the equivalent of the burning midsummer heat of Japan, and so in order to preserve her body for the funeral the Indian government made all efforts to obtain a coffin with suitable refrigeration equipment, as soon as possible. Yet, despite all their efforts they finally could not obtain it, and so Mother’s body lay in the coffin without refrigeration for eight full days, namely from September 5 to the day of the funeral, which was September 13. In particular, during the last 6 days while the body lay in the coffin it easily caused the development of steam, despite there being air-conditioning in the room. Yet in the heat of midsummer her body was taken out in parade for about an hour along the streets of Calcutta, to the church of St. Thomas located near the Netaji Indoor Stadium. Since suitable preservation-from-decay measures were taken there was no odor emanating from her body, and no decomposition was seen either. Every day my mother and I were present near her body along with her Sisters in the church, but we were worried about the eight days remaining until her funeral, wondering what we would do if the body decayed. Every night I inspected her body while standing beside the doctor, but to my surprise her body never emanated any odor and never rotted.

The time for condolence visits was from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM. Yet, even when it was past the stipulated time, poor people with no watches or clocks continued standing in line outside St. Thomas Church. Even when the Sisters announced that the condolence call time was over there were many who found it difficult to go away, and so they continued praying and watching over Mother’s body from the outside of the church. Around the church the lines stretched several kilometers daily, and police constables who were stationed at every 10 meters carefully directed the movement of people, lest confusion arise among them. The people continued standing outside for many hours, to say goodbye to Mother Teresa who for them was the Mother of Bengal. On an average it took 6 hours for those in line to reach the coffin, and when I spoke to them and asked what they felt about the matter, I found that waiting 6 hours or even more in the sweltering heat was no problem for them at all, for they were motivated by pure zeal.

In the beginning the superiors of the congregation had thought of conducting the funeral on Wednesday, September 10, a day they refer to as ‘Inspiration Day,’ for it was on September 10, 1946 that Mother heard the voice of God. Among the Missionaries of Charity Inspiration day has been annually commemorated, ever since their foundation on October 7, 1950. Yet, since the Indian government feared that the
extensive preparations involved in the state funeral might not be completed in time, the date was changed to September 13.

The government decided to conduct Mother’s funeral on a national level as a “state funeral,” and this I felt was something truly exceptional. It served to show the extent to which the nation of India and its people admired her work and contribution to society, and how much she was esteemed both within and outside the country.

The English newspaper the Telegraph of Calcutta reported on September 11, 1997, that the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral held an urgent cabinet meeting in 1996 when Mother’s health had reached a critical state, and at that time they had decided that in the event of her death they would organize a state funeral for her. Another urgent meeting was held a few hours after her death on the night of September 5, and here the cabinet members formally and unanimously decided upon her state funeral. The Telegraph reported that they had obtained information from certain governmental sources, stating that in the course of the meeting none of the cabinet members expressed any contrary opinion with regard to the proposal. Since the question of her funeral had already been decided upon in 1996, the Indian government was able to formally declare to the world their determination to conduct for her a state funeral, right after her death.

On September 8, my mother and I visited the Embassy of India located in a suburb of Tokyo called Kudanshita, in order to apply for a visa to attend the funeral. At that time the embassy staff informed me that the Ambassador planned to make arrangements to accept condolence calls for Mother at the embassy, but that they did not have a photograph of hers big enough to be placed in the hall for viewers. Since they asked me if I could possibly supply them with one, I lent them the biggest poster of Mother Teresa that was in my possession. News of Mother’s funeral was conveyed at once to Indian embassies and consulates located in every country, and while a visa to India usually takes two days to obtain ours came in an hour, thanks to the kindness of the Ambassador.

On January 26, 1962, the fifteenth anniversary of India’s becoming a Republic, the Indian government announced that Mother Teresa would be awarded the ‘Padma Shri’ (Order of the Lotus), one of the country’s major awards. This award was

---

3 New Catholic encyclopedia, Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1998, pp. 1184-1185. Concerning Mother Teresa’s funeral, in the section entitled ‘Teresa,’ the encyclopedia states that her funeral was exceptional.
formally presented to her in September of that year, and it was the first time it was given to a person who was not born in India. Furthermore, on March 22, 1980, the Indian government presented her with the ‘Bharat Ratnam,’ (Jewel of India) the nation’s highest award. Until now only 17 persons have received this highest award, and among them we have Mother Teresa. However, Mother was the only one among the 17 awardees who was not born in India. Thus we see that in India she was esteemed greatly during her lifetime, and the Indian government actively displayed this esteem by conducting her funeral on a state level. They viewed her as being of equal merit to Mahatma Gandhi (1969-1948), and what was really noteworthy was the fact that the gun carriage that bore the body of the Mahatma during his funeral, was brought over from Delhi in order to carry the body of Mother Teresa.

From September 11, in order to protect the body of Mother Teresa and guide citizens who came to pay their condolence calls (whose numbers increased every day), soldiers of the Indian army were stationed as guards at the church of St Thomas. The national flag of India was draped over her, and instead of the Sisters of Mother Teresa soldiers of the Indian army kept guard over her body, which was under the custody of the government of India.

At 9:00 AM on September 13, Mother’s body draped with the national flag of India was laid in state upon the gun carriage, the same that was used for Mahatma Gandhi at his state funeral. This gun carriage was a symbol of the occasion when India declared its independence of British colonial rule, and earlier it had also carried the body of the former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Mother Teresa however was the first foreigner and non-political figure to be awarded the honor of this carriage. Her body left the church of St Thomas protected by soldiers, and a million and odd citizens crowded the scheduled route of the funeral parade in order to bid her farewell. The parade covered the distance of 4 kilometers in the space of an hour, and at around 10:00 AM her body arrived at the Netaji Indoor Stadium, with the people still following and their numbers progressively increasing. A report of guns then gave the funeral salute, and a funeral band began to play.

The funeral progressed in accordance with the following schedule.
9:00 AM: Mother Teresa’s coffin left the church of St Thomas, and moved towards the stadium.
10:00 AM: The coffin arrived at the stadium, and Cardinal Angelo Sodano of Vatican City offered the funeral Mass.
11:20 AM: The speech by Sr. Nirmala MC, the new Superior General of the
Missionaries of Charity.
11:40 AM: Prayers by representatives of seven different religious groups.
12:00 AM: Floral tributes by guests representing various countries.
12:20 AM: Floral tribute by K. R. Narayanan, President of India.
12:30 AM: The coffin left the stadium and returned to the Mother House.
1:45 PM: Her body was installed in the grave within the Mother House.
2:45 PM: Conclusion of the funeral.

Due to security reasons about 12,000 persons who had obtained letters of invitation were permitted to attend her state funeral, in the Netaji Indoor Stadium. A huge altar was installed in the center of the stadium, and her body was laid on the altar.

Many of the guests who attended as delegates of various countries were seated in special places in front of the altar. From Vatican City there arrived the Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who conducted the funeral Mass; from the USA there arrived Hillary Rodham Clinton the First lady of the United States and wife of President Clinton, and William Jefferson Blythe III; from the Republic of the Philippines came former President Corazon Aquino; from the Republic of France came President Jacques Chirac and the First lady; from the Republic of Italy came Prime minister Romano Prodi; from the Republic of Albania came President Rexhep Meidani; and from Japan came the former speaker of the House of Representatives Ms. Takako Doi. The President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, sent a message of condolence. Delegates from over 23 nations including the above-mentioned individuals participated in the funeral, and the nationalities of prominent people who attended on an independent basis when totaled, amounted to no less than 51.

Mother Teresa acquired Indian citizenship, but she was born in Europe. In India where 82.7% of the people are Hindus, it is indeed striking that the funeral of a

---

4 The Prime Minister of Albania who attended the funeral stayed at the same hotel as my mother and I. Since the expense for two persons was about 50,000 yen (about $400) per month, including food, you may guess the rank of the hotel. The most expensive room was less than 3000 yen (about $24) at that time. However, the hotel is conveniently located in front of the Mother House.
5 Mother Teresa became a citizen of India in 1949. Moreover, she had an Indian passport and also a passport for diplomats that the Indian government had established. It has also been said that she became a citizen of India in 1948. Since her religious order approved the purchase of the land and building where the present Mother House is located in 1950, and since non-Indian people and foreign organizations can own neither land nor property in India, it may be appropriate to believe that her Indian nationality was formally acquired in the year 1949.
6 Mother Teresa was born in Skopje, the capital of former Yugoslavia and the present Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, and Skopje is a city that spreads along the banks of the Vardar River, located 200m above sea level. Later I would like to explain in detail how the culture, religion, and historical background of Skopje in those days affected Mother Teresa’s character formation, and how it influenced her mission in India.
European Christian and a nun was conducted as a state funeral. My mother and I noticed that present for the occasion was the President of India Mr. K. R. Narayanan, a member of a depressed caste of Indian society, who had assumed office of president on July 25, 1997, precisely 50 days earlier. He duly fulfilled his role as president by participating in the funeral and enhancing the prestige of India, as a ‘child of God.’ While seated in the stadium with the Sisters I couldn’t help but feel that this poor graduate who rose to become the foremost individual in the country, was best suited to take charge of the funeral of Mother Teresa, who was often referred to as the “Mother of the Poor.”

I also imagined what St. Thomas would have thought if he were present at the funeral. St. Thomas is the patron saint of the church in which Mother Teresa’s body was laid, and he is said to have come to India after the death of Christ and died as a martyr. Mother Teresa attained something truly great, a magnificent achievement for which many sacrificed their lives. They died of illness or as a result of various confrontations in the course of their work, and in many cases they were unable to realize their goals. The fact that the common citizens of a non-Christian land welcomed her with such unreserved sincerity, made me wonder what it was in her that moved them so much, and equally, what it was in the people of India that evoked within them such a spontaneous attitude of acceptance and trust.

Cardinal Sodano who offered the Mass in the place of Pope John Paul II read out the Pope’s message at the funeral, and the message praised and admired her for her fidelity to Christian teachings. Occasionally also in the past she was criticized as being too conservative, especially regarding issues such as abortion. In his eulogy the Pope declared, “Mother Teresa lit the light of love.” His greatest praise was directed towards

7 Scheduled Castes (Untouchables). At present, preferential treatment is given to them by the Indian government with regard to schools, employment, elections, etc. They are people of the lowest caste in India, who experienced discrimination throughout their history. Gandhi referred to them as “Harijans” (children of God), and strove for the recovery of their social rights.

8 “The Gospel of Thomas” (2nd-3rd century) written in Syria, stated that the apostle Thomas started the propagation of Christianity in India during the 1st century. Although according to this gospel St. Thomas landed in India in the southeast part of the region of Madras through the sea route and preached at King Mazdai’s court, yet he was martyred and was supposed to have been buried in the area of Mylapore. In that city, “Saint Thomas’s grave” which was built in the 1st century is located, and it has become the object of veneration by the local Christian people.

The historical credibility of this is not certain, but Eusebius (263/65-339) wrote in the Historia Ecclesiastica (AC325) about the testimony of the theologian Origen (184/85 - 253/84) who was from ancient Greece. Origen said that St. Thomas went to Parthia in northern Iran and taught Christianity. Some sources say that St. Thomas spread Christianity from the Middle-East through the northern overland route to India through the Silk Road. (Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Historia Ecclesiastica, Tokyo, Translated by Gouhei Hata, Yamamotoshoten, 1986-88)
the sacrifices she made for the poor and the exploited, and in this context he remarked, “Mother Teresa transcended the boundaries of religion and race and realized the good news of love.” The Pope also extolled the fact that despite being honored with the Nobel Peace Prize she refused to become political-minded, and remained true to her religious vows to the very end.

Prayers and addresses by various groups such as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others were also offered apart from the Catholic Mass, and the funeral addresses though made in English, were translated into Hindi and Bengali. It was heartwarming to see that she transcended differences in religion, language, and race, and that she was loved and respected by all. Such an incident though had occurred even earlier, when she happened to fall sick. It was on December 12, 1991, when her health had broken down during her stay in Mexico, and at that time, transcending barriers of race and religion, people of diverse groups and faiths prayed together for her recovery. Later on December 27 at St. Teresa’s Church, and on January 4 in the church attached to St. Xavier’s College in Calcutta, Mass and prayers were offered for her twice. At that time, not just Christians but Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists prayed for her, and high-ranking clerics of these diverse religious groups participated in the service. I myself witnessed members of numerous religious groups meeting and praying together for her recovery, inside a Catholic Church.  

The main theme of this thesis is why a European Christian and nun like Mother Teresa, was loved so much by the non-Christian people of a culturally dissimilar country. It is a question over which I have ceaselessly pondered for the past 9 years. It was one of the key issues that goaded me to return to India every year as a volunteer from 1988 to 1997, and to work at Mother Teresa’s houses. When I attended her funeral, I realized that not only the people of India but also the Indian government revered her deeply, offering her the same degree of veneration as they did to Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation. What was it that caused the Indian people to accept and love her to such a superlative degree? I decided to reflect over and analyze the reasons one by one.

As a child I was very restless, and my problem was diagnosed as ADHD

Moreover the Telegraph of January 6 reported as follows: “Prayers for Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Jan 6: The All-India Minority and Weaker Sections Council today organized a prayer service at a church in the Entally area for the speedy recovery of Mother Teresa, and according to a press release Justice Padma Khastagar of the Calcutta High court, Mr. Idris Ali, the secretary of council, and others, were present at the prayer meeting. A similar prayer service was organized today at the Dargasharif in Moulali, by the minority council.” Television and newspapers reported on Mother Teresa’s health every day until she recovered.
(Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder), and as a consequence I was expelled from a private kindergarten at the age of four. Since then I found it difficult to get used to group life, and going to school and studying in a classroom were excessively painful for me. I was under the impression that for me academic research was a total impossibility, and this was a cross I bore throughout my life. However, I finally came to the conclusion that conducting research on Mother Teresa was a lifelong mission, which I as her spiritual daughter had no choice but to carry out. In this context I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the staff of Sophia University for providing me with the research environment needed for the writing of this thesis, and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart. I am also grateful to the students of Urawa University’s Faculty of Comprehensive Welfare, where I am employed as a full-time lecturer. I have learned many things from my students, and thanks in particular to those of my students who take their lessons seriously and study welfare earnestly, I obtained the energy needed to continue my research without being discouraged.

In this thesis I would like to consider the 87 years that comprise Mother Teresa’s entire life from both sides, namely her 18 years of family life in Skopje, and her 69 years as a missionary nun in India.
8th July, 1990.

Dear Teresa and Josepha,

Many thanks for your letter together with the photos of Mother and daughter being baptized at the M.C. Chapel in Japan.

Thank you also for the beautiful drawing of the Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph preparing for us a house in Albania. Continue praying much that if it is the will of God, I may get the answer and the visas for the sisters to enter Albania and then the house which the Holy Family is preparing will be very useful for us!

Thoughtfulness, the kindly regard for others, is the beginning of holiness. If you learn the art of being thoughtful, you will be more and more like Christ. His heart was kind and gentle. God love you for living your Faith.

God bless you,

Le Teresa (signature)
My dear Josephina
and Teresa,

Tomorrow we will
write the letter and
I will ask them to
give me the money
for Shishu Bhasun.
So please do not
worry. You know
mother's care for
both of you. God bless you.

See Teresa.
The Author on the occasion of the reception of her Ph.D. Professor Lakinska and Fr. Veliath are on her left and Dean Gocevski on her right.

Gonxha aged ten with her friends

Gonxha and her sister Aga (1923) (In traditional Macedonian dress)

Nikola Bojaxhiu (Gonxha's father)

Gonxha (seated) with Lazar and Aga

Gonxha (middle), Aga (left), and Zorica a friend of Aga's (right)

Sodality of the Children of Mary Fr. Jambrenkovic is seated in the middle with Gonxha right behind
Some of these photographs are reprints from the book *Mother Teresa* by S. Trenchevski

DR. HIROMI JOSEPHA KUDO with MOTHER TERESA
DR. KUDO AND HER MOTHER RECEIVING BAPTISM
Early Life in Skopje

Birthplace, Historical Background, and Youth

The Jesuit Fr. Anselmo Mataix, one of the former Vice-Presidents of Sophia University located in Tokyo, once wrote the following statements with reference to Mother Teresa’s excessive reluctance to pen her memoirs, owing to fears that it might portray her as a heroine. The statement appears in the second chapter of his book entitled Iyesu wo aishita onna Maza Teresa or Mother Teresa: A Woman who Loved Jesus, and the chapter itself is entitled Kami no Shomei or God’s call.

“In any religion, if it were only individuals with special abilities that could put into practice the teachings of their faith, then that religion cannot be said to hold universal value. In this sense, Mother Teresa’s attitude of self-denial with regard to her personal history is justified” (Author’s translation).

Fr. Mataix thereupon continues his comments on the merits of pursuing research on the life of Mother Teresa, and declares as follows:

“While this may be true, I believe also that not just anyone can put into practice the beliefs of their faith. This is an undisputed fact, and so an investigation of the soil on which Mother Teresa, Agnes Gonxha, was raised, is a project worth undertaking” (Author’s translation).

This thesis seeks to study the environment under which Mother Teresa was raised until she reached the age of eighteen, her age when she left for India, and the influence this later exerted upon her activities within the Indian subcontinent. It is obvious from her life that she demonstrated extreme flexibility and adaptability with regard to diverse cultures and ethnic groups, besides a deep-seated tolerance towards people of religious faiths other than Christianity. I however am of the opinion that such characteristics were imbued by her during the first eighteen years of her life in her native city of Skopje, through her experience of her country’s history, culture, ethnic background, religion, and family life, and accordingly I wish to probe the matter from

---

10 Anselmo Mataix SJ, Iyesu wo aishita onna Maza Teresa, Tokyo, Gendantsyorin, 1997, p. 73.
these different perspectives.

**Preliminary Procedure**

For a period of eleven days, namely from August 29 to September 8, 2003, I was able to visit the city of Skopje in Macedonia which happens to be the birthplace of Mother Teresa, in order to carry out my research. It was at this time that I came into contact with Kosta Balabanov the former Director General of the Museum of Macedonia, who graciously agreed both to edit an article of mine on the basis of his extensive historical knowledge, and advise me on my future research. Busy as he was, he nevertheless aided my work in Macedonia, especially in relation to the complex historical and ethnic elements that permeate the history of the region. In this context I would also like to mention my debt to Kazu Liesnikovska and Vlado Liesnikovski, both for arranging my interviews with Albanian Catholics and relatives of Mother Teresa, and for serving as interpreters. They are both at present associated with the Society for Macedonian-Japanese Friendship and Cooperation.

After the death of Mother Teresa, Stojan Trenchevski, a journalist who produced documentaries both for Macedonian Radio and Skopje Radio, broadcast on January 6, 1998, a documentary entitled *Gonhxa Bojaxhiu of Skopje: Mother Teresa—the Nobel Prize Recipient*. Although broadcast originally in the Macedonian language I nonetheless succeeded in obtaining an English transcription of the broadcast, and in September 2003 I also obtained a copy of his new book which had been published under the title *Tereza*. I am grateful to Mr. Trenchevski for the assistance he offered me during my trip to Skopje. He not only arranged my visits to the grave of Mother Teresa’s father but also offered me valuable directives for my research, based on his own investigation of Mother Teresa’s life.

In addition to working as a journalist for Macedonian National Television, Trenchevski is also the director of a group entitled ‘Citizens Association Mother Teresa.’ In 1975, while serving as administrator for the Red Cross in Geneva he met Mother Teresa, and since then he has sought to assist her and her charitable works through his many journalistic activities. The organization he heads holds a ceremony every year on September 5 which is the date of Mother Teresa’s death, in order to honor those individuals who have demonstrated in their lives the spirit of her work. Here they make a gift of a statue of her to people who organize charity concerts and other such activities for her sake, thereby encouraging all to emulate her spirit. This group has also been the force behind the creation of the Mother Teresa House in Skopje, which opened in 2003
as a museum commemorating the principal events of her life. It is located about three minutes away by foot from the actual site of her original childhood home, and approximately fifty meters from where her statue now stands.

The documentary was comprised of interviews with Mother Teresa’s relatives and other prominent figures, including the Mayor of Skopje and certain others associated with her and her activities. Among those interviewed was the author Fr. Don Lush Gjergji, the parish priest of St. Anthony’s Church of Bincha who had earlier published many books and a biography of Mother Teresa. In the course of the interview he remarked:

“Mother Theresa comes from Skopje. She’s of Albanian descent. She is a Catholic. She lived through all the changes and dimensions of her hometown of Skopje, which was at that time under Turkish rule. Gonxha Bojaxhiu witnessed the formation of the first Yugoslavia. She actually felt what all those changes and problems meant. Beginning with the changes in the family, the school, and the Catholic Church, Mother Teresa had the whole world in small dimensions. “That’s when she began to communicate with others that had different points of view as to language, culture, and religion. However, in all those differences, Mother Teresa began to understand that love is the only thing that reduces the differences and gives us all a chance to live well with all those differences.

“Later, when Mother Teresa came to Calcutta and saw all the poverty there, she remembered Skopje, where she washed the wounds of desolate women with her mother Drona. In other words, the family life had remained with her as something secure and inspirational. Assured and permanent roots which gave Mother Teresa an opportunity to develop and to erupt as a phenomenon of goodness and love.”

“Live well with all those differences.” In light of the fact that she was a child of an ethnic Albanian mother and was born in Skopje in Macedonia, these words were to become a key phrase in her life.

Problems and Sources

Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu who later came to be known as Mother Teresa was born on August 26, 1910 in what is currently the Republic of Macedonia, in the city of


\[\text{On checking various sources that recorded Mother Teresa’s date of birth I discovered this variation. I}\]
Skopje. She was baptized at the Church of the Heart of Jesus on August 27, and the parish priest who baptized her, namely Fr. Zef Ramaj, gave her the name Agnes, after St. Agnes. St. Agnes was born in Rome in the reign of Emperor Diocletian (245-313), and in 304 she was martyred at the tender age of twelve or thirteen, during the Christian persecutions.

In the process of studying her personal background, I felt that the difficulties I ran into while pin-pointing the exact date of her birth, were perhaps a foretaste of the hurdles I would encounter while pin-pointing dates in general in her life. For, depending on the source, her date of birth has been differently recorded as August 16, August 26, August 27, and August 28.

I was fortunate to be blessed with a chance to question Mother in person concerning her date of birth, and she replied saying that she was born on August 26, and that on the following day she was baptized a Roman Catholic. Apparently in those days the infant death rate was rather high, and so children were baptized immediately after birth. All the same however as we shall soon see, despite my having asked her directly and obtained her answer, I yet have no guarantee that the answer is correct. The reason for this confusion lies in the fact that she herself felt ‘unworthy’ and disliked the idea of her biography being published, an idea Fr. Mataix has clearly presented in his book.13

On this analysis we see that items such as dates, accomplishments, and other biographical data were unimportant to her personally, but for those of us who are concerned with accuracy of detail and historical veracity, they do evoke problems.

Mother Teresa considered her birthday to be on August 27, the day on which she was baptized and accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. Fr. Mataix confirmed this fact, pointing out that when questioned about her date of birth during interviews she usually responded with the date of her baptism, namely August 27. For her, the date on which she was reborn as a Christian was more important than the date of her actual birth. Also, at the Mother House where she was stationed, her birthday was always

---

celebrated on August 27 and not August 26. Since it is customary in her congregation to celebrate feast days rather than birthdays, it is not surprising that confusion arose regarding the date of her birth.

In any case I verified the matter in person with Sr. Christy MC who had been Mother Teresa’s personal secretary at the Mother House, and clarified the fact that she was born on August 26 and baptized on August 27. These dates have also been accepted by researchers such as Jaya Chaliha, Fr. Edward Le Joly SJ, and Fr. Mataix, and besides Navin Chawla has duly corroborated the fact by checking her passport and proving that her date of birth was in fact August 26, 1910, and that she was baptized the following day, namely August 27.

With regard to this confusion in dates, it may be added that in the book Something Beautiful for God, an early biography of Mother Teresa by Malcolm Muggeridge, it is recorded that she was born on August 27. In 1973, four years after having shot a fifty-minute documentary on her for the BBC in 1969, Muggeridge published a book of the same title. This early documentary was created ten years before she received the Nobel Prize, and accordingly a time when not many people knew about her. Muggeridge not only produced and directed the program but also acted as reporter and interviewer, and through conversations with Mother Teresa he introduced the activities of her various Houses. In my opinion, what was most impressive in the documentary was the manner in which he succeeded in portraying the real Mother Teresa, by an extensive use of close-up camera shots.

As I personally have professional experience in the direction of television programs, I am aware that during interviews it is common to use two shots of both the interviewer and interviewee, that is, the bust shot and the close-up head shot. Maintaining the close-up head shot for long periods proves monotonous for viewers, and hence it is only used at specific points for emphasis. Even at such points the close-up shot is not prolonged for more than a few frames, since stabilizing the camera is difficult and post-editing gets even more problematic. Despite this however, it is curious to note that the camera operator for Muggeridge’s documentary, namely Kenneth Macmillan, made abundant use of close-up shots of Mother Teresa’s face. From the beginning of the interview the camera shot her using the close-up headshot and then gradually focusing in on her face, and even during questions the camera remained on her face. Cutting while focusing on the face is difficult, and hence I am of the view that he did this on purpose to make her famous. Muggeridge himself seldom appears in the documentary, and this again seemed like a calculated act on his part to
make Mother Teresa the focus of the film. The film was successful largely due to the fact that it allowed us to concentrate upon her words and facial expressions, and besides it granted us an opportunity to have an experience of her before she won the Nobel Prize, and before she was transformed into a world-renowned figure. Muggeridge concentrated almost entirely upon her face, and he appears to have done hardly any editing at all. He seems to have made a deliberate effort to ignore balance and beauty in doing so, and I personally am of the view that it was this honest and forthright attitude on his part that was responsible for propelling Mother Teresa into worldwide fame.

In 1985 Ann and Jeanette Petrie, using film footage collected over a period of five years, produced a documentary entitled Mother Teresa. The footage used was taken in India and included film segments from Latin America, the USA, Beirut, and other places Mother had visited. Wherever she went the cameras followed her. Interviews with her niece in Italy and others associated with her were also included in this wide-ranging documentary, and in consequence it came to be considered the richest collection of footage. After winning the Nobel Prize however the media around the world focused attention on her, and each country produced its own programs introducing her. Though other documentaries may have had bigger budgets and more extensive film footage, I personally hold the view that Muggeridge’s documentary is far more valuable and successful in its truthful and intimate portrayal of her.

When Mother Teresa returned to Macedonia, Branko Mihailovski, a camera operator for a Macedonian company named Vardar Film who shot her visit, made the following comment:

“Mother Teresa, with her unique appearance and her rich soul can be seen and experienced only live, only in direct contact with her. I think that there is no technique that has the ability to convey the vibration and the mutual current that are conveyed live. That live contact makes you want to be closer to her and to get to know her better.”

I also concur with the fact that Mother Teresa’s aura is something that cannot be transmitted via television screens. Speaking in this context Fr. Mataix wrote, “Mother Teresa is a person one has to experience.” However, I believe there do exist

---

15 When Mother Teresa spoke at Sophia University, a student commented that she was best “in the flesh” or “live.” Professor Anselmo Mataix also said that her aura came from a non-verbal world.
documentaries that present a genuine picture of her, and one such is the documentary by Muggeridge, which in my opinion is one of the best. Though parts of the film were shot in Nirmal Hriday (Home for Dying Destitutes) where there is little natural light, and besides no artificial lighting equipment was used during the filming, yet there was always enough light entering the lens to assure clear images. The fact that such an exquisite documentary was created without artificial lighting was regarded by all as a miracle, and for this reason too I consider it to be exceptional among the documentaries on Mother Teresa.

Now, returning to the confusion over dates in her biography, a journalist named Desmond Doig wrote an article on Mother Teresa that appeared in the Statesman, an Indian newspaper. In 1976 Doig published a book entitled, *Mother Teresa her People and her Work*, which included a foreword by the former Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Here, she is stated as having been born on August 27. In Japan, photographer Morihiro Oki who first introduced her to the Japanese public, also recorded her birth as being on that day. Oki’s works include *Maza Teresa Afureru Ai* or *Mother Teresa Overflowing Love* and a photographic collection entitled *Maza Teresa to sono Shimai-tachi* or *Mother Teresa and her Sisters*. In yet another work of his entitled *Ai wa Kagirinaku Mother Teresa* or *Love is Endless Mother Teresa*, Oki explains that it was through Muggeridge that he was first introduced to her, and so it is no wonder that the date of birth given in his work is the same as that in the analysis of Muggeridge.

Oki visited Mother Teresa in India from September 1996 until the end of that year, when his health deteriorated due to esophagus cancer. During the visit he received permission to enter her room, even though such a privilege was usually granted only to other nuns of the order. I also was present at the time, and on seeing Oki I realized the depth of his affection for Mother.

Following Mother Teresa’s death Oki organized a photographic exhibition in her native Macedonia, during the period extending from August 26 to September 5, 2001. The exhibits were displayed at the Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, from August 26, which was the date of her birth, to September 9, the anniversary of her death, in Skopje, the city of her birth. Simultaneously however the unrest in Kosovo erupted. It was Oki’s hope that the collection would somehow urge people to recall

---

17 Albanians were 90% of Kosovo’s population, but they remained a deprived class and their language and schooling rights were heavily curtailed. The war between Serbs and Albanians in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo started in 1998 and ended in 2001.
love in their hearts and create peace in her homeland, which was sadly enveloped in conflict.  

Oki and Muggeridge built up over many years a deep friendship with Mother Teresa, while at the same time assisting her many activities. Although they had both worked with her directly and developed links with her that spanned several years, yet they had a tendency at times to report inaccurate details concerning some of the events in her life.

Another example was Masanori Kobayashi, an award-winning photographer who netted the United Nations Photography Prize, and who in 1994 published a collection of his photographs entitled Sekai no Okasan Maza Teresa, which I would translate as, Mother Teresa. Mother of the World. However, he also mistakenly records her date of birth as August 27. Kobayashi like others before him also eventually put down his camera and participated in volunteer activities with her, and it was only after obtaining her consent that he began taking photographs. Having done so however his collection turned out to be extremely down-to-earth and honest, but even so there was a discrepancy over her date of birth in his writings.

Although the journalists mentioned above had spent many years collecting information and documenting her life, yet there are many points about her that remain ambiguous. The confusion regarding her date of birth is symbolic of much of the information we have on her, and it was for that reason that I included in this book such an extensive analysis of the topic. My personal opinion is that after her death some newspaper articles around the world reported her date of birth as being the 27th, because it was so stated in the 1973 book of Malcolm Muggeridge. In his 1976 biography, author Desmond Doig also declared August 27 as being the day on which she was born, since Mother Teresa herself had so stated when directly questioned by him, and so some Indian newspapers accepted this statement.

Owing to these reasons, there may arise in this book too some incongruities pertaining to her date of birth and certain other major events in her life. Even though I was blessed with the opportunity of obtaining information through direct interviews with her and others working closely with her over a period of nine years, yet the accuracy of the information can never be completely guaranteed.

As for written sources concerning Mother Teresa, it is essential to analyze and confirm how much time the writers in question had actually spent in India. Recently

18 Mainichi Shinbun (Daily Mainichi), Mother Teresa no aitodoke, August 25, 2001, Evening Newspaper.
authors who have neither been to India nor met Mother in person have yet brought out several publications about her. As I stated earlier journalists who actually got to know her over a period of several years have been able to present a truthful picture of her, yet there are some who although they had never been to India or met Mother Teresa in person, have all the same gone ahead and written books about her. This is not to state though that their books are valueless. The information they contain may be used for purposes of verification, since their contents have been acquired from a variety of sources.

In this work I intend utilizing data both from my personal research and experiences and other literary sources, and primary among these other sources is the work of Navin Chawla. Most sources on Mother Teresa are works written from a Catholic or Christian standpoint. Navin Chawla’s work however presents a Hindu perspective, and this difference in religious background is a matter of prime importance for this work. Praising the work of Navin Chawla, Fr. Van Exem SJ declared that it was a carefully prepared work, and a great achievement for a Hindu who had come to understand the spiritual aspects of a Catholic nun.

I have also borrowed material from the Skopje journalist Stojan Trenchevski’s documentary script and his book *Tereza*, especially with reference to the spelling and pronunciation of Mother Teresa’s family name, since this information varies greatly depending on the source.

Neither Navin Chawla nor Stojan Trenchevski hail from a Catholic background, and the purpose behind their work was not so much to explore the spiritual aspects of Mother Teresa’s life as to lay before us details of her daily living. Hence the elucidation of Christian religious concepts in their works may not always be exact. This however is understandable, since it was not their specific aim. Hence, when dealing with matters of Catholic religious thought, I intend referring to the work of the Jesuit Fr. Anselmo Mataix, who in his book *Iyesu wo Aishita Onna Maza Teresa (Mother Teresa: A Woman who Loved Jesus)*, has clearly analyzed and clarified the spiritual constituents of her personality.

**Albanians in Macedonia and Mother Teresa’s Family Background**

Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu who was later to earn renown as Mother Teresa was born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, the present capital of the Republic of Macedonia. Some sources however state that her mother Drona was an Albanian who was born near the city of Venice in Italy.
During my visit to Macedonia I was able to interview Pina Markovska (1914-) the niece of Mother Teresa’s mother, and question her directly regarding her family’s background. Age-wise Mother Teresa and Markovska were separated by four years, and so at the time of the interview Markovska was ninety years old. Despite her age however, she was able during the interview to display a sound recollection of events and matters related to family history. Markovska lost both husband and son at an early age due to illness, and her daughter who had been confined to a wheelchair expired at the age of fifty-six, leaving her alone. Consequently, she was supported in daily life by a few of Mother Teresa’s Sisters, who called on the elderly Markovska every week to help with the cleaning and other duties that are now difficult for her to perform.

According to the account of Markovska, Mother Teresa’s mother was an Albanian hailing from the city of Prizren near Kosovo, but she was unable to explain why people referred to her as belonging to Italy. Recently, groups have sought to manipulate Mother’s Teresa’s ethnic background and use it for political propaganda. Markovska suggested that probably as a reaction to this, others who resented this type of exploitation might have deliberately dispersed this erroneous information, in order to stem off further propaganda efforts by those groups. Markovska also pointed out that political pressure was being exerted in certain quarters, to utilize Mother’s ethnic identity as a tool to support numerous nationalistic movements. She felt that acts like these may have lead to the dissemination of such incorrect information by opposing groups.

Her mother’s name was Dranafile Belnai (1889-1972) but she was called Drona, a word meaning ‘rose’ in Albanian, and because of this she gave her daughter the name Gonxha, which means ‘flower bud.’ The Belnai family members were wealthy people who hailed from Prizren in Kosovo. Originally they were from the village of Novo Selo near Gjakovica, and since the middle of the 18th century they were owners of fields, woods, gardens, and herds of sheep and goats. They also ran bakeries and handicraft shops in the cities of Gjakovica and Prizren, to which they moved at the beginning of the 19th century. Though the family roots were Albanian, yet their faith was Catholic. In her 1998 biography of Mother Teresa entitled, *Mother Teresa. Citizen of Skopje, Citizen of the World*, journalist-author Jasmina Mirlonski recorded the year of Drona’s birth as 1889.

Nikola and Drona had three children. Their elder daughter Aga was born in

---

1904, their son Lazar in 1908, and in 1910 was born their second daughter Goxha, who later became Mother Teresa. Since her eldest daughter Aga was born in 1904, through simple calculation we may conclude that Drona would have been just fourteen years old when she married, and fifteen when she gave birth to Aga. On discussing the issue with Mirlonski she confirmed this fact, by explaining that marriage at such a young age was a widespread practice in those days. Drona came from a well-to-do family that was involved in land and property management. At certain times of the year the family also manufactured jewelry, and for this reason her father frequently visited Skopje.

Nikola’s family, that is, the family of Mother Teresa’s father, managed a small inn in addition to his involvement in construction business. Apparently Drona’s father was a regular customer at the Bojaxhiu shops and inn, for whenever he came to Skopje on business he would stay at the Bojaxhiu inn. It was in this way that the two families came into contact with each other, and later due to the intimate relations that grew between them a marriage was arranged between Drona aged 14 and Nikola aged 28. All Catholic families of that time were referred to as Latins. Regardless of ethnic background they had strong ties with each other, and consequently they often arranged marriages between their children. Such was the case with Nikola and Drona.

It has been said that Nikola Bojaxhiu (1875-1919) was Albanian, but according to Tony Josifovski the nephew of Nikola’s cousin, whether this was true or not is uncertain. It does seem as though Catholic Albanians tended to marry within their own group. Hence the marriage of Mother Teresa’s parents might have exemplified this custom, and it might even serve to confirm the fact that both families were of a Catholic Albanian background. At the same time however in the Bojaxhiu family line there were numerous cases of marriage with people outside the group, and so it is impossible to establish whether both families were in fact pure-blooded Albanians or not.

In yet other sources, Vlach and not Albanian ethnicity is attributed to Nikola’s family, because ethnically the surname does sound Vlach. On discussing this point with Professor Balabanov though, he provided me with the following clarification regarding names in the region.

“My own last name was originally Balabanjan, but during Serbian rule Skopje names were altered to sound more Serbian in tone. Thus my last name became Balabanvic. Once again, when shifting to a region under Bulgarian rule, in order to be included in the citizens’ register the name was changed to Balabanov. Thus an analysis of the surname of a person from the Balkan
Peninsula has little meaning or worth in discerning ethnic background.”\(^{20}\)

So, ultimately to which ethnic group did Nikola belong? Since even his relatives are unable to cast much light on the issue, I will permit the question to remain unanswered. It does seem as though he were not a pure Albanian, but it is possible that I may be wrong in my analysis. What we may confidently assert is that Nikola was born in Skopje, for the family name appears in the town registry from the 18\(^{th}\) century, the period during which the Turkish Ottoman Empire ruled Skopje.

According to the official Ottoman records, the Bojaxhiu family had lived in Skopje as early as the 18\(^{th}\) century. They lived in the center of the city near the left bank of the Vardar River, in a single-story house with a large yard. In the yard were two shops and an inn. One shop was for the sale of construction tools, and the other was a dyer’s shop or ‘bojadzija’ in the local language (pronounced “boyajiya”). The customers were both people from Skopje and merchants from outside the city.

Most of the merchants were Vlachs, and they were usually shepherders. They would come to Skopje in order both to sell their dairy products and dye their wool at the shop, and they would lodge at the inn. The street on which the Bojaxhiu shops were located was called ‘Boyajiski sokak’ (meaning ‘dyer’s street’) and the neighborhood was called ‘Vlashko maalo’ (meaning Vlachs’ neighborhood).

The Bojaxhiu family members were devoutly Catholic, and there was also a Catholic Church in their neighborhood called the Church of the Heart of Jesus. Mother Teresa’s great-grandfather Niko Bojaxhiu ran a construction business and managed a handicrafts shop in the city. On August 9, 1873, as a dynamic craftsman of the city, he was given charge of the decorations during the opening ceremony of the Skopje railway station. Lazar Bojaxhiu the grandfather of Mother Teresa married Cila, and in keeping with tradition he took over the business of Niko, the grandfather of Nikola.\(^{21}\)

Mother Teresa’s father Nikola was the only child of Lazar and Cila. He was named after his grandfather Niko (whose full name was Nikola), and young Nikola was called Kole. Depending on the source however Nikola’s occupation was said to have ranged from pharmacist to craftsman, architect, carpenter, construction entrepreneur, and politician. Some also state that he was a city council member, thereby showing that he was probably a person of considerable wealth and popularity. With regard to her father’s occupations of architect, politician, and farmer, Navin Chawla’s study included...

\(^{20}\) I personally received this information in the course of an interview with Professor Balabanov.

an interview with Lazarus Bojaxhiu (1908-1981) Mother Teresa’s brother, in which the occupations of architect and city council member were confirmed. According to this interview, the idea of his having been a farmer arose from the fact that the family had a few fruit trees in their yard. Besides, since Drona’s family had been involved in agriculture and land ownership, it is possible that such a notion grew out of that fact. Fr. Edward Le Jolly SJ has also recorded this in his book on Mother entitled, *We do it for Jesus*, a work based on interviews with Fr. Julian Henry SJ (1901-1979), who had worked closely with Mother Teresa. Fr. Mataix also points out this discrepancy.

Incidentally, when I was at the Mother House I called on Fr. Le Jolly and spoke to him directly regarding the matter, and accordingly I can confirm the close relationship he maintained with Mother Teresa as her spiritual director. However, based on the Skopje journalist's research and interviews conducted with her family members, one can say that Nikola was experienced in the professions of pharmacist, craftsman, and architect, and that later he became a successful entrepreneur. Nevertheless, on concluding my research in Skopje, I learned that Nikola had actually been interested in working as a medical assistant, and that he had in fact worked at the pharmacy of Dr. Soskalovic, a family friend and a famous doctor in Skopje. The pharmacy was located just across the Vardar River, about a five-minute walk from the family home near the Orthodox Christian Church of Saint Dimitri.

Nikola helped Dr. Soskalovic in his office and traveled with him on business to Italy, France, the Austro-Hungarian region, Walachia, Egypt and around the Turkish Empire. His mother hoped that he would become a pharmacist, but on graduating from the school for manufacturers in Skopje he prepared himself to take over his father's business. As Nikola was a pleasant-natured man with good commercial sense, the business prospered under his management. Also, as a lover of art and culture, he was instrumental in setting up the Skopje theatre. In 1906, the local Turkish ruler Shefket Pasha started the construction of the first Skopje theatre. Nikola led the campaign for donations to help the project, and he himself donated construction materials from his shop. In 1912, he became a member of the city council, and thus a respected citizen of Skopje. He was one of 12 councilors, and represented his neighborhood ‘Vlashko maalo’ (meaning Vlachs’ neighborhood). Lazar and his wife Cila (pronounced Chila)

---

23 Edward Le Joly SJ, *We do it for Jesus*, Mumbai, St Paul’s (Second Print), 1999, p. 15.
built a new two-story house next to their former residence, and it was built for their only son Nikola. Later the street got the name Pop Kocina (pronounced Pop Kochina), and the new house got the number thirteen.

Mother Teresa’s family lived at 13 Pop Kocina Street, just next to the Vardar River that flows through the country southeast into Greece. In 1963 an earthquake of magnitude 6 rocked Skopje, killing over 1100 people. It destroyed the home in which Mother Teresa was raised, and so today the street has become a busy shopping mall. In the vicinity there lay the church where she was baptized namely the church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which was also destroyed, although the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was miraculously spared and is now displayed in the reconstructed church. To this day Catholics of the city venerate the statue and pray before it, and besides, being the only Catholic Church in Skopje, it was the site of Drona and Nikola’s wedding and also the family baptisms.

When Mother Teresa was growing up the church was only about four blocks away from the family home, but after the earthquake it was re-located to an area outside the center of the city, about twenty minutes by foot from the original location. Since the socialist Yugoslav government of that time declared churches and other places of worship as undesirable in the city center, a location outside the center was chosen for the renovated church. Although the Yugoslav government did not permit the building of a new church, they did however permit the rebuilding of the ruined one.

When the catastrophic earthquake hit Skopje Mother Teresa was in India, and in 1967 she managed to organize the shipment of emergency goods to Skopje from India. Later in 1970 under the sponsorship of the Macedonian Red Cross she returned to Skopje at the age of 60, this being her first visit since leaving the town at the age of 18. Today the vicinity around Pop Kocina Street where her childhood home lay is a bustling shopping area, located in the city’s business center, just off Macedonia Square. A memorial plaque on the square marks the site of her home, and the spot where the house originally stood is clearly designated.

**Mother’s Relationship to Skopje**

Mother Teresa visited Skopje a total of four times since leaving it at the age of

---

25 It is based on the real estate documents of her parents’ home of those days. Tony Josifovski has the documents now. Being the nephew of Mother Teresa’s father’s cousin he has a right to her parents’ home, though at present the home does not exist.
18, and on this visit as she walked along the banks of the Vardar River recalling her childhood memories, she remarked as follows:

“I thank you for all this from the bottom of my heart. It means so much to me to be able to come back here after 52 years. Even though Skopje has changed and looks completely different, it's still the Skopje where I was born and where I spent my childhood days with my family, a place where I was happy. Those were good times. Now, I'm especially happy because my sisters will be able to give their love to our people in sign of gratitude to all. Even though a small number of sisters will remain, only four, I believe they'll be able to give the love and warmth that I received in this city. We haven’t much to give, but what we give, we give from the bottom of our hearts.”26

Immediately after being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978 she visited the Macedonian Red Cross, and during the visit she spoke to the Red Cross representative Dare Xhambaz and said, “Skopje is my hometown.”27 Also, to Vasko Popovski the mayor of Skopje she said:

“Imagine that I should live to receive such a heartwarming acknowledgement from the people of my hometown of Skopje! I’ve been all over the world and I’ve received many acknowledgements, however I’ll keep this one close to my heart because it means so much to me.”28

During this brief visit she also dropped into the Letnica Monastery of Kosovo, where she dedicated herself to God prior to her departure for her mission in India when she was 18 years of age. In answer to a journalist’s question regarding her nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, she replied:

“That would be nice, because we planned on building about 200 houses for lepers. If they gave me the Nobel Prize, good. If they don’t, its also good. However, I’d like to tell the people that only love can bring peace to the

27 Ibid, p. 38
28 Ibid, p. 42
Before leaving Skopje Mother Teresa said, “I’ll be back again with my sisters to help my fellow citizens. That’s my debt to my birthplace, Skopje.” On several other occasions she used phrases such as “my birthplace Skopje, my fellow citizens,” and “people of my homeland.” It is obvious from this that Skopje occupied a special place in her heart, and that she held its people in high esteem.

Various political groups have attempted to make use of Mother Teresa in order to support their individual goals, and some in particular have emphasized their links to her in an effort to shore up their political causes. However on completing my in-depth research in Skopje, I reached the conclusion that Mother Teresa in all likelihood identified herself as a Skopjanka (a citizen of Skopje), rather than anything else. During her eighteen years in Skopje the ruling authority changed hands from the Ottoman Turks to the Serbs, and to complicate the issue even more, due the fact that she had already departed for the shores of India she never had the experience of living in Macedonia, either when it was part of Yugoslavia or even when it became an independent nation. It seems likely to me therefore that she experienced within herself a feeling of being a citizen of Skopje, because the fear of being politically exploited was a constant source of worry for her.

In Skopje, a city where rulers frequently changed and people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds co-existed, a sense of being a Skopjanka appears to have developed. This concept transcended barriers of religion and ethnicity, and emphasized the ideas of tolerance and harmony with regard to differences. It is this Skopjanka identity that I feel most aptly suits the manner in which Mother Teresa pursued her life, and the results of such thinking are apparent in her activities.

On obtaining the Nobel Prize in 1979, Mother Teresa was invited to Skopje the following year. At that time in keeping with her promise to the people of Skopje she returned to aid the poor and destitute of the city, and four Sisters of her congregation came along at the same time in order to carry out the work. Currently at the Mother Teresa residence in Skopje there are four Sisters. They run an orphanage for abandoned children and a soup kitchen to feed the poor of the city.

After receiving the Nobel Prize she was awarded the distinction of becoming

30 Ibid, p. 40
31 Missionaries of Charity, UL. GEORGI. DIMITROV 38.1000 SKOPJE
an Honorary Citizen of Skopje, and on that occasion she made reference to her winning of the Prize, commenting as follows:

“I didn’t achieve all that on my own. I have many sisters, many people that we call co-workers. We have other people, baptized and non-baptized that worked and shared their love with the people. However, we’ve gained more from the poor than they have from us. Even, when it is most difficult for me, when I am around the sick, the children, the old people, when I help them, god watches over me and gives me strength. He brings me back to my youth, to Skopje, by the river Vardar, and he gives me strength to save people.”

To another journalist she expressed her views in the following way:

“I received that prize for the poor. I received the prize in their name. If I didn’t work for them and with them, I wouldn’t have received the Nobel Prize. By awarding me the Nobel Prize, they proved that the work of love is also a work for peace. With the Nobel Prize that I received I’ll try to build a home for many people that haven’t got a home.”

The message that Mother emphasized with reference to the people of her homeland was the power of love to create peace. Regardless of ethnic differences or whether people were baptized or not, by working together and understanding each other with love, it was possible for us to establish peace. Mother visited Skopje four times until 1986. Not only did she daily visit the Catholic Church where the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was placed in order to hear Mass, but she visited also the Macedonian Orthodox Church in order to heal the long-standing historical wounds that separated the Eastern and Western churches. The hometown she so loved however was a place where people like her mother were daily confronted by problems of inequality, the constant threat of conflict, and rule by different powers, and the roots of these divergences can be exposed by a study of the population and religious features of the area.

33 Ibid, p. 44
Population and Conflicts

The death of Mother Teresa’s father Nikola when she was only 9 years old was a decisive event in her life, and so I intend dealing with this event in greater detail at a later stage. As a result of this early death she was for the most part raised by her mother Drona, and so it would be reasonable to say that she received more of her mother’s influence than her father’s. While I am of the view that Mother Teresa felt a greater attachment to her Skopjanka identity than to any other, yet it is a fact that her mother Drona was an ethnic Albanian.

There were few Albanians living in Macedonia, and hence, as is the case in other parts of the world, from the remote past conflicts between different groups were noticed with regard to both population and religion. First, from the standpoint of the population, it is known that when Mother was born in 1910 the population of Macedonia was two million. The breakdown according to ethnicity was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanies</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judging by these figures, we notice that in 1910, which was the period of Ottoman rule, the Albanians made up the fourth largest ethnic group in Macedonia. However the Macedonian Information Center made available to me the population figures from 1953 which was the Yugoslav period to 1994 which was the period of the Republic of Macedonia, and so I present here below a comparison between the data of 1953 and 1994.

---


According Mark Mazower’s book entitled *The Balkans*, under the rule of the Ottoman Empire the inhabitants of the territory were registered not on the basis of their race but their religion, that is, as Muslims or non-Muslims. So some questions arise regarding the population comparison data in *A Short History of Yugoslavia*. Confer Mark Mazower, *The Balkans*, London, Phoenix press, 2001.

The method of counting the population of each race is different now from what it used to be when the Ottomans ruled Macedonia. The area that constituted Macedonia also varied with reference to the political situation.
At the time of Mother Teresa’s birth the Albanians constituted the fourth largest ethnic group in Macedonia, but according to the population figures obtained from the Macedonian Information Center, we see that by 1953 the Albanian population had increased to occupy the third place, and by 1994 they had moved up to the second place. That is to say, during the period 1953-1994, while Macedonians remained a stable 66% of the overall population, the number of Albanians increased from 13.5% to 22.7%. At the time of Mother Teresa’s birth the population of Albanians in Macedonia stood at 120,000, but over the next 84 years it expanded nearly four times to reach 441,104 in 1994.

In 1913, Albania, which later became the Republic of Albania, gained independence from the Ottoman Empire. Currently the population of Albania stands at 3,400,000, and 97% of the population is Albanian. Following independence however Albanians from other parts of the Balkan Peninsula immigrated to the Republic of Albania, though at the same time the number of Albanians living in Macedonia between 1910 and 1953 rose from 120,000 to 162,542. Even though many Albanians in Macedonia possibly moved back to the independent Albanian Republic, the population of Albanians in Macedonia still grew a little. From 1956 to 1978 Albanians who lived in Kosovo moved abroad to Macedonia in search of farmland and work, and this is one of the reasons for the growth in the Albanian population. As the Albanians in Macedonia grew to constitute a major ethnic group, relations between them and the Macedonians underwent a decisive change.

---

East-West Religious Conflicts and Discriminatory Political Policies

What I would like to examine next is the religious aspect of the Macedonian-Albanian relationship. Albanians and Macedonians lived in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula, and like all communities in the world they had their ethnic and national aspirations. For Albanians, survival as an ethnic group was through religion. During the nearly five hundred years of rule by the Ottoman Empire many Albanians rejected their traditional Orthodox Christian beliefs, and converted to Islam. Even today in Macedonia 22.9% of the population is Albanian, most of whom are Muslims, and 66.5% are Macedonians, mostly Christian Orthodox.

Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire ethnic Macedonians sought to protect their religious beliefs, but prior to dealing with the religious differences between the converted Albanians and the Orthodox Christian Macedonians, I would like to look into the historical and religious milieu in Macedonia.

In 395 AD the Roman Empire split into East and West, and even prior to that there began within Christianity a gradual separation between the two, brought about by differences in doctrine and worship. The Roman Church stretched into Western Europe as far as Germany, while the Eastern Orthodox Church extended to the East to include Macedonia and the Slavic language region, to the mouth of the Danube River over to Russia. It was at this point in history that the Rome-centered Western Church and the Constantinople-centered Eastern Orthodox Churches were formed.

In Macedonia, it was St. Paul who initially carried out Christian missionary work. There are fourteen letters of his that the Roman Catholic Church accepts as Holy Scripture, and his ‘Second letter to the Corinthians’ was written in 57 AD, when he stayed at Macedonia. St. Paul declared that he received assistance from Macedonia for his missionary work in Corinth, and on this he wrote, “It was the brothers who came from Macedonia who brought me all I needed.” (11:9). Furthermore, his ‘First letter to Timothy’ and ‘Second letter to Timothy’ were written during his stay in Macedonia in 65 AD.  

In the 4th century fourteen martyrs followed St. Paul’s mission, and in the 9th century the brothers St. Cyril (827-869) and St. Methodius (826-885) achieved great success in the conversion of the Slavs. The brothers, through educating the Slavic people and teaching them the reading and writing of their own languages, were able to spread the message of Eastern Orthodoxy. They developed the Cyrillic alphabet, and it

---

37 *Bible*, Tokyo, Translated by Fr. Federico Barbaro SDB, Tokyo, Koudansya, 1980, p. 230
is believed that owing to the simplicity of this system they met with success in the
conversion of the majority of the Slavic people of the Balkan Peninsula. As a result they
were able to translate texts from original Greek or old Slavic languages into the
language of the common people. In Macedonia, this was one of the main reasons for the
success of Eastern Orthodoxy, but as Macedonians acquired the ability to write in their
own language, the foundations of the Macedonian Orthodox Church began to develop.

In actual fact however the Eastern Orthodox Church of that period was
nurturing the objective of making Macedonia and its people a part of the congregation
of Eastern Orthodoxy, and to achieve this purpose they sent the brothers Cyril and
Methodius to preach in Macedonia. However, Cyril and Methodius, whose mother
happened to be Slavic Macedonian did not fulfill the purpose of the Eastern Orthodox
Church, but instead helped in influencing the decision of Pope John VIII (872-882) in
permitting the celebration of Holy Mass in the Slavic tongues as well as in Latin, and
later when the Pope died abroad, it was said to have been St Cyril who was responsible
for conveying the bones of the deceased Pope back to Rome. St. Methodius died on
April 6, 885, in Moravia. St Cyril died on February 14, 869, in Rome, and his body was
placed in the Church of Sacrament. Now they are both canonized saints of the Roman
Catholic Church, and Catholics celebrate their feast every year on July 7 or March 9.38

Geographically Macedonia was located at the crossroads between the Western
Roman Empire and the Eastern Church’s capital of Constantinople. The main route of
that period from Rome to Constantinople started from the Italian harbor town of Bari,
crossed the sea to Durres, which is now part of the Albanian Republic, and then crossed
Macedonia on the way to the final destination, namely Constantinople. Occupying such
a spot in-between the Eastern and Western worlds, the Orthodoxy in the Macedonian
Church developed by accepting the influences of both the Eastern and Western Church
traditions, rather than that of Eastern Orthodoxy alone.

Since Macedonia occupied this central position between the East and the West,
the people of the country’s capital, Skopje, developed a unique character. On this point
Biljana Jovanovska, a long time journalist who worked for the magazine Zum, and who
has written widely on the subject of religion in the Balkan Peninsula, commented:

“As Macedonia is situated in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, historically it
came a sort of stage for invasions and disputes across the region. The people

38 Originally the feast day of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the Catholic Church was on March 9.
However, Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) changed their feast to the present July 7.
of Skopje developed a sense of tolerance and harmony, out of the sufferings, hardships, and turmoil they had endured. I feel that those who have endured suffering such as the people of Skopje, tend to develop into a gentler and more compassionate people.\(^{39}\)

Her analysis of the qualities of compassion and tolerance, carried out from the standpoint of a historical insight into the religious and political state of affairs in Skopje, matches the situation in India.

At the close of the 9th century, St. Clement (- 910) and St Nahum (- 916), pupils of the brothers Cyril and Methodius, concluded their work of converting the Slavs to Christianity. In the last half of the 6th century, the Slavic ethnic group had immigrated to the region of Macedonia, and by the 10th century they had been converted to Christianity.

Through the 10th and 11th centuries there increasingly developed a rivalry between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. This enmity in 1054 led to the two religious leaders mutually excommunicating each other, and both parties formally recognized the split. As a result of the split the countries in Eastern Europe had to choose between the East and the West, and this resulted in domestic conflicts across the region. The central European regions that had been converted to Christianity and the Eastern European regions now had to choose between the Eastern and Western Churches, and a choice between the Latin or Cyrillic alphabet became the deciding factor. This point can be understood from the example of Croatia. Although it was a Slavic country the Croats chose to use the Latin alphabet over the Cyrillic, meaning they had chosen the Catholic West over the Orthodox East.

Now what became of Macedonia, the country in which St. Cyril actually created the alphabet? On this point Mutsuo Shimizu in his study of Slavic history refers to the work of the Polish political refugee and scholar Henryk Paskiewicz, a work entitled \textit{The Making of the Russian Nation}. Paskiewicz argues as follows: The original religious practices and faith teachings that Cyril and Methodius had communicated to the Slavs, is referred to as ‘Slavic Belief.’ This was really a combination of the Roman and the Orthodox, as it neither completely had the Roman style nor the Byzantine elements. Hence Slavic belief was a fusion of both Roman and Byzantine.

\(^{39}\) I personally received this information in the course of an interview with Biljana Jovanovska, who is a long time journalist working for the magazine \textit{Zam}. She has written widely on the subject of religion in the Balkan Peninsula. She is a citizen of Skopje.
characteristics. Thus while Macedonia had formally chosen Eastern Orthodoxy, what it actually represented was a special form of the Slavic religion, which combined Byzantine and Roman elements. Later however, this would prove to be the beginnings of Macedonian Christian Orthodoxy.

St. Clement and St. Nahum, both pupils of Saints Cyril and Methodius, built up the Ohrid Archiepiscopy, and it was here that the first Slavic university was founded. This action had the effect of propelling forward the movement in Eastern Orthodoxy, as the teachings of the faith were spread through education, first to the upper classes and gradually down to the common people of the area. In 976 Samuel founded the powerful Slavic kingdom by building up the Ohrid Archiepiscopy, but it collapsed soon after in 1018. This was the period during which Roman and Byzantine elements fused to become the base of Macedonian Orthodoxy, and it was also a period when many convents, monasteries, and cathedrals were raised in the region.

In the 1392 battle of Kosovo the Ottoman Turkish forces were victorious. Macedonia began 500 years of rule by the Ottoman Empire, and Macedonian Christian Orthodox followers fell under the Islamic rule of the Ottomans. The Ottoman Turks demanded heavy taxes of the Christians and instituted a system called ‘Millet’ which divided people into ‘Muslims’ and ‘non-Muslims,’ in order to govern them. ‘Yenicari’ was a military system that was included in the ‘Millet,’ whereby all boys of Christian background were forced to serve in the army. Yenicari was referred to as ‘tax in blood’ but it was a system not just of enforced enlistment but also voluntary. We notice that the discriminatory policies of the Ottoman Turks were based not on racial distinctions but religious ones, for any person who followed a religion other than Islam was not permitted to hold any public office. Gradually some Albanians in Macedonia left the Orthodox Church and converted to Islam, in order to retain their ethnic individuality.

In a study entitled Turkey in Europe published in 1900 while the Turks still ruled the Balkan Peninsula, the author maintained that those Albanians who converted to Islam from Christianity, in fact still followed pre-Christian traditional customs in their marriages and funerals. He is of the view that since their earlier conversion to Christianity was not a very serious change, their succeeding conversion to Islam too was easier when compared with other ethnic groups. Thus it would make sense to say that compared to other ethnic groups of Europe the Albanians put up less of a resistance

---

to conversion, since they viewed it as a conversion only in name and not in spirit.\(^{42}\)

Albanian conversion to Islam occurred in two waves. First, directly after Turkish rule began, and later in the 17\(^{th}\) century when the policy of granting key government posts to Islamic converts was instituted. The sultan immediately recommended all who converted to Islam to high and lucrative political positions, and furthermore they were exempted from heavy taxation. On the other hand however ethnic Macedonian Christians who insisted on upholding their Orthodox Christian faith were subject to taxation, compulsory military service, and other such practices, and hence from this stage onwards the separation between the Orthodox Christian Macedonians and Muslim Albanians was marked.

However, the fact is that the Albanians were not given special treatment by the ruling Ottoman Turks. While Greece, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria each gained the status of independent states under Turkish rule, Albania was not granted the right to independence. One possible reason for this may lie in the fact that the Albanians had so easily adjusted to the new Turkish rule, that they did not actually demand an independent state as the others had done. However, even the Albanian language was not accepted as an official language in education and in government circles. Ottoman Turkish rule was marked by an attitude of tolerance towards those ethnic groups that demanded cultural or linguistic rights, and this was done as a measure of conciliation. Using this type of a broad governing style, the Turks did not seek to suppress ethnic consciousness. For example, they did not force the use of the Turkish language on people under their rule, and so while other European ethnic groups may think that the Albanians received special treatment under the Ottoman Turks, evidence points to the fact that this is an unfair assessment.

Currently the population of Macedonia consists of 66.66% Orthodox Christians, 30.06% Muslims, 0.49% Catholics, and 2.79% others.\(^{43}\) Mother Teresa’s parents being Catholic, in Macedonia today they would account for only 0.5% of the total population, but her parents were among the few ethnic Albanians in Macedonia who upheld their Catholic faith among the predominantly Muslim Albanians. At this


“At the time of the Turkish conquest they were normally Christians. Though, from the number of pagan customs, which still survived in their weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies, it may be surmised that their conversion was only superficial. Subsequently they distinguished themselves by embracing Islam more readily than any other European race.”

point I feel it essential to address the conflicts that occurred between the Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christian believers.

As I mentioned earlier, the 1054 schism between the Eastern and Western Churches was related to doctrinal differences. In addition however there arose differences of opinion between the leaders in Constantinople (currently Istanbul) and Rome, with reference to the religious and political dominance of the world. Sad to say however during the 4th Crusade in 1204 Roman armies attacked Constantinople in force, and from that point on relations between the two groups became irreparably severed.

On May 4, 2001, Pope John Paul II met the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Christodoulos, and made the following statement.

“Certainly we are burdened by past and present controversies and by enduring misunderstandings. But in a spirit of mutual charity these can and must be overcome, for that is what the Lord asks of us. Clearly, there is a need for a liberating process of purification of memory. For the occasions past and present, when sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have sinned by action or omission against their Orthodox brothers and sisters, may the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of him.” (Courtesy visit of His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and Primate of Greece, Friday, May 4, 2001).

The Greek Orthodox Archbishop thereupon embraced the Pope and commended his words. However, the nearly 800 years of antagonism between the Churches could not be overcome by a single embrace, and so tensions between them still prevail. Thus we see that Mother Teresa’s Catholic family were a minority, even within the Albanian ethnic group.

It appears as though the people of Skopje with their character of tolerance and harmony managed to avoid many of the ethnic and religious conflicts, as well as any discrimination and mistreatment. Concerning this, Tony Josifovski, the nephew of Mother Teresa’s father’s cousin remarked, “I consider myself a Skopjanec, just like everyone else living in Skopje. In everyday life and business we don’t really think about the ethnic group we belong to, or the religion we subscribe to. I think Mother Teresa felt the same way, like a Skopjanka.”

Ironically though, under the rule of the Turks the various ethnic groups lived peacefully together, and it was only after the end of Turkish rule that each ethnic group began national movements for independence, and this led to the fall of the Turkish
empire and the eruption of both the first and second Balkan wars. Even today, the Macedonia-Albanian conflict still simmers.

Mother Teresa’s father died at what could be called a historical turning point in these ethnic conflicts, and I am of the view that there lies a link between those historical circumstances and his death.

At the conclusion of the second Balkan war Skopje fell under the control of the Serbs, and this was when Mother Teresa was educated in school speaking the Serbian language, between the ages of six and eighteen or between 1916 and 1928. After interviewing her for Macedonian Radio Trenchevski remarked that Mother Teresa could not speak Albanian, and that the interview was conducted in Serbian. Under Serbian rule the common language used in Skopje was Serbian, and it was during this crucial period that she received her education. Naturally, her knowledge of Serbian far surpassed her knowledge of both Albanian and Macedonian.

She entered a Catholic elementary school, but later she transferred to a public elementary school. Here Serbian was the language of instruction, and her classmates comprised both Macedonians and Albanians. Ethnically the Albanian children were the same as Mother Teresa, but with regard to religion they were different. In her class there were both Albanians and Macedonians. Even against the backdrop of such religious and inter-ethnic divergences she managed to live with people of diverse backgrounds, and she possibly realized here that if such differences were not accentuated, it was possible for all to live peacefully together.

**Her Mother Drona’s Influence and the Love of Neighbors**

On analyzing Mother Teresa’s faith, it is impossible to ignore the profound devotion she held for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her mother Drona recited the rosary daily together with her children, and Mother Teresa herself spoke of her saying, “She taught us to love God and to love our neighbor.” She also said, “I was very close to my mother.”

So, from where was it that she acquired her special devotion to Mary? Perhaps a little explanation regarding Catholic religious practice is necessary here.

---

44 It was referred to as Serbo-Croatian during the period of Yugoslavia (1943-1991). However, after the independence of Serbia and Croatia, it was divided into the Serbian language and the Croatian language. Hence in Mother Teresa’s biography, which was written during the period of Yugoslavia, it is described as Serbo-Croatian.

45 Catholics use Rosary beads to pray to the Virgin Mary.

46 Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, p. 2.
Although there is a unified Catholic faith and dogma, I personally have witnessed certain minor differences in practice in various countries, which I believe are the result of cultural influences. For instance, people in a certain region may be devoted to a particular saint or to the mother of Jesus, or they may continue to retain in their religious practices elements that are remnants of former religious beliefs, beliefs they embraced prior to accepting Christianity. Due to such regional or cultural differences Catholics of dissimilar backgrounds reveal diverse tendencies in their worship.

In the Skopje region there is a legend associated with the church that Mother Teresa and her family used to attend, concerning a miracle involving the Virgin Mary. The story is well known among members of Skopje’s Catholic community, and I myself heard the story from Anton Serechi, one of the founders of the ‘Citizens Association Mother Teresa.’ According to Serechi, about 4 or 5 years after building the church around 1880, the statue of the Virgin Mary suddenly vanished, and reappeared in another church in Montenegro. Catholics around Skopje believed that this disappearance and relocation was a miracle. On August 15, which is the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, a pilgrimage was conducted to the church in Montenegro, namely the church of St. Mary of Montenegro (Sveta Bogorodica). During the pilgrimage further miracles are reported to have occurred such as the curing of illnesses, and people say that such miracles continue to the present day.

Currently at the church of the Sacred Heart parishioners gather daily at 5:30 PM in order to recite together the rosary, and after Mass at 6:00 PM there is a special 10 to 15 minutes of devotional prayer, specially for the Virgin Mary. In Tokyo Catholic churches this sort of devotion to the Blessed Virgin is rarely seen, except in the Mother Teresa branch house located in Tokyo. Despite the fact that this type of devotion is rare in a Japanese Catholic church, yet in Skopje it is a normal and accepted form of prayer. Judging by this devotion that arose as a result of a miracle in the Skopje, it is not difficult to comprehend how various forms of devotion appear in areas across the world.

Mother Teresa’s parents may have had a direct experience of this miracle, and this in turn might have affected Mother Teresa’s faith and devotion to the Virgin Mary. On perusing her life and activity we notice the influence her mother’s faith had on her, a few examples of which I have presented below.

Following a heart attack on September 4, 1989, Mother Teresa was hospitalized at a Calcutta nursing home named Woodlands Nursing Home, and she underwent surgery for the implantation of a pacemaker. When her condition worsened however on September 18, she requested the Sisters of her congregation to pray for her,
using the words, “Mary, Mother of Jesus of Medjugorje make our Mother alright.”

Medjugorje is a town in Bosnia-Herzegovina where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared. On September 22, Mother Teresa requested the following prayer to be said, “Jesus, tell your Mother to make our Mother alright. So that Mother can carry you to Albania.” On that day Sr. Agnes made a telephone call to the children in Medjugorje who had witnessed the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, and requested the children to deliver Mother’s message. Although some felt that this sort of a prayer raised Mary above Jesus, yet they respected Mother’s wishes and offered the prayers according to her will.

It was at this time that she obtained the permission of the Albanian government to send four nuns to Albania, to serve its people. Her mother and sister had emigrated to Tirana in Albania and had eventually expired there, and so viewed from this perspective it is not difficult to appreciate why she was so eager to convey the word of God to Albania, for Albania was the land where her mother and sister had lived, a country where the practice of religion was prohibited. Mother Teresa’s sister Aga shifted to Albania in 1934 and two years later in 1936 her mother Drona joined her, but in 1948 Albania became a closed country. In 1972 her mother expired at the age of 93, and two years later her sister Aga also passed away at the age of 70, and they were both buried in Tirana. She also implored the prayers of Pope John Paul II regarding her visit to Albania and wrote, “I am offering all for Albania, as the government has given permission for four sisters to enter. Holy Father, pray for me.” Despite the fact she experienced severe pain owing to her heart condition, yet because the poor to whom she ministered were unable to afford such luxuries as painkillers, she refused to take them herself. This however caused her doctors a great deal of stress and worry.

Mother Teresa was hospitalized once again when her condition worsened, but even then she did not pray merely for her own recovery. Her will to recover was linked to her need to provide aid to Albania, the country where her mother and sister were buried, and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary she attempted to complete her mission in Albania.

In July 1991, she wrote me the following letter:

“I am sure you will be happy to hear about the miracles Our Lady has done for us in opening up Albania to the Church through the Missionaries of

---

47 According to the diary of a Sister of the Missionaries of Charity, Sep. 4th to Oct. 14, 1989
Charity. It is a time of special grace for the Church and the people there who are so hungry for God. Our Sisters there have a beautiful apostolate—that of opening the minds and hearts of the people to God. Please pray for our Sisters in Albania that they may do it beautifully.”

It is clear from this that she attributed the opening of her mother’s ethnic homeland, Albania, to the Virgin Mary. “Jesus through Mary” and “All for Jesus through Mary” are phrases she often used, and this inclusion of Mary as an essential figure is also seen in her religious congregation, namely the Missionaries of Charity. All the Sisters include the name of Mary in their names, and Mother Teresa’s own full name was Mother Mary Teresa MC. She felt she could speak directly to Mary, and that she shared a special relationship of intimacy with her.48

This reliance on the Virgin Mary is revealed in numerous instances related to the daily life of the Missionaries of Charity. In prayer, the Sisters of the congregation look upon the Virgin Mary as an intercessor to Jesus Christ. In illustration of this we have the case where a down payment of Rs. 85,000 was needed, in order to purchase the Mother House. To obtain this money Mother Teresa recited the ‘Memorare,’ a prayer to the Virgin Mary, a total of 85,000 times over a period of three months. During this entire period the Sisters of the convent conducted a daily procession and prayer ceremony at the convent chapel, kneeling before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima (an apparition of the Virgin Mary in Portugal in 1917). The ultimate result was the money needed was duly collected, and the Mother House successfully purchased. As I stated earlier she frequently sought the Virgin Mary’s prayerful intercession, and this confirms the fact that her devotion to Mary was an essential part of her spirituality.

Mother Teresa and her siblings referred to their mother by the name ‘Nana Loke,’ which in Albanian meant ‘soulful person.’ The children realized that their mother’s faith was something special, and so a brief reflection on the faith that inspired her mother, may perhaps offer us an insight into the type of faith that enthused and motivated Mother Teresa herself.

She left her home country at the age of eighteen and was never able to see her mother again, and so in this sense it is understandable that the Virgin Mary became a sort of a surrogate mother to the young Teresa. The sentiments of love and trust she felt

48 Jose Luis Gonzales-Balado, *Mother Teresa: One heart full of love*, Tokyo, Translated by Kazuko Watanabe, P H P shuppan, 2000, p. 115.
towards the Virgin Mary were like a cherished friendship or a deep familial relationship. Whenever she passed a picture or image of Mary, whether it was in a Church or outside in the garden, she would bow as though greeting a friend. While she did the same whenever she saw a crucifix, yet statues of Mary appeared more frequently in the church, since images of Mary may even be seen at places removed from the altar. In addition, before leaving the convent or arriving, she would always advise me and my mother to “get the blessings of Mary.” It became a sort of a casual greeting for her, and she ceaselessly reminded others of it. In this way her devotion to Mary was transformed into a natural inclination, both for those living in the convent and those working at the houses of the congregation in India.

Mother Teresa’s reliance on the intercession of the Virgin Mary at times caused people to misunderstand her. I personally feel however that it is essential for us to realize that the relationship she bore to the Virgin, was analogous to her relationship to her mother who remained behind in Skopje. The human love that she felt for her mother was sublimated into a spiritual love for the Virgin Mary. She felt that Jesus too during his days upon this earth had demonstrated the same type of devotion and love for his mother, a love that is graphically presented in the story of the wedding feast at Cana. In that story from the Gospel of John, Mary, noticing that the hosts at the wedding were distressed because there was not enough wine, turned to her son and said, “they have no more wine.” (John 2:3). Jesus thereupon acted to solve the problem even without his mother directly asking him to do so, and the wine miraculously appeared in accordance with her wish.

In the same way, in Mother Teresa’s work, there is never a lack of food or other essentials. Fr. Mataix, describing the situation at the Mother House wrote, “Whenever there is a need, that need is met in the form of a miracle” (Author’s translation). Just as at the wedding feast at Cana the water was miraculously converted into wine, Mother Teresa too received miracles many times over, through the assistance of her spiritual mother Mary. As a child would ask its mother, Mother Teresa too asked and received blessings through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

According to people close to her, not only did her mother Drona influence her faith, but also her character. For example, her mother allowed a family of several children to live rent-free with her own family for over 30 years, and later that family’s fifth daughter was named after her. Mother Teresa and her sister Aga never married, and

---

49 Anselmo Mataix SJ, Iyesu wo aishita Onna Maza Teresa, p. 76.
hence could not pass on their mother’s name to the next generation. However through one of the guest family’s daughters her mother’s name was passed on, for the two families living under the same roof had become like one.\textsuperscript{50}

Slavka Stojanovska was one of four daughters who lived with the family until 1946, and concerning Mother Teresa, she said:

“\textquote{She used to go to church every day for communion. And she used to go to mass. I recall Gonxha used to gather us in the yard and she made us sing. I remember we sang... ‘Jesus was born, Jesus was born, our savior, Jesus our creator...’}”\textsuperscript{51}

Before Mother left to join the Loretto convent in Ireland Slavka received a gift from her, and referring to this she said, “I received a silver ring from Mother Teresa, as well as faith, love, hope and some pearls, so that I would pray to god.”\textsuperscript{52}

We see from this the manner in which Mother Teresa was raised, and how her kindness and mercy were actively demonstrated to the poor. She lived with the poor as though they were her brothers and sisters. Within the communities of the Missionaries of Charity the goal is not merely to be charitable to the poor, but to live with them and experience their poverty. The sisters of the congregation take not only the three standard vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but also an additional vow of charity.\textsuperscript{53} The roots of this tradition are to be found in the family in which Mother was raised. The motto for the sisters was not simply to give to the poor, but to share in their poverty.

Serechi an Albanian Catholic explained, ‘Besa’ is a belief held in common by both Catholic and Islamic Albanians. The term can best be translated from Albanian as, ‘a promise that can never be broken.’ Even the Albanian national soccer team has taken the name Besa as its name. As I mentioned earlier, under the reign of the Ottoman Turks the Albanians had to survive along with other ethnic groups, and in order to do so they created the concept of Besa.

With reference to this concept of Besa, Fr. Mataix, speaking of a book written by Eileen Egan entitled, \textit{Such a Vision of the Street: Mother Teresa—The Spirit and the Work}, described the concept as follows:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Stojan Trenchevski, \textit{MAJKA TEPE3A}, Skopje, Citizens Association, \textit{Mother Teresa}, 1998, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid, p. 34
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid, p. 38
\item \textsuperscript{53} In addition to the three standard vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity take the 4th vow of charity.
\end{itemize}
“Eileen Egan explains that Mother Teresa’s character was influenced by the Albanian cultural ideal of mutual assistance. ‘Besa’ is the ideal that a promise must by all means be kept. Mother Teresa herself explained to her that if someone in a family promised another person that they could stay the night, in order to carry out the promise any sacrifice must be made by other family members. Even though they were not involved in the original promise, they were bound to carry it out. The promise must be carried out even if doing so would be dangerous, or put another family member in an awkward situation” (Author’s translation).  

Viewed from this standpoint, one sees that Mother Teresa’s actions were motivated not just by her strong Catholic ideals of loving one’s neighbor, but also by this ethnic Albanian characteristic of Besa, which emphasized the keeping of promises. The ideal was indeed put into practice in her own experience, for her mother allowed another family to live within their house for over thirty years, without demanding any rent. Thus, not only was it her mother’s faith that influenced her, of equal importance was the urge to carry out the ideal of ‘Besa.’

Her mother was certainly generous and compassionate but she also possessed characteristics such as strictness, and on this issue Mother Teresa remarked:

“One evening the children were sitting around their mother, engaged in childish chatter. This went on for a considerable length of time, throughout which their mother remained silent. Finally, she left the room, only to turn off the power switch, which plunged the house into darkness. It was of no use, she said, to waste electricity on foolish talk.”

In a similar way Mother Teresa too exercised control over the nuns of her congregation. Early in the formation of the congregation she happened to notice a nun admiring herself in a mirror, concerned about her appearance. After scolding the nun and explaining to her that such behavior was inappropriate she later returned and covered the mirror with paint, so that the behavior did not continue. This type of resolute attitude with regard to conduct was another trait she inherited from her mother. She was also concerned about saving energy, and hence was continually

54 Anselmo Mataix SJ, Iyesu wo aishita Onna Maza Teresa, p. 76.
55 Navin Chawla, Mother Teresa, p. 3.
56 Once while working at the Mother House I attended Mass dressed in shorts. Mother Teresa scolded me
turning off lights in rooms or chapels when they were not in use.

**Ethnic Conflicts and Language Issues**

Mother Teresa, her sister Aga (1904-1974), and brother Lazarus (1908-1981) spent their early lives with their financially successful father and deeply religious mother. About her father Mother Teresa declared, he was “a man of charitable disposition who never refused the poor.” Her mother’s openhanded nature was fully backed by her father, and besides, since her father Nikola himself once aspired to become a medical assistant, it was natural that he followed his wife in her acts of kindness to the poor.

Her father was fluent in several languages. He spoke Macedonian even though it did not become the official language until 1944, when it was formally accepted. Apart from that he spoke Serbian, Turkish, the language of the ruling political powers until 1912, Albanian, Italian, and French. Language problems and ethnic conflict are deeply associated. Even as recently as 2001-2002, ethnic Albanian guerrillas demanded that the new Macedonian government grant the Albanian language an official status for use in education, politics, and law, and the government finally did accept their demand. Ethnic conflict in the region was not merely a matter of territory, but was linked more with each culture’s survival. Besides, in a multilingual multi-ethnic nation like Macedonia, understanding languages spoken by other ethnic groups was obviously of the utmost importance.

To illustrate this let us take for example the fact that Macedonian and Serbian share many of the same linguistic roots. In Macedonian, the word ‘bel’ means ‘white’ whereas in Serbian, ‘beo’ has the same meaning. When a Macedonian speaks, both Bulgarians and Serbs can understand his words. Serbian and Macedonian are related, much like written Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese and Japanese languages share many of the same characters that often have the same meanings. While it may not be possible to have a perfect interaction between the speakers, nevertheless they are by and large able to understand one another’s writings. In this way even if the speakers do not employ accurate grammar, a Macedonian could get the gist of what a Serbian or a

and told me to stand outside the chapel during Mass, and strictly forbade my entering the chapel. I was able to receive Holy Communion though from the outside, and I noticed Mother Teresa nodding in agreement to me since I had been obedient and followed her instructions to the letter. From that time, I have never felt comfortable entering a church wearing shorts.

Croatian was saying.

On the other hand, the Albanian and Macedonian languages do not share the same root and thus are not mutually understood by speakers of the two languages. This is because the Albanians were reportedly descendants of the Illyrians,\textsuperscript{58} who had come into the Balkan Peninsula before the 6th century. (This view however is highly disputed). The Illyrians arrived and settled before the Slavs, and the former occupying Illyrians are said to have protected their own language and not accepted the language of the new incoming Slavs. Concerning this, the author of \textit{Turkey in Europe} writes, “Since Albanian is a non-Slavonic language, of whose introduction we have no record, it is permissible to conjecture that it was the language, or rather is the descendant of the language, spoken by this older population.”\textsuperscript{59} Albanian language and culture are not similar to the predominantly Slavic cultures of the Balkan Peninsula. Thus, as all languages have a long historical background, these linguistic histories are reflected in the construction of the ethnic and political conflicts of the peninsula.

While Albanians living in the Balkan Peninsula began to dream of creating a Great Albania in order to unite their ethnic group, Mother Teresa lived in Macedonia, where it is believed that like her father Nikola she was fluent in Albanian, Macedonian, and also Serbian, which being the official language was taught in schools. In 1917 (during the First World War) she started attending a Catholic school, the only Catholic school in Skopje. It opened in 1880 in a building near the Vardar River, and it functioned as a school until 1926. Together with her sister Aga she was active in the drama and music club, and since an early age she even sang in the children’s choir at the church. All Catholic activities in both the school and church were conducted in Serbian. In 1918 she became a first grade student at the state elementary school where again the medium of instruction was Serbian, but rather than give up her Catholic education she decided to simultaneously continue her attendance at the Catholic school. On completing grade four at the elementary school she carried on her education at Skopje’s Women’s Gymnasium (an institution equivalent to a middle or junior high school), while her sister attended the Middle Trade School. These details reveal her as being a serious and responsible student, and she eventually graduated from the Gymnasium with the best of grades. However her best language was Serbian, which in later years

\textsuperscript{58} Odysseus, \textit{Turkey in Europe}, London, Edward Arnold, 1900, pp. 386-387.


\textsuperscript{59} Odysseus, \textit{Turkey in Europe}, p. 388.
she used during interviews in Macedonia, when it seemed as though that she had more or less forgotten her Albanian. There is a nun who speaks Serbian in the Mother House of Kolkata named Sr. Francis Xavier, and Mother Teresa and Sr. Francis Xavier sometimes spoke to each other in Serbian while in the convent.

In India, Mother Teresa mastered languages easily. She was often commended for her skill in Bengali, and while studying the language at the Loretto convent she earned the nickname ‘Bengali Teresa,’ because she later even taught in Bengali.\(^{60}\) She was also fluent in Hindi, Serbian, Croatian, and her own ethnic tongue Albanian, besides English, which she acquired at the Loretto convent. Like her father before her she also was fluent in five languages, and such a linguistic ability was possibly inherited from him. Differences in race, religion, and language are often causes of conflict, and having been born in the Balkan Peninsula this was a truth of which she was extremely well aware. It was perhaps this that made her realize that acquiring knowledge of the language of others was a matter of primary importance.

Within the houses of the Missionaries of Charity in India Mother decided to use English as the common language, over either the regional language Bengali or the common language of the north, which is Hindi.\(^{61}\) More than the fact that it was the language used in the Loretto convent, her decision to choose English was made because she was aware of the delicacy of the language issue in India. When viewed in the light of her early life and experiences in her native Macedonia, her choice was reasonable. She was aware of the dangers associated with linguistic and ethnic conflicts, and it might have been this that led her to decide upon using English in her congregation. Also, since her nuns hailed from diverse parts of the country English served well as their common language, for by using English they were able to interact with one another on an equal basis. All activities at the convent including Holy Mass, daily prayers, and everyday communication, spoken or written, were conducted in English. Although she probably never imagined that her congregation would eventually spread throughout the world, choosing English as the common language perhaps boosted its worldwide growth.

**The Effect of her Father’s Death**

Mother Teresa described her family life as a joyful one,\(^{62}\) but the fact is after

---

\(^{60}\) Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, p. 8.

\(^{61}\) Hindi is an official language of India but 17 other languages are recognized.

her father Nikola’s sudden death in 1919,\textsuperscript{63} the situation of the family was drastically altered. There is a strong possibility though that his death was politically motivated. It was during her father’s lifetime that the Macedonians began to resist the 500 years of rule by the Ottoman Empire, but to realize how his death may have been linked to the political turmoil in the country we need to inspect the historical milieu. Such an investigation is also vital for another reason, namely because I personally am inclined to believe that the circumstances surrounding her father’s death affected her later work in India.

From the 19\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, the people of the Balkan Peninsula who had endured nearly 500 years of rule under the Ottoman Turks all of a sudden awoke, and set their sights on independence. In Macedonia too there arose a rediscovery of educational and literary culture, and ethnic consciousness began to spread across the peninsula.

In 1767 the Ottoman Turks had employed a Greek general to shut down the Ohrid Archiepiscopy, because the Serbs in Macedonia had begun to resist. However in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Skopje’s Bishop Theodosius of the Macedonian Orthodox Church started his preaching of the word once again, and the Archiepiscopy in Ohrid that had been closed, was now revived. Through this liberation of the Church, the consciousness of the people was united once more under the patronage of the Church.

Such situations arose not only in Macedonia but in other regions of the peninsula as well, and additional patriotic ambitions arose giving birth to dreams of Great Greece, Great Serbia and Great Bulgaria. Ethnic groups like these began now to resist the common enemy, namely the Ottomans.

In 1875, revolts against the Ottoman Empire occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and this served to spark off other revolutions across the peninsula. Ethnic independence revolutionary movements sprang up in Bulgaria as Muslims and Christians killed each other indiscriminately, and this type of religious struggle continued to grow. The conflict eventually ended and Bulgaria became independent on March 3, 1878, when they concluded a treaty with the Ottomans at the San Stefano Congress. At this Congress, Macedonia, including areas inhabited by the Albanians,

\textsuperscript{63} Not only with regard to Mother Teresa’s date of birth and the years of the birth of her brother and sister, there are differences also in the date of their father’s death in many books. For instance when Navin Chawla interviewed Mother Teresa’s brother Lazarus, he declared the year of Nikola’s death as 1917. Navin Chawla, \textit{Mother Teresa}, p. 3.

I however visited Nikola’s grave and found that he died in 1919, and not in 1917.
became the territory of Bulgaria. Witnessing this successful foundation of Great Bulgaria, Albanian ethnic consciousness too was awakened. In December of that year Abdyl Frasher and Rilindja Kombetare formed the ‘Committee for the Liberation of Albanians’ in Istanbul. This committee later joined in the Berlin conference with the support of the Ottomans, and requested the protection of Albanian territory.

Nevertheless however on July 13 of that year the Berlin conference was concluded, some stipulations of the San Stefano Congress held four months earlier were changed, and Macedonia was returned to the Ottoman Empire. In June of 1889 some Albanian representatives gathered in Kosovo and formed the Prizren League, and this would later serve as the base for the Great Albania movement.

On August 2, 1903, the Macedonian revolutionary army rose up against the Ottoman Empire. They attained victory in the Krushevo region of Macedonia, and promptly declared themselves the first republican nation of the Balkan Peninsula. This day is still celebrated in Macedonia, although soon after the event the revolt was suppressed and Ottoman rule continued. Again in April 1909, after a coup d’etat by the Committee of Union and Progress within the Turkish army, Abdel Hamid II (1842-1918) the sultan of the Ottoman Empire tendered his resignation. The head of the committee believed in equality for all ethnic groups, and so in Macedonia too the various ethnic and religious groups experienced a brief respite, with an easing in tensions and relative peace. However this respite was short-lived, for the groups were still under the rule of the Ottomans. As the committee was made of Turkish patriots the situation ultimately remained practically unchanged, since the Macedonians were yet under Turkish rule.

In 1909, fearing an Albanian revolt in Macedonia the Ottomans promptly suppressed them, and in 1911 certain unarmed Albanians entered Skopje in order to buy weapons from groups with whom they had been in contact, but the Ottoman authorities expelled them. Despite such reverses though the Albanian army had visions of creating a Great Albania, and so they set their sights upon the regions of Pitra and Kosovo for their subsequent conquests. The Albanians had with the passage of time been ruled by diverse powers affiliated to different religions, and in all those cases they had either

---

64 Abdyl, Naim, and Sami Frasheri were active in protecting Albanian ethnic rights. Aside from Abdyl the other two brothers became writers, and have published many books in Albanian.
Naum Veqilharxhi (1767-1846) published the first spelling book in Albania. After his publication of the work Albanian ethnic consciousness began to grow. We observe here that ethnic language and movements towards ethnicity have a deep connection. Norihiro Shiba, Shinban seikakkkokushi 18 Barukanshi, Yamakawasyuttpan, 1998, p. 194.
accepted those changes or adjusted to them, in order to ensure their survival as an ethnic group. Now however since their population was on the increase their vision gradually expanded, and grew from that of basic survival to the realization of an independent Great Albania.

Mother Teresa’s father died under suspicious circumstances, but regardless of his political views, judging solely by the role he played as a council member in Skopje, we may assume that he held some degree of political influence. Yet, the fact is we have no evidence at all as to what type of political views he held.

In 1912, when Mother was two years old, the first Balkan war broke out. Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria united against the Ottoman Empire, and the combined Balkan forces managed to end the 500 years of control of the peninsula by the Ottoman Turks. However as a result of this victory ethnic groups across the peninsula began to fight each other and assert their independent identities. Even before the war Serbia and Bulgaria intended taking over Macedonia. So the Albanians in Macedonia now fought for the formation of Great Albania, the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians in Macedonia began territorial wars within Macedonia, and at the same time next to Macedonia, the Republic of Albania was formed. Bulgaria and Serbia felt it necessary to stop any movement within Macedonia in support of an independent Great Albania.

As a result of these events, in 1913 when Mother was still two years old, the second Balkan war began. Bulgaria with its territorial aims on Macedonia went to war with Serbia and Greece, even without a formal declaration. To maintain the balance of power Romania declared war on Bulgaria, and attempted to mediate between the two sides. On August 10th of the same year the Treaty of Bucharest was concluded, and it was decided that 51% of Macedonia, the southern part, would become Greek territory, 39% of the central part would be under Serbian control, and the remnant would go to Bulgaria. In this way Macedonia was formally partitioned into three sections. From then on Skopje where Mother Teresa lived became the territory of Serbia, and Serbian became the common language in Skopje until the establishment of the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia in 1944. Skopje where Mother Teresa lived was ceded to Serbia, and from this time on its people had no choice but to speak Serbian, until Yugoslavia allowed the use of Macedonian. The Albanians who occupied Skopje in 1911 and aimed at creating Great Albania now found themselves under a new ruler, but their desire for Great Albania survived.

At the onset of the First World War in August 1914 Mother Teresa was four years old, and this was the third time since her birth that war had engulfed her homeland.
Even though Macedonia had disappeared from the political map through the partitioning, the people of the country still held hopes of winning their freedom. Albanians too hoped to gain independence, both from the Serbians and the Macedonians.

On February 3, 1919, when Mother was eight years old, the Paris Peace Conference was held and the division of Macedonia was confirmed, and it was in this year too that her father died. Nikola died in Macedonia, at a time when the people’s resistance and struggle for autonomy began to increase. He arrived late in the evening at about half past eight at Skopje, from Belgrade, when he swiftly developed stomach pains and died soon after in a hospital. He had gone to Belgrade not on business, but as a member of the Skopje city council. The police suspecting foul play investigated the matter and informed his eldest son that Nikola was possibly eliminated for political reasons, but despite the investigation the matter was never clarified. I visited the Butel graveyard where her father was buried and confirmed the year of his death, because the date of Nikola’s death too is uncertain. I confirmed the fact that he died in 1919, but I would like to investigate the matter further and hopefully find out what exactly happened in Belgrade in that year.

On December 1, 1918, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was born, and soon after in 1919 a constitutional conference was organized in Beograd, the official capital of the Kingdom. Since Skopje was the territory of Serbia, it automatically belonged to this Kingdom. In 1929, this Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes eventually became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In 1919 the southern Slavs gathered in politically active Beograd, to discuss the possibility of a united Slavic kingdom. It was during this period that Nikola had been in Beograd, and while returning to Skopje he died. The distance between Skopje and Beograd is approximately 400 kilometers, and the trip can be made in half a day. If his death resulted from poisoning, it follows that the perpetrator had given him the poison before his departure from Beograd, or at some time along the way back to Skopje. There are two possibilities regarding the timing of the poisoning. One, that a slow-acting poison was given him before leaving Beograd, and two, that the poison was given to him somewhere along the

66 Fr. Lush Gjergji, Mother Teresa, p. 41. In this book he records her father’s death as being in the autumn of 1918. This book also claims that he was for the Great Albanian ideal. Macedonian journalists never discuss the reason why Mother Teresa’s father’s died, for to do so may sow the seeds of even more conflict. I also intend to follow their lead and not seek to lay the blame on any single group.
67 Mother Teresa offered eighteen roses at her father’s grave when she visited there. Those eighteen roses meant eighteen years of her life in Skopje. I also did the same and offered him eighteen white roses.
way back to Skopje in the train. I am of the view though that whichever theory we may
choose to accept, the murderer was in all probability an acquaintance of his, a person
who perhaps had engaged in political activities along with him. The various theories
concerning the identity of the criminal are merely a reflection of the ethnic conflict, and
all I can say concerning the matter is that he was killed for political reasons.

If her father was a supporter of a united Yugoslavia, it is possible that a
political enemy in disagreement with his stand was the perpetrator. There are a variety
of possibilities as to the type of political enemy it might have been, such as for instance
an Albanian who backed the creation of a Great Albania, or a Serb who supported the
Great Serbia ideal. Even within the pro-Yugoslavia movement there were divisions
among those favoring a federalists union and those favoring sovereignty of the republics.
However as I stated earlier we have absolutely no information at all as to the persons
who brought about Nikola’s death, and so it would be wrong on our part to blame any
single group for the crime.

The political situation in the Balkan Peninsula had always been volatile, and
liable to arouse violent personal reactions. As evidence of this, in 1928 there occurred a
shooting incident in the Yugoslavian Congress, in which a member was killed. This
murder occurred within the Congress, in the course of a heated debate over the use of
the Latin or Cyrillic alphabet. It was an argument between the Federalists and the
Unionists, which led to one member shooting the other.

Now that 86 years have passed since the death of Mother Teresa’s father, it is
difficult to discover the entire truth concerning the matter. However, solving that crime
it is not the object of this book. This probing of the details related to his death is
necessary, because such details inform us of the fact that if her father had really been an
important political figure, an individual powerful enough to deserve assassination, it
shows the extent to which he must have been active in the political affairs of
Macedonia.

Macedonia had been partitioned during the First World War, and yet during
the middle of the Second World War a part of the Vardar region was occupied by
Bulgaria and Italy, and so the Macedonian people had to fight against the occupying
fascist forces. In 1943 Macedonia became part of the Yugoslavian union, and the next
year the constitution was drawn up. At the Yalta Conference that was organized during
February (4-11) Macedonia fell under the rule of Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980), who
formed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Macedonia was constituted one of
the republics, and Tito structured the federation under the following guidelines: The
seven borders of the Republics of Italy, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, the
Hellenic Republic, and Romania; the six Republics of Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia,
Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, five ethnic groups of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Albanians; four languages of Serbo-Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian and Slovenian; three religions of Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Roman Catholicism; and two writing systems of the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets.

However, following Tito’s death in 1980 the federation of Yugoslavia collapsed, and by a citizen’s vote Macedonia became the Republic of Macedonia, on September 17, 1991. Greece opposed the use of the name Macedonia, because ancient Macedonia had once been Greek territory. Since they insisted that the word Macedonia was their possession, as an act of pacification the words ‘Former Yugoslav Republic’ were added as a prefix to the name of the country. In 1993, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was recognized by the United Nations.

**Regional Conflicts of the Albanians**

In Albania, the custom of ‘Kanun’ or ‘blood feud’ governing human relations, is a basic belief among the people, and proposition 695 of the Kanun assumes that blood and ethnicity have an infinite connection. At the 33rd meeting of the Human Ergology Society, Kazuhiko Yamamoto in the course of his lecture described the cultural phenomenon as follows:

“It is a way to maintain social order through a system of revenge with blood relations at its base. However, the revenge does not create disorder, but it rather keeps order and is viewed as just and holy. The code of conduct has attained the level of a holy power among Albanians” (Author’s translation).

---

68 In 1992, Yugoslavia consisted only of Serbia and Montenegro. In 2003, these countries dropped the name Yugoslavia and became Serbia and Montenegro.
69 Became independent in 1991 and was recognized by the United Nations in 1992.
70 Became independent in 1991 and was recognized by the United Nations in 1992.
71 Became independent in November of 1995.
72 Became independent in 1991 and was recognized by the United Nations in 1993.
74 Kazuhiko Yamamoto’s lecture, (*Kottkanakisyakai no riron to chituzyo*: *Yuurashia wo turanuku Marebito shisou*), the 33rd Human Ergology Society Meeting, 1998.
In January 1997, Albania with a population 97% Albanian faced a pyramid scheme crisis, and here we may witness the mechanism by which the concept of Kanun started to work. In this crisis, propositions 695’s never-ending connection between blood and ethnicity was symbolically exhibited. In February 2001, in the northwest region of Macedonia and in Kosovo in Yugoslavia, terrorist incidents occurred. These incidents were reportedly caused by the NLA (National Liberation Army), and they were linked to the crisis. The breakdown in law and order was triggered by the collapse of enormous government endorsed pyramid investment schemes. Eventually eight companies went bankrupt, and since approximately 40% of the Albanian Republic’s GDP had been placed in these schemes, with the onset of the collapse the public began to riot and looted army weapon depots, as furious investors clashed with security forces. Nearly one million firearms were stolen from the army and police, and some believe that many of these weapons made their way to Kosovo to aid the NLA’s struggle for freedom, and that it was these weapons that ultimately enabled them to begin the Kosovo war. We observe here that to win the rights of territory for Great Albania, the Albanians still operated under the Kanun code of conduct. They viewed their actions as just.

Both the NATO and EU tried to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict between Macedonia and the NLA. However during the period of Macedonian president Boris Trajkovski negotiations proved difficult, and later the Macedonian forces suppressed the NLA movement. In course of time Macedonia did grant ethnic Albanians rights such as the use of their own language and the entitlement to hold

---

75 The Macedonian President threw a party at 19:30 hours in Hotel Columbus in Rome, after the beatification ceremony of Mother Teresa that was held at 10:00 AM on October 19. I was invited along with my mother and thus got an opportunity to speak to him and the First Lady. The President had visited Japan from the 7th to 10th of October 2002. It was the first visit after Macedonia was founded as a country.

For the sake of Macedonian tourist promotion, the President had meetings with the Foreign Minister of Japan. The First lady confessed that it seemed as though they could not get a proper response from the Japanese side about tourism in Macedonia, and also that only a few Japanese press people had come for the interview. I told the First Lady that since Macedonia is Mother Teresa’s hometown, not tourists but pilgrims would like to visit Macedonia from all over the world. I told her that if institutions for pilgrimage were prepared, such as a Mother Teresa Cathedral, there are many people who would want to visit Mother’s hometown. Beautiful ancient cities in Europe exist in plenty, but Mother Teresa’s birthplace is only one, namely Skopje.

Five months after the meeting in Rome, the President passed away in a plane crash at 8:00 AM local time on the 26th of February, 2004. It was the day when Macedonia was to submit its application for acceptance into the EU. The President did his best for the development of Macedonia, and he was perhaps planning to serve his country even more. Forty-seven was too young an age to die, and I have no words to console his family.
public office in order to bring about a peaceful settlement to the problem, but sad to say the struggle did not end.

The place of Mother Teresa’s birth, namely the Balkan Peninsula, takes its name from the Roman god Vulcanus, who was the god of fire and blacksmiths. Similar to the god it is named after, the area has shown over and over again that with its complex web of ethnic and religious tensions, it has the power to spark off conflicts within its borders, as well as across the rest of Europe. It was through the unions and splits that continued across the Balkan Peninsula that Mother Teresa lost her father.

After the war, Mother Teresa’s brother Lazarus quit his homeland of Macedonia in 1925, in order to live in his ethnic homeland, namely the Republic of Albania that was established in 1912. Later the Republic of Albania became the Kingdom of Albania with the beginning of imperial rule under Ahmed Zog, and Lazarus served as a professional soldier under King Zog.

Mother Teresa in contrast chose a different way of service, for she decided to join a convent in order to bring peace to the world. It was her earnest desire to bring religion back to her mother’s ethnic homeland, which under the communist regime had embraced an atheistic policy. In 1991, with the intention of serving the country where her mother and sister died she successfully began a branch of her congregation in Albania, while her work in her birthplace of Macedonia had already begun earlier in 1976. Clearly, she was never able to forget that her mother was ethnically Albanian.

In 1989 she received permission to dispatch four nuns to Albania, and after her recovery from complications resulting from a heart attack she even traveled to Albania along with her Sisters. I happened to see the records kept by one of her Sisters while she was hospitalized, and they reveal the fact that she struggled against her illness in order to be well enough to visit Albania. From this I concluded that while Skopje was certainly important for her, Albania where her mother and sister were buried also held a place close to her heart.

Earlier I discussed the concept of Kanun or blood feud in Albanian society. It is important to assert here that Albanians living in Skopje in Macedonia regard the tradition of Kanun as uncivilized and barbaric, an outdated notion that only uncouth

---

76 In the beginning of July of 2001, with the encouragement of NATO the ceasefire between the NLA and the Macedonian government was decided, and in the middle of August people in Macedonia of Albanian origin had their lot improved. The stipulations decided upon were: (1) In places where Albanians represented 20% of the population, the Albanian language could be used. (2) Within two years the police force was to be increased by 1000 Albanians and the constitution would be officially modified to allow this change.
people subscribe to. I am of the view that Mother Teresa did feel an inclination for her mother’s ethnic homeland, but with regard to the ethnic bloodletting and conflicts, she neither revealed any leaning nor felt any sympathy. She certainly displayed an attitude of respect for her mother’s ethnicity, but at the same time she desired to work for peace and tolerance among religious and ethnic groups. Later she brought along this attitude to India.

At her funeral on September 13, 1997, the premier of Macedonia sent a message of condolence, and Rexhep Meidani the President of Albania personally attended the funeral. However the day before the funeral on September 12, a message was sent to the Indian government through Vladimir Pulaj an Albanian communist party spokesperson, with the following request: “Our people want her to be buried in Albania where she was born.” Nevertheless since prior to her death Mother herself had requested that she be buried at her convent’s cemetery at St. John’s Church, the Indian government communicated this to the government of Albania and her wish was respected. The Albanian communist party spokesperson was later quoted as saying, “Mother Teresa’s death is a big loss to the people of Albania. She took extreme care of the people of the world and it is a big loss to the whole world.” The prime minister of Albania remarked that if Mother Teresa had not died on that day she would certainly have visited Albania, since she had earlier planned on doing so.

If we were to consider our place of birth as our motherland, then Skopje in Macedonia would be the motherland of Mother Teresa. Yet on pondering over the comment of the Albanian government’s spokesperson, it is clear that he was insisting upon her body being restored to her mother country. When I read the article *Albania bows to Mother’s wish* in the September 13th issue of the *Statesman*, I was surprised. For Albanians the motherland is not the land of their birth, but their ethnic homeland. Viewed from this perspective, Albanians living outside Albania in the Balkan Peninsula are somewhat like orphans. The Albanian people in the course of their history had undergone a great deal of suffering, and so they tended to view Mother Teresa as a heroine in whom they could feel justly proud.

While Mother Teresa was alive she exercised worldwide influence, and she was consequently subjected to pressure by a variety of groups from different parts of the world. Political parties, politicians, social movements, and religious bodies attempted to persuade her to get involved in their specific pursuits, and I believe it was the circumstances surrounding her father’s death that made her realize the necessity of maintaining a distance from them all. Often journalists would ask her tricky questions,
and seek to convince her that the problem of poverty could never be solved without social reform. To these questions she would answer that her aim was not to construct a society but to serve each one in society, and by this means she skillfully managed to evade being dragged into their schemes. In response to other criticisms regarding her charitable work as not being effective in solving the problem of poverty, she would answer, “Still it is a drop in the ocean, but if this drop did not exist even the ocean would not.”

The manner in which she avoided these traps is reminiscent of the way Jesus answered questions of a political nature. In the Gospels we find a statement of Jesus which says, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Viewing this question from the standpoint of the Roman law that prevailed in those days, the Herodians responded that Jesus’ answers were clever, and the Pharisees criticized them as vague. Jesus’ answers however were not evidence of his running away from challenges, but rather of his seeking to remain outside the political arena. He was no doubt questioned out of a desire to ascertain his political standpoint, but for him the positions people backed held little value, since he operated on a level above politics.

Mother Teresa’s method of helping the poor regardless of ethnicity or religion was often criticized as not effecting a change in the structure of society, through political or social movements. She felt that the way to peace, which was the cornerstone of a stable society, was to assist each one individually rather than through political action. In her answers to questions posed by journalists or in response to criticism of her methods, she cleverly avoided the traps that she knew would arise out of political involvement.

As mentioned earlier, the gun carriage employed to transport her coffin at her state funeral was the same that was used to carry the body of Mahatma Gandhi. The difference between these two individuals lay in the fact that one was assassinated for political reasons, while the other was not. In India, socially or politically powerful figures are at times targets of assassination. The Indian people view Mahatma Gandhi as

---

77 And they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and Herodians to trap Him with a question. Coming to Him they said, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere and not partial to anyone; for you court no human favors but teach truly the way of God. Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar or not. Shall we pay or not pay?” But knowing their hypocrisy He said to them, “Why do you test me? Bring me a coin, so I may see it.” They brought one and He asked them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said “Caesar’s” Jesus told them, “Pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and God what belongs to God.” And they greatly wondered at Him.
the father of the nation, and at her funeral they came to treat Mother Teresa too with a similar degree of reverence. This confirms the fact that like the Mahatma she too achieved the status of a compelling and influential figure in India, despite her non-involvement in political issues.

The death of her father Nikola in Macedonia did not result in any sort of a political outcome. Yet it did create an effect in India, where as in Macedonia religious and ethnic riots are a frequent occurrence. I personally believe he died a martyr for the cause of his daughter’s calling in India, for through his death he taught her what ought and ought not to be done. Concerning Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II was said to have remarked that despite the honor of becoming a recipient of the Nobel Prize, she voluntarily rejected the political field and tried to put into practice her religious convictions. As the Pope truthfully stated, she did display a vigilant attitude when dealing with political and social issues. She acted in accordance with her vocation as a nun, and never ventured beyond the restrictions of a nun’s duties. Indeed, I personally hold the view, that either consciously or unconsciously she carried out the lessons she had learned from her father’s death.

**Mother Teresa and St. Francis of Assisi**

Speaking of the period following her father Nikola’s death Mother Teresa remarked, “We were very closely united, especially after my father’s death.”78 Her father’s business partner embezzled money from the finances they had operated together, leaving her family with nothing but the family home. Her mother thereupon took up embroidery and other such jobs to support the family members, who were now faced with economic and mental hardship. Owing to the privations caused both by her father’s death and the death of a friend they grew even more dependent on God, and consequently Mother Teresa and her sister Aga became involved in the activities of the local church.

At the center of the family was faith, and this served to unite them all. Five years after her father’s death, that is, at the age of twelve which was the age at which St. Agnes was martyred, the idea of becoming a nun arose for the first within her mind, and at that time she was greatly inspired by a book she read about the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

I visited the city of Assisi in Italy between March 14 and April 2, 1997, in

78 Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, pp. 1–2
order to have a glimpse of the hometown of St. Francis and the place where he founded the Franciscan religious order. It is located about two hours away from Rome in the countryside, and is situated on a hillside. Walking from one side of the city to the other would take approximately thirty minutes, and even today the buildings and church exist as they did in his time.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181 or 1182 – October 3, 1226) was the son of a wealthy textile merchant. His father Peter Bernardone provided him with all material comforts, while from his mother Pica Bernardone he received his faith in God. Like Jesus Christ his mother is said to have given birth to him in a barn in a manger. His birthplace still exists though it has now been converted into a chapel called Chiesa Nouva, and the church where he was baptized namely the church of St. Rufino too is in existence, as also the original baptismal font.

In 1202 Francis joined the army at the age of 19 in order to fight the Perugians, but he was captured and imprisoned for a year, after which he fell ill, obtained his release, and eventually made his way back to Assisi. On recovering however he once again joined the army, but this time on his way to battle he fell ill at the city of Spoleto, where from his sick bed he heard the voice of God. The voice that spoke to him asked, “Who gave you the grace, the master or the servant?” To this he replied with a question of his own, “Lord, what do you expect me to do?” The voice then continued, “Go home, and I will tell you what you should do.” After that he gave his expensive armor to a poor soldier and returned to Assisi, where he started charitable work for the deprived and downtrodden.

In 1206 at the age of 24, while praying before the crucifix at the church of St. Damian he again heard the voice of God, and this time the voice instructed him as follows. “Go Francis and repair my house, which as you know is falling into ruin.” He took the words literally and immediately set to work rebuilding St. Damian’s church. His father finding it difficult to understand such behavior at first forcibly attempted to keep his son at home, and when such measures failed he even brought him over to the Bishop for instruction. All his efforts however proved futile, and so finally after seeing the Bishop his father disowned him in the public square, and Francis in response returned to his father the clothes he wore. With no money and starting with nothing he left home, and started living with a poor priest at the church of St. Damian. While begging for alms and rebuilding the church he also engaged in other works of love and compassion, such as comforting and helping lepers. Gradually however through realizing the wisdom of his deeds other people began to join him, and they all lived
together and worked as a community.

In 1208 the reconstruction of the church was complete. It was done just four years after starting out, and it was the fruit of the efforts of Francis and companions. In 1210, with his group now numbering 12 he traveled to Rome in order to obtain the permission of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), since he wished to start his own religious order, namely the Friars Minor.

The most representative feature of his order was their strict vow of poverty, for the members could not receive anything other than what was granted them by the superior. This vow however did not involve any property that was owned by the order. While other orders also took the vow of poverty, Francis’ order was stricter in the sense that he refused to allow the benefits of any of the profits to go to the members. He believed it was possible to follow the words of Christ to Saints Peter and Paul, when he told them to own nothing. However, this insistence on poverty drew protests from certain cardinals who felt that the ways of the group were suicidal, reckless, and dangerous, and they forcefully insisted that certain guarantees be met. Pope Innocent III however did give permission to Francis to start his order. He personally felt that Francis was a pure and pious man who could rebuild the Church, and so he managed to win over the protesting cardinals. At that time the Pope himself faced political and religious threats, and he believed that Francis’ group, namely the order of the Friars Minor, would be successful in implementing its task of spiritually rejuvenating the Church.79

In 1224 at La Verna Francis received the stigmata,80 and he died soon after in 1226 at the age of 44. On June 16, 1228, just two years after his death, Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), a Pope who had supported him earlier when he was a cardinal decided to canonize him. Owing to threats from Friedrich II however the Pope was forced to leave Rome, and so the canonization ceremony was carried out not in Rome but in Assisi.

79 Johannes Jörgensen, Der heilige Franz von Assisi 1182-1226, Tokyo, Translated by Fuzio Nagano, Koudansya, 1979, p. 108.
80 “To decide merely the facts without deciding whether or not they may be explained by supernatural causes, history tells us that many ecstacies bear on hands, feet, side, or brow the marks of the Passion of Christ with corresponding and intense sufferings. These are called visible stigmata. Others only have the sufferings, without any outward marks, and these phenomena are called invisible stigmata. None are known prior to the thirteenth century. The first mentioned is St. Francis of Assisi, in whom the stigmata were of a character never seen subsequently; in the wounds of feet and hands were excrescences of flesh representing nails, those on one side having round back heads, those on the other having rather long points, which bent back and grasped the skin. The saint’s humility could not prevent a great many of his brethren beholding with their own eyes the existence of these wonderful wounds, during his lifetime as well as after his death. The fact is attested by a number of contemporary historians, and the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis is kept on the 17th September.”

The body of Francis lies today in a chapel located in the basement of the Basilica of St. Francesco, which was completed in the year 1230. There are continuous streams of pilgrims and tourists visiting the site, and the schedule for Holy Mass in the chapel is booked three to four months in advance. Even the crucifix, through which Francis encountered God at the church of St. Damian, now lies in the church of St. Clare. The congregation of St. Clare was created through the influence of Francis, and visitors from around the world come to worship and pray before the crucifix. Since the life of Francis was so filled with miraculous events it was difficult for me at first to believe that he actually existed, but on seeing the relics in the St. Francesco Basilica, I began to believe that he was a real person.

Mother Teresa read the life of St. Francis when she was twelve years old, and since the story made a great impression upon her, in her later religious life she decided to choose St. Francis as a model. After Holy Mass at the Mother House the prayer of St. Francis is recited, the full text of which is as follows:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
Where there is sadness, joy

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it is in dying
That we are born to eternal life
Amen.

When speaking before a large audience she would always request the people
to recite this prayer along with her, and this was best seen on December 10, 1979, when she made her acceptance speech on receiving the Nobel Prize. At that time, in the course of her initial remarks she said:

“As we have gathered here together to thank God for the Nobel Peace Prize, I think it will be beautiful that we pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which always surprises me very much. We pray this prayer every day after Holy Communion, because it is very fitting for each of us. And I always wonder that 400 to 500 years ago when St. Francis of Assisi composed this prayer, they had some difficulties that we have today as we compose this prayer that fits very nicely for us also. I think some of you already have got it, so we will pray together.”

This episode reminds me of how St. Francis would preach to the birds, and how his preaching affected even on the Sultan of Babylonia and the Saracens. His simple words and prayers for peace transcended the bounds of race and religion, and affected every person on a human level. Also, when Mother Teresa happened to be hospitalized, people of diverse faiths and religious beliefs in India, non-Christian Indians, regardless of whether they were Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, or Sikhs, all prayed for her recovery. On gathering together each one first prayed in accordance with the dictates of his or her own faith, and finally they all recited together this prayer of St. Francis. This prayer enables people to transcend religion, and to accept and share the universal message of peace and love at its core.

On seeing the garment used by St. Francis I was reminded of the sari of Mother Teresa, for her sari had been repeatedly washed and the fabric had grown thin.

---

81 St. Francis along with two brothers Masseo and Agnellus was somewhere between Cannara and Bevagna when they saw some birds by the side of the road, and St. Francis spoke to the birds and told them to praise God. While St. Francis was preaching to them the birds were silent, but after he had instructed them to praise God they erupted in chirping. During my stay in Assisi I often had lunch in an outdoor café, and one day I shared some of my left over bread with the birds. The next day however my table was severely attacked by birds, so much so this incident reminded me of the well-known Hitchcock movie entitled ‘The Birds.’ I couldn’t avoid the feeling that unlike St. Francis I personally had been unsuccessful in preaching to them.

On another occasion during my stay in Assisi, a white pigeon came out from the window of the Eremo Carceri, flew over me and messed up my hair. One of the Franciscan brothers consoled me by saying that it was a great blessing from the Holy Spirit, and that it was meant to make me feel better. The experience made me recall how St. Francis had also preached to a misbehaving wolf in Gubbio, and succeeded in improving the wolf's behaviour. My personal feeling though was that preaching to the wolf of Gubbio would have been easier than preaching to the birds, since the birds I came into contact with in Assisi had treated me so badly.
from wear. To me it mentally overlapped the garment of St. Francis, for even though Mother Teresa was not of the Franciscan order, yet she was able to follow the vow of poverty as described by St. Francis. Concerning poverty she explained:

“Our poverty is described by the stitching of our habits. When it rips or breaks we repair it carefully and neatly. The sign of poverty is not to walk around with un-repaired clothes or clothes with holes in them. Our poverty follows the model of Christ. Ours is not the poverty of the beggar. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and so we must repair our clothes neatly to show that we respect our bodies. If we do this, we need not be ashamed because we are showing our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit” (Author’s translation).  

To illustrate how this instruction was followed, I recall an instance when my mother happened to notice that the hem had fallen away from the bottom of Mother Teresa’s sari. When my mother drew her attention to it I could observe clearly that she felt ashamed, for she lifted the hem that had come undone in her hand and ran back to her room to mend it. When she returned, I noticed that she had mended it neatly. The fact that she had not noticed that her sari needed mending, was apparently a dreadful thing for her. When she returned a little later wearing a mended sari, I noticed that the sari had been stitched even better than the garment of St. Francis that I had seen earlier. The portions that needed mending might not have been the same in number as those in the garment of St. Francis, but they were certainly patched up much more skillfully.

Sisters owning membership to the Missionaries of Charity have the following personal possessions: a bucket, a Bible, a rosary, and three saris. Of the three saris two are for daily use, while the third is for special occasions. The sari in which the body of Mother Teresa was draped at her funeral was the one meant for special occasions, and hence no patches were visible on it.

St. Clare (1194-1253) who through the influence of St. Francis started a religious congregation for women, refused to minimize her life of poverty even when advised to do so by Pope Innocent. Similarly when people visit the convent of Mother Teresa, they tend at times to recommend the use of electronic equipment such as washing machines and telephones, in order to make life a little easier for the Sisters. When confronted by such advice Mother would answer, “In India the poor do not have

---

82 Jose Luis Gonzales-Balado, *Mother Teresa: One heart full of Love*, p. 184.
these things, so I also cannot have them.”

At the Mother House in Calcutta there was only a single telephone. Similar to St. Francis who refused ownership of land or property, calling the huts in which his friars lived not houses but by the Italian word ‘luogo’ meaning simply ‘place,’ Mother Teresa too in her desire to follow a rigid life of poverty, requested the Vatican to accept the property rights for the land and house she intended to use when arriving in India to start the Mother House. Nevertheless however, since in India non-residents and foreign organizations are not permitted to own land her desire was technically not possible to fulfill, and so she had no choice but to accept property rights. She adopted a literal interpretation of the words of Christ in the Gospel of Mathew 6:26:

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they?”

Accordingly she never opened a bank account because she felt that by receiving interest for money she was not depending entirely upon God, although she did have a non-interest safe deposit box. For this reason, sending financial donations to the Mother House was often somewhat problematic, since all donations had to be directly handed over to her either in the form of cash or checks. However in some countries such as the USA or Japan her organizations are permitted to have bank accounts, since in those countries they need to use those accounts in order to pay for utilities or other expenses. In India however money could not be sent directly to her bank account.

On numerous occasions the Archbishop of Kolkata offered to give her financial donations on a recurring basis, but in all such cases she would respond that accepting regular donations would indicate that she was not depending entirely on God. She disliked the use of the word ‘regular.’ My mother and I have been sending donations to her charities for over ten years, and they have been sent regularly, once a year. If however on handing her a gift we happened to mention the next year’s donation, she would gently remind us of the birds of the air. In this way she put into practice the words of the Bible in her daily life, for like the birds of the air she entirely placed her trust in God and his divine providence. It is clear from this that St. Francis influenced Mother Teresa in many aspects of her life, especially spiritually.

Mother Teresa as a child of twelve had entertained an unbounded admiration for St. Francis, much like the admiration for a hero. Later in life however she emulated him by directly following the voice of God, by commencing charitable works on her
own initiative, by founding her own congregation after having assembled an adequate number of helpers, and finally by allowing herself to be led to India in order to carry out the work of God. In fact, she led a life that in many ways resembled that of St. Francis. In all probability she did not expect her life to resemble that of her hero, but in actual fact it did. Pope Innocent III had declared to St. Francis, “God Almighty will increase the number of your brothers, so there is nothing for you to worry about. I will give you greater recognition and even more missions to accomplish” (Author’s translation). These words rang true not just for St. Francis’ group of twelve brothers, but for Mother Teresa’s original twelve sisters as well. Today the Missionaries of Charity have spread to over 100 countries, and they number nearly 4700.

**India and the Jesuits**

In 1925 a Jesuit named Fr. Franjo Jambrenkovic SJ (1883-1965), who happened to be Mother Teresa’s parish priest, founded an organization called the ‘Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.’ Mother Teresa became a fervent member of the organization at the age of fifteen, and through this involvement her devotion to the Virgin Mary increased, as did her activities linked to social work. The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a group centered on the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola the founder of the Jesuits, and it was oriented to apostolic work abroad. As part of its activities Fr. Jambrenkovic would introduce letters written by Jesuits in India, and he also introduced a magazine entitled *Katolike misije (Catholic Mission)*, which contained among other things accounts of Jesuits fighting wild animals in Indian jungles. It is certain that not just young Teresa but all the children of the parish were fascinated by these accounts. A year earlier in 1924 the priest had visited India, and it is believed that it was owing to accounts of his experiences there that Mother Teresa was inspired to visit the Indian State of Bengal.

Mother Teresa’s devotion to the Virgin Mary was undoubtedly the outcome of her mother’s influence, but it was enhanced even more by the inspiration she received from this Jesuit. It was due to his influence that she was able to clearly link her desire of becoming a nun with the desire to go to India to do the work of God, for these were both necessary conditions for her vocation. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that if she had not met Fr. Jambrenkovic, she might never have received the call to go to India.

---

Concerning her religious vocation she consulted Fr. Jambrenkovic, who instructed her saying that if the decision brought her joy, it was the call of God. It was in this way that she came to understand the distinction between the will of God and her own will. In India when she received a call for her Second Vocation, uncertainty again arose within her mind as to whether she was being goaded by her own will or the will of God, and here again she relied on the advice of Fr. Jambrenkovic. She heard the voice of God on September 10, 1946 when she was 36 years old, and on receiving this second call she sought the advice of another Jesuit, namely Fr. Van Exem, and this Jesuit’s counsel contributed greatly towards her leaving the convent and working among the destitute. In other words, with regard to both her first and second vocation the Jesuits clearly played a decisive role, but about this I shall write in detail later.

I would like to stress that Mother Teresa’s attaining of the Nobel Prize was in large part due to the influence of the Jesuits, for they from the very start played a crucial role in her spiritual development, operating behind the scenes. Since this is a truth not many are aware of, it is my wish in this book to give them the credit that is due. When I consider the number of people she led to God, I realize that even if all this success were not the outcome of Jesuit influence alone, yet the development of her faith and fostering of her religious vocation, were undoubtedly a magnificent contribution of theirs.

Mother Teresa, wishing to be sent to India, decided upon entering the convent of the Loretto sisters in Ireland, since she was aware that they had missions in India. This to me appears the sole motive behind her choice of the Loretto convent. It seems clear that she viewed her vocation as not merely becoming a nun, but as functioning as a nun in India. However the activities that are now being conducted in India by her Sisters had their origins in the influence of the Jesuit in Skopje, namely Fr. Jambrenkovic.

She took the decision to enter the convent in 1928 when she was eighteen years old, and this was eleven years after her father’s death and six years after she first realized her intention of becoming a nun. During those years there were many in the Balkans who fell victims to tuberculosis. Mother herself suffered a serious lung disease, and to help her recover her mother took her to the shrine of the Holy Virgin of Letnica, located on the Skopska Crna Gora mountain (Presveta Bogorodica Letnica or Letnica Monastery, which translates as ‘Summer Monastery’). Every year during the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary she would be there with her family, and it is said that even her decision to become a nun was taken at the shrine.

At that time the shrine of the Holy Virgin of Letnica was in the diocese of Skopje-Prizren, and now the United Nations has begun working in Prizren after the
Kosovo crisis. The shrine was renamed the ‘Church of the Blessed Mother Teresa,’ soon after her beatification in 2003. When she confessed to her mother her intention of becoming a nun her mother was initially not in agreement, but after a day of prayer she accepted her daughter’s decision saying, “Put your hand in His hand and walk all the way with Him.” Around the same time her elder brother Lazarus chose to serve King Zog as a security guard in the Kingdom of Albania. Surprised at his sister’s decision he wrote her a letter expressing his doubts, and asking why she had decided upon such a path. To this she responded using the words God to St. Francis, “Who will give you grace, the master or the servant?” She then added, “You serve the master of one million people, but I serve the king of the whole world, Jesus Christ”(Author’s translation).

In this way, brother and sister chose very different paths of service. Mother Teresa’s brother on leaving Skopje opted to protect the king and kingdom of Albania, but unfortunately King Zog whom he served reigned from 1928 to 1939, a mere eleven years. Before the start of the Second World War a political crisis erupted, Albania was united with Italy, and King Zog was forced to flee to Greece as a political refugee. Ironically, in Albanian the word ‘zog’ means ‘bird.’ Thus analogically her brother served just one of the many birds to whom St. Francis preached, while Mother Teresa made the right choice in serving the master of the entire world.

**Mother Teresa’s Family—Torn by walls between States**

On April 1939 Albania was occupied by Italy and later became a part of it. The deposed King Zog left his country for Greece, and Lazarus left Albania for Italy. In fact Mother Teresa’s niece still lives in Italy, in the island of Sicily.

In 1934 Mother’s elder sister Aga left Skopje, which owing to its being under the control of Serbia was in a state of unrest, and shifted to Albania on her brother Lazarus’ invitation. Aga was thirty years old at that time, and she had been working for the radio station at Tirana. Two years later in 1936, both brother and sister invited their mother to join them. Five years after they had been reunited in Albania the regime of

---

84 I visited the Church of the Blessed Mother Teresa on Christmas Day, 2004. It was an hour and a half from Skopje by car. After crossing the border and entering Kosovo soldiers with guns and also the local police stopped me, and asked me the reason why I wished to visit Kosovo. Each time I was stopped I answered, “I am on my way to the church. Merry Christmas!”

85 Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, p. 5.

86 Natu Shimazu, Akiko Miura, Touru Hikuma, Tkakko Takabayashi, *Juunin no seinaru hitobito (10 holy people)*, Tokyo, Gakusyukenkyusya, 2000, p. 311

87 King Zog’s original name was Ahmedo, which is not an Albanian name. Under his dictatorship all religious schools in Albania were closed, but the Franciscan school was given permission to continue.
King Zog ended, and Lazarus took the decision of leaving for Italy. According to one source, it was because Lazarus had been enlisted by the Italian government to serve under Zog, and also because Albania had been occupied by Italy, that he was able to return to Italy after the fall of the Zog regime. It is unclear as to why Lazarus did not take his mother and his sister along with him to Italy at that time. Possibly he thought that since Albania was now under the occupation of Italy, it would be possible for him to call them over at a later date. As Aga and Drona were at that time living in Tirana which lay about three to four hours from Skopje by car, they also probably felt that if they remained behind in Tirana, it would be easy for them to return occasionally to Skopje for a visit.

Nevertheless however in 1944, five years after Lazarus had moved to Italy, the Albanian communist party rose to power and Albania became an independent nation. In 1948 Albania became a closed country, and now Drona and Aga could neither travel to Italy in order to be with Lazarus, nor could they make the three or four hours journey by car to visit their hometown of Skopje. Also, it was no longer possible for the mother and daughter to visit Mother Teresa in India, since the Albanian government refused permission to leave the country. In 1972 Drona passed away at the age of 93, and two years later in 1974 Aga also passed away at the age of 70, and they were both buried in Tirana. Mother Teresa was aware that if she once entered Albania she would never be able to depart, and for this reason she was unable to visit her sick mother and sister.

During the Venice film festival, an award-winning Macedonian director named Milcho Manchevski won the Gran Prix for his 1994 movie entitled ‘Before the Rain.’ The movie vividly described the everyday lives of ordinary Macedonians living in the grip of ethnic conflict within a small mountain village, inhabited by both Macedonian Orthodox Christians and Albanian Muslims, who lived together amidst an endless cycle of butchery and revenge. For me personally the movie seemed to express the never-ending circle of violence instigated by ethnic and religious divisions, by showing the tragedy experienced by two lovers who decided to come together despite differences.

“In the world outside, war is a rare thing, but here it is peace that is rare.” This line quoted from the movie serves to enlighten us with regard to both the past and present situations in Macedonia. We know that in the land of Mother Teresa’s birth the sequence of hatred and violence had long been present, but on seeing this movie we

---

88 Milcho Manchevski, *Before The Rain*, 1994
realize to our sorrow that such a sequence continues even to this day.

Even prior to my arrival in Skopje for my research a terrorist attack was carried out, in the course of which grenades were hurled at government offices, army barracks, and courts. These incidents of violence which occurred the day before my arrival, made me realize even more as to how ethnic conflicts continue to fester in the region, but at the same time they revealed to me a very important fact about the Macedonian people. In my conversations with the people of Skopje I learned that the majority of the residents want to end the violence, and live peacefully with those who differ from themselves. Both Albanians and Macedonians wish to end the fighting and killing. That is to say, ordinary people of all walks of life who have no links with terrorism, wish to end this violence linked to ethnic and religious divisions and live in peace with one another.

By the time Mother Teresa left her native Macedonia at the age of eighteen she had already encountered three wars, namely the First World War, the first Balkan war, and the second Balkan war. Having lived in an area in which times of war exceeded those of peace, she grew to embrace a mode of living peacefully amidst diverse religious and ethnic groups. In a multi-ethnic multi-religious nation such as Macedonia, she realized that despite there being differences, people could still manage to live peacefully together. We may also assume that owing to her personal experiences in Macedonia she was not only able to adapt easily to the cultural situation in India, but she also developed a tolerance towards other religions. As she herself hailed from the ethnically charged milieu of the Balkan Peninsula where issues of race and religion were hardly ever settled, in India and especially in Kolkata, she was well prepared to deal not only with the political and economic aspirations that prevailed in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India, but also the tensions that pervaded the Islamic and Hindu peoples of both nations. As a child of an Albanian mother whose

---

89 The bombing that occurred on August 28, 2003 was caricatured by the Newspaper AhebHuk on August 30, just two days after the incident. Japanese newspapers generally do not make cartoons out of bombing incidents, even when there are no victims. After the Albanian guerrillas were suppressed, the government ordered them to give up their weapons. Although the weapons were handed over the government suspected that the guerrillas had given up only the old ones, and that the newer arms remained hidden with them even now. In the panel cartoon, the personnel said, “It seems as if the remaining arms have been given up at last,” and he made this remark in front of an exploded government building. There was an impressive comedy that I saw during stay, a comedy about an ethnic conference between an Albanian, a Serb, a Gypsy, a Turk, and a Macedonian who was the chairman. The difference in each ethnic point of view turned the cynical comedy into one full of severe black humor. It seemed as though each person converted the stress that arose from the other’s difference into a good joke, in order to avoid a serious collision. I really felt that this was one possible way of surviving peacefully in a multi-ethnic nation like Macedonia.
birthplace was Skopje, it was doubtless through her personal experiences as a child that she arrived at the conclusion that the sole means of escape from this endless chain of hatred and violence, lay in acts of love.

We notice from the above that despite having been raised in a nation where the seeds of ethnic and religious conflict were rampant, she yet managed to learn the art of bypassing conflict and succeeding in her chosen vocation, and furthermore in India, she succeeded in putting such learning to good use, thereby enabling her work to blossom.
Religious life in India and Mother’s Second Vocation

Living Well with Differences

Mother Teresa’s talent of “living well with differences” had its origin in her birthplace of Skopje in Macedonia in the region of the Balkan Peninsula, a fact described in the preceding chapter. Here I intend to show how this talent of hers blossomed among the multitude of races and religions within the heartland of India. I would like to pursue this topic by centering on sections dealing with her religious life and her ‘Second Vocation,’ by delving into the historical situation and principal incidents of that time, such as the independence of India and disputes that arose among different religious groups. Also, I would like to consider major events in her personal life, such as her first profession as a nun, her final profession and religious vows, and the beginning of her work outside the convent, paying special heed to individuals and organizations that influenced her spirituality and behavior.

Conducting Interviews and obtaining of Data

As I explained in the preface, from 1989 to 1992 I was a graduate student, and in those days I not only undertook volunteer work in the homes of Mother Teresa, but also conducted investigative research in order to obtain material for my Master’s thesis on her life and activities. I investigated her life in India by conducting face-to-face interviews, with numerous people who had dealings with her in those days.

Several individuals linked to her such as priests and nuns were still alive in the 90s, though now many have passed away. Hence, this type of study based on interviews is now almost impossible to conduct. For these reasons not only will I refer to the work of others involved in a similar research, but I also intend to describe the situation on the basis of the nearly eight years of my personal study, which was carried out from 1989-1992 and even further until 1997.

The tolerance that characterized Mother Teresa was something she cultivated in her birthplace of Skopje, and symbolically represented by the words, “live well with all those differences.” This is the spirit of a Skopjanka (a citizen of Skopje), and it blossomed during her work in the subcontinent. I desired also to study the Loretto congregation that Mother had initially joined, and consequently I have on record
interviews with Sisters who had lived and worked with her in those days, over a period of 20 years of religious life in the Indian branch of the congregation.

Many inconsistencies and irregularities are to be seen in references pertaining to Mother Teresa, as the preceding chapter has shown. I however sought to write this thesis using the testimony of those who had direct personal contact with her, and to include as many useful references as possible. While writing of her Second Vocation and the congregation of the Missionaries of Charity\(^90\) that she established I based my descriptions on interviews with Fr. Celest Van Exem SJ (1908.10.4 – 1993.9.20), who was her spiritual director throughout those days until his death, and who had worked with great devotion for the realization of her Second Vocation. Fr. Van Exem was certainly a person who played a key role in her activities in India, and so in this thesis I desired to investigate also the contribution of the Jesuits and the relationship that Mother bore to them. Details relating to her life and work were obtained from Fr. Van Exem during the period extending from December 1990 to the end of January 1991, and again from November 1992 to January 1993. It totaled up to five months, and during that time I visited and interviewed him almost every day.

Besides the testimony of Fr. Van Exem I have relied on the words of Mother Teresa herself, and in doing so I have attempted to discover how an ordinary Catholic nun in a convent in India became not only a national hero like Gandhi, but also a Blessed (and soon to be Saint) of the Roman Catholic Church.\(^91\)

**The Loretto Congregation that Mother Teresa joined**

As mentioned above, I frequently visited St. Mary’s school where Mother Teresa used to teach, and interviewed the Sisters who knew her in those early days. The enclosure of this school, built for the education of upper and middle class Indian girls, was an exquisite garden. Roses bloomed, grass beautifully cut and trimmed grew thick in vivid green color, waterfowls played in the pond, and the church that towered above all was an imposing white edifice of classic colonial style. Within the precincts of the

---

\(^90\) Whenever Mother Teresa’s congregation started a branch in a foreign country, they translated their congregation’s name into the language of that country. In Japan, the name “Missionaries of Charity” was translated into Japanese as “Kami no Ai no Senkyousyakai” I personally would like to use the term “Missionaries of Charity” in this book, which people at the headquarters of the congregation in Kolkata use.

\(^91\) Much of the content of this chapter overlaps with the book of Mr. Navin Chawla, entitled *Mother Teresa*, which I mentioned in the preceding chapter as a reference, and the quotation reference of Mother Teresa’s personal history. However, the reason is because Mr. Chawla and I investigated the same person at the same period. I have specified the parts quoted from his book.
school was the convent of the Loretto Sisters, with those who taught in the school residing therein. Mother Teresa used to live in this scenic world, separated by a high gray wall from the adjoining slums.

On February 19, 1990, I visited for the first time Sr. Rozario IBVM, a nun who used to be intimate with Mother Teresa in those early days, and she spoke of Mother saying, “She was a hard worker.” Sr. Rozario who hailed from Rathfarnham in Ireland spent about ten years with Mother Teresa, that is, from 1938 to 1948, until she left the Loretto convent and began her activities in the slums. She described the situation of those days in the following words.

“This St. Mary’s school has classes in English mainly for the daughters of upper class families, and half the school have classes in Bengali, like any ordinary Indian high school. Mother Teresa taught in the English school, but she was very good at Bengali, and so she applied for and took charge of the lessons in the Bengali school by herself.”

She then showed me a small room located beside the beautiful chapel. It was a simple room with a wooden desk, and a picture of the Virgin Mary adorned the wall. Referring to that room she said:

“Mother Teresa was often alone and thinking in this room. When she came and told me that she would leave the Loretto convent and go to the slums alone, I was very worried. The superior cried and reluctantly parted from her, because she was a really good Sister. I tried to stop her because I wondered what she could do alone, and worried about her very much, but now I know she was not alone, because God was with her. At the time I did not think that the activity she began alone would turn into a new religious congregation called the Missionaries of Charity, and I never thought that the Missionaries of Charity would develop on a worldwide scale.”

---

92 Mr. Chawla also interviewed Sr. Rozario. Although he wrote of her as “a shy, retiring person, and was difficult to find” (Navin Chawla, Mother Teresa, New Delhi, Gulmohur Press, 1992, p. 14), my own impression was that of a bright obliging Sister who explained many things to me positively. Although during 20 years or more he developed a confidential relationship with Mother Teresa, I feel it would be difficult for a male to become the intimate friend of nuns in a short period of time. In this respect I think it was a big advantage for me that I was a woman.
I think the principal reason why Mother Teresa chose the Loretto was because they had a branch in India. As I stated earlier, the influence of Fr. Franjo Jambrenkovic who was her parish priest and who described to her his work in West Bengal at the Heart of Jesus church in Skopje, awakened in her a desire to go to India like him. She probably decided to choose her religious congregation with the hope that they would send her to India, and for this reason she joined the Loretto who had a branch in the West Bengal district of the country. However, had Mother Teresa been a male, my guess is she would have become a Jesuit like Fr. Jambrenkovic, who deeply influenced her vocation. The Loretto are a congregation aiming at Christian apostolic work through education, and in many ways they resemble the Society of Jesus. I therefore believe the reason why she chose the Loretto was not only because she hoped to go to India, but because the work of the Loretto was similar to that of the Jesuits.

I shall now describe the Loretto congregation founded by Mary Ward (1585.1.23 – 1645.1.23) whose educational activities began in 1609, and later developed into a religious congregation. Members of this group were referred to by a variety of names depending on their activities, such as for example ‘Englische Fräulein, Dame Inglesse, Loretto Nuns, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM),’ and so on. All these have the same founder. The Loretto are based in Ireland, and the Sisters are devoted principally to the education of girls.

Mary Ward was born on January 23, 1585, the eldest daughter of Marmaduke Ward and Ursula Wright, and she was connected by blood to most of the great Catholic families of Yorkshire. In 1606 she entered the convent of the Poor Clares founded by St. Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) at St. Omer, as a lay sister. The Poor Clares are a contemplative congregation. Contemplatives live within a monastery, and the nuns and monks maintain cloister, which meant not only that people of the world are not allowed to enter, but that the nuns and monks too do not come out of the monastery. No outsider is permitted to enter and those within have no contact with the world, and the people who live within the walls of the convent devote themselves to prayer and meditation.

However, Mary Ward, on finding that she herself was not called to the contemplative way of life resolved to devote herself to active work, and she had hopes of starting her activity as a member of a religious congregation on the lines of the

93 It not only does not allow entry for an outsider, but in contemplative groups such as the Carmel order the nuns never come out of the cloister, they do not have any contact with the world, and never show their faces to visitors.
“Jesuitesses,” in imitation of the males who were members of the Society of Jesus. Concerning this a Jesuit, namely Fr. John Scicluna SJ, wrote the following words in an article entitled Madre Teresa ei Gesuiti (Mother Teresa and Jesuits), which was published in the October 2003 issue of the Italian magazine Popoli.

“Mary Ward’s charisma was formed through her lived experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. After a serious illness, she heard an inner voice saying that her new Institute should be established along Ignatian lines, but adapted to a feminine way of life.”

Also, the New Catholic Encyclopedia says,

“They adopted the rule of the Society of Jesus and received provisional approval from Paul V.”

In 1609 she established a religious community at St. Omer, and opened schools for the rich and poor. Her idea was to enable women to do something for the Church in their proper field. This was the foundation of the educational activities of school management, that is, of the junior and senior high schools and university that served as the unique feature of her community, and it was also the start of the Loretto congregation that was established in Ireland.

However in the 17th century, active religious congregations of women who worked for the relief of the poor and for education were also required to work within convent walls, just like the contemplatives. There were restrictions on their activities, and it was believed that any activity performed by a nun should be ‘within a convent.’

The congregation and schools established by Mary Ward spread in 1615 to Flanders, Bavaria, Austria and Italy, and she desired that her group, which dealt with educational activities, should be recognized as a formal religious congregation. Pope Pius V (St. Pius V, 1566-1572, who was beatified by Pope Clement X in 1672, and canonized by Clement XI in 1712) declared that solemn vows and strict papal enclosure

---

I obtained the English version through Fr. Jose M. de Vera SJ who works at the Jesuit public relations office in Rome. I quoted this line from the English version.

were essential to all communities of religious women. However Mary Ward formed her congregation of ‘Jesuitesses’ on the basis of the ideas of St. Ignatius as mentioned above, and she adapted the constitution of the Society of Jesus for her group. She yearned to work outside convent walls like the Jesuits, and Pope Pius V provisionally accepted her plans at that time.

Pope Paul V, Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623), and Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) had all shown her great kindness and spoken in praise of her work, and in 1629 she was allowed to plead her cause in person before the congregation of cardinals appointed by Pope Urban VIII, who had passed a sentence of guilty on Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who had advanced the Copernican theory. The Pope ordered experts to examine the issue, and her congregation of ‘Jesuitesses’ as was designated by her opponents was sadly suppressed in 1630. Many nuns were secularized or joined other religious congregations, but with those who remained she continued her educational activities, and thus their religious life proceeded. Even after Mary Ward passed away at the age of 60 on January 23, 1645, which was the same as the day of her birth, her Sisters continued leading their religious lives, even though they were not formally approved by Rome. Eventually however the group received approval from Pope Clement XI (1700-1721) in 1703, and recognized as an Institute by Pope Pius IX in 1877 (Blessed Pius IX, 1846-78, who was beatified on September 3, 2000, by Pope John Paul II), but still the Sisters were not allowed to come out of the gates of the convent, or conduct any activity outside.

“Work outside the convent wall!” This earnest wish of Mary Ward the founder of the Loretto congregation was to be realized 318 years later, through the efforts of Mother Teresa. Even after receiving her Second Vocation where she claimed to have obtained a message from God, she still needed to go through the difficult process of getting permission to work outside the convent walls from the Holy See, and this is something I shall describe at a later stage. In presenting this tragic history of Mary Ward my intention was merely to show what an exceptional and epoch-making thing it was to obtain such permissions in those days, and these facts lead me to believe that the permission Mother herself later received to work outside the convent walls, was nothing short of a miracle performed by the hand of God.

However as my investigation proceeded, I discovered that such a miracle became possible largely due to the selfless cooperation of Fr. Van Exem, who had worked earnestly in petitioning the Archbishop to obtain this permission for Mother Teresa. Furthermore, the vast records that he had carefully preserved for the
investigation that he was convinced was bound to arise in the future regarding her beatification and canonization, have indeed proved very useful. I personally feel that it was Fr. Van Exem who led Mother Teresa to her beatification on October 19, 2003, and hence in this chapter I plan to focus upon and discuss in detail the relationship that existed between Mother and the Jesuits, particularly Fr. Van Exem.

**Mother’s Novitiate and the influence of St. Therese of Lisieux**

On September 26, 1928 (when she was 18 years old), Mother Teresa left her hometown of Skopje and went to Zagreb, accompanied by her mother Dranafite Belnai and her elder sister Aga Bojaxhiu. She parted with them in Zagreb, after which they never had a chance to see each other. She then traveled to the Loretto convent in Paris for an interview and was subsequently sent to Dublin, where the headquarters of the congregation was located. Later she went to the convent of Rathfarnham, and on October 12 she was accepted as a postulant and received lessons in English for two months.

She sailed for India on December 1, 1928, and reached Bombay (now called Mumbai) on January 6, 1929, and later traveled by train, namely the Bombay Mail, and finally reached Howrah station in the city of Kolkata in the former Indian state of West Bengal. This was the very place where she had long wished to be. In the 70s, within the enclosure of the station, one saw many people from both the Indian state of Bihar and the neighboring nation of Bangladesh, unemployed with no place to live. The enclosure of the station presented the image of a refugee camp, and the people built ramshackle houses to protect themselves from the rain and heat. In course of time many began to settle in the locality, and gradually slums appeared around the circumference of the station. The bestselling novel and movie the *City of Joy* by the French novelist Dominique Lapierre, vividly describes the lives of the people of that time in the slums around Howrah station.

---

96 As I mentioned with regard to the date of her birth in chapter 1, many references present different dates, such November 29, and December 1, and besides there are references that do not mention any date but simply say November. I obtained this date from the book of Sr. Wada who visited the headquarters of the Loretitos for her research on Mother Teresa. [Machiko Wada, *Mother Teresa*, Tokyo, Shimizusyo-in, 1994, p. 40]. However, every reference mentions the day of her landing in India as 6th January 1929, and so there is no confusion about that.


The priest who served as the model for the hero of this excellent novel got angry and burned the manuscript. Apparently he read the portion in which the priest was said to become confused over the
Mother was then sent from Calcutta to Darjeeling, which lay in the same former East Indian State of West Bengal, on January 16, 1929. Darjeeling is a plateau health resort with an altitude of 2134 meters. At the time of British rule, before the capital was relocated to Delhi from Calcutta in 1911, Darjeeling prospered as a summer resort for British officers, their associates, and the royal families of India, and was also referred to as the summer capital of the country. In those days Darjeeling had many Christian schools for British and upper class children of India. A school run by the Loretto Sisters was also located in Darjeeling, a school meant to educate the daughters of upper class Indians.

Mother Teresa was admitted as a novice of the Loretto on May 23, 1929. She studied English, which was the official language of the Loretto Sisters, and also Bengali and Hindi, and she also received training as a Religious in Darjeeling. She took her First Vows on May 25, 1931 (she was 20 years old at that time), and swore to live as a Bride of Christ by keeping the vows of ‘Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience,’ under the constitution of the Loretto congregation. She wanted to take the name ‘Therese’ at that time because she wanted her Religious name to be that of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who had died at the youthful age of 24, a Sister of the Carmel congregation in Lisieux in 19th century France. Usually the Christian name is given when someone receives baptism and the Religious name is given when joining a religious congregation, and the names generally chosen are those of Christian saints. Unlike in the case of infant baptism, adults who are baptized or who take vows of Religious life, generally choose the name of a saint to whom they are personally devoted.

charm of an Indian woman, and was deeply hurt. Because this novel accurately presents the misery of the poor of Kolkata and of the people living in the slums, many readers do not think the episode of the priest is pure fiction, and some feel that the author created it because he wished to introduce some romance in his book. Yet, to others it seemed as though the author had trampled upon the honor and dignity of the priest, who had willingly cooperated with him for two months. I heard that the author visited the Mother House for the permission to make a movie on Mother Teresa in 1992, but Mother Teresa refused permission.

99 The date of her first vows is recorded as the 24th of May in the book of Sr. Wada.
100 Religious Vows.
The term vow in the Old Testament meant the sacrifice of a certain thing or person, or an oath that was freely taken. The early Church believed that the ideals of poverty, chastity, and obedience would draw people to service in the Church, and these ideals later got converted into religious vows. In the Church, at present a religious vow means a public vow made by the aspirant to God in a religious congregation approved by the Holy See. *New Catholic encyclopedia*, Tokyo, Kenkyusha publisher, 1998, pp. 173-174.
101 In the case of the baptism of my mother and myself, Mother Teresa chose the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 for the ceremony. As for our baptismal names, Mother proposed that one of us take the name of
A saint is described as a person who specially received the benefit of God richly, who followed the way of life and death in an excellent and Christian manner, and who deserved veneration by the Church (New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 711). Whether a person is entitled to be declared a saint is a judgment made on the basis of a strict examination by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints of the Vatican, based on factors such as whether a miracle occurs after death, and the activities and achievements of a lifetime. I would later like to describe the process of beatification and canonization of saints in the Roman Catholic Church.

Mother Teresa desired to take this new saint’s name, one who had been canonized just six years before her own first vows in 1931. However, since another nun who had already taken her first vows a year earlier was called Sister Marie Therese, the superiors of the congregation were of the view that using the same name was inadvisable. Nevertheless though Mother Teresa had no desire to relinquish the name of this saint, and so she adopted the English version of the name, converting Therese into Teresa. This episode reveals the deep devotion she had to St. Therese of Lisieux.

**Saint Therese of Lisieux**

With the desire to learn something about St. Therese I stayed at Lisieux in France from September 27 to October 3, 1998, and visited the Sisters of the Carmelite congregation (at 37 Rue de Carmel, 14100 Lisieux), where she had lived. I studied her life and also made a pilgrimage. On September 30, which is the anniversary of her death, and October 1 the feast of St. Therese, I participated in events in which she was revered, such as hearing Mass and attending prayer meetings at the Carmelite convent where she lived and worked.

The town of Lisieux where she was born and where she grew up is a quiet country town, located about an hour and 40 minutes from Paris by train. The church in which she received her baptism, the home of her parents, the Carmelite convent where she lived, and the cathedral where she is commemorated are all located in the vicinity, and they can be traversed by foot, just like Assisi, the town of St. Francis. Since my visit took place at the time of the anniversary of her death and also her feast day, the town was swarming with people, owing to the many pilgrimages.

The Carmelite convent of Lisieux is located about 20 minutes by foot from

---

St. Joseph and the other take little Teresa’s name. Hence my mother took the name Teresa and I became Josepha. I never imagined that I would one day receive the name of the carpenter and stepfather of Jesus.
the station. I stayed at the Ermitage Saint Therese where there was accommodation for pilgrims and which adjoined the convent, and there to my good fortune I met a French nun named Sr. Bernadette OCD, who was the former superior of the Carmelite convent in Nishinomiya of the Hyogo Prefecture in Japan. She now lived in the convent of Lisieux, and as she was fluent in Japanese I was able to receive from her various little hints for my research, such as details concerning the course of the pilgrimages, the various events, and so on. The cooperation Sr. Bernadette gave me was a great help since I could not speak French, and accordingly I am indebted to her for her kindness.

I would now like to briefly touch upon the life of St. Therese, since I am of the view that she also like St. Francis of Assisi had a deep influence on the spirituality of Mother Teresa.

Therese Martin (1873.1.2 – 1897.9.30) was born as the 9th and last daughter of Louis Martin (1823-1894) a jeweler, and Zelie Guerin (1831-1877). Her parents’ home was called Les Buissonnets, and it is now open to pilgrims and others who would like to pay a visit. Judging by the appearance of the mansion, the personal room of St. Therese, and her toys, it is clear that she was a rich man’s daughter, just like the family of Mother Teresa when her father Nikola Bojaxhiu was alive. Mother Teresa lost her father at the age of nine, but St. Therese lost her mother when she was four years and six months old.

St. Therese declared that the ten years that passed since her mother died, namely the period when she grew from four to fourteen, were the “saddest” in her life, and in her autobiography she stated that she became shy and sensitive in the course of this period. Mother Teresa as we saw desired to become a Religious at the age of twelve, and six years later when she was eighteen she joined the Loretto congregation. St. Therese however asserted that her wish to become a Religious started at the age of nine, and that at fifteen she joined the order of Discalced Carmelites that St. Teresa of Avila (1515.3.28 – 1582.10.4) had founded. What the two saints (Teresa of Lisieux and Mother Teresa) had in common was the fact that both lost a parent during childhood, and both developed a desire to become a Religious at a very early age.

In 1893, just five years after she had joined the order of her elder sister Pauline Martin (1861-1951) who was the superior at that time, St. Therese was appointed assistant novice mistress, and consequently took charge of the education and

---

instruction of the novices. The next year, on receiving an order from her superior she wrote down her autobiography, starting from the time of her infancy to just before her death. It was written over a period of five years, namely from 1894 to 1897, for sadly in 1897 she fell a victim to tuberculosis and passed away at the young age of 24. Her autobiography was published under the title “Histoire d’une ame,” and acquired a wide readership in 1898, just a year after her death. St. Therese was beatified by Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) on April 29, 1923, and two years later on May 17, 1925, she was canonized. The bone of her right hand, the hand with which she wrote her autobiography, is now preserved in the Basilique Sainte-Therese, and her body lies in the church of the Carmelite convent of Lisieux.

On December 14, 1927, St. Therese was named the patron saint of missionaries along with St. Francis Xavier (1506.4.7-1552.12.3), and later on May 3, 1944, she was also made the patron of France by Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), similar to St. Jeanne d’Arc (1412.1.6-1430.5.30). On October 19, 1997, Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) eventually declared her a doctor of the Church. Among women she is third among the doctors of the Church, the first being St. Catharine of Siena (1347-1380) and the second being St. Teresa of Avila, the founder of the order she had joined.

**Mother Teresa and the Little Way of St. Therese**

Sr. Anne Marie, the superior of the Carmelite convent, made the following remark about St. Therese:

“She become a sister at the age of 15 and passed away due to tuberculosis at the age of 24. Although her religious life was only for nine years, yet her principle of following the humble way of life, namely “the little way,” made her a saint.”

Since Mother Teresa referred to herself as a “pencil in the hands of God,” Sr. Anne Marie surmised that she had taken St. Therese as a model for her religious life, keeping the ‘little way’ of St. Therese in mind. The following passage from the autobiography of St. Therese describes this little way in a lucid manner.

---

“As you know, Dear Mother, I’ve always wished that I could be a saint. But whenever I compared myself to the Saints there was always this unfortunate difference—they were like great mountains, hiding their heads in the clouds, and I was only an insignificant grain of sand, trodden down by all who passed by. However, I wasn’t going to be discouraged; I said to myself: ‘God wouldn’t inspire us with ambitions that cannot be realized. Obviously there’s nothing great to be made of me, so it must be possible for me to aspire to sanctity in spite of my insignificance. I’ve got to take myself just as I am, with all my imperfections; but somehow I shall have to find out a little way, all of my own, which will be a direct short-cut to heaven. After all (I said to myself) we live in an age of inventions. Nowadays, people don’t even bother to climb the stairs—rich people, anyhow; they find a lift more convenient. Can’t I find a lift which will take me up to Jesus, since I’m not big enough to climb the steep stairway of perfection?’ So I looked in the Bible for some hint about the lift I wanted, and I came across the passage where Eternal Wisdom says: ‘Is anyone simple as a little child? Then let him come to me.’ To that Wisdom I went; it seemed as if I was on the right track; what did God undertake to do for the childlike soul that responded to his invitation?’


The little way of St. Therese consists in placing oneself in the hands of God completely, by making oneself as humble and powerless as one can. Mother Teresa followed the teachings of St. Therese and saw herself as a humble tool, a “pencil” in the hands of God. My personal feeling however is that though this little way may sound easy when we see St. Therese using the word “lift” in order to describe it, yet in actual fact it is difficult. The destination of this lift is determined by God, and not by any person traveling in the lift. Each time I recite the Lord’s Prayer, I find it difficult to say ‘Your will be done.’ If I were to say ‘Your will be done,’ in all sincerity, it might well happen that what I myself desired and what God willed for me, are opposed to each other. I may find it difficult to accept God’s will, despite being aware that what he has willed for me was nothing but the best. If I were in any measure unwilling or resentful about accepting God’s will, I feel I should never say ‘Your will be done.’ Since I am a
person of little faith,\textsuperscript{104} I find it difficult to resign myself into the hands of God completely, like St. Therese.

Regarding the issue of holiness, Mother Teresa when questioned by journalists would always answer with the words, “Total Surrender,” and “Acceptance.”\textsuperscript{105} It may be said that she thought to offer herself completely to the will of God, and she considered the little way vital to the attainment of holiness and perfection. Since she totally offered her will to God and looked upon herself as a mere tool, she did not think the honor of receiving the Nobel Prize and being admired by the world, was any achievement of her own. She considered herself just a ‘pencil,’ and the success of any work was not due to any merit on the part of the pencil, but on the part of God who was its user.

During the time I was in India I had the opportunity to come into contact with Mother Teresa daily, and I recall wondering how she could possibly consider herself insignificant\textsuperscript{106} while being the focus of the entire world. Despite her thinking of herself as someone average and of a lowly status, yet she was indeed a singularly unique woman.

This practice of the little way came into effect when she received her Second Vocation, and while trying to get permission to work outside the convent walls. This, as I discussed in detail earlier was the earnest desire of Mary Ward. Mother Teresa, in calling herself a pencil in the hands of God, symbolized both the spirit of St. Francis of

\textsuperscript{104} See Appendix 1.

\textsuperscript{105} Ann & Jeanette Petrie announced that their long documentary film \textit{Mother Teresa} of 1985, was based on the coverage of five years. In the interview for the film Mother Teresa is said to have spoken strongly of the importance of full obedience, and of constantly accepting the will of God.

\textsuperscript{106} For example, Mother always picked up the telephone, of which there was only one set at the Mother House, by herself. Whenever she was in the office, she always picked up the telephone and took down the memos for messages and other matters. However, often people who called the Mother House did not realize that it was Mother herself on the phone. If any garbage had fallen on the passage she would order the Sisters to clean it up, but she also promptly began cleaning herself before Sisters took any action. From tourists to the poor, as far as it was possible she met everyone who visited the Mother House to see her, even without an appointment.

The Sisters would always beg Mother to preserve her physical strength and not do any sundry jobs, since they were anxious about her health. However, she would keep on performing little jobs such as picking up the phone and cleaning the passages, jobs from which superiors are usually exempted. I personally felt there was no need for her to pick up the telephone. In order to ask a Sister to send the documents required for the transportation of relief goods, I once telephoned the Mother House before I visited India, and of the three calls I made, Mother herself picked up the telephone twice. Since it was easier to talk about the arrangement of documents with the secretary rather than with Mother, when I told her that I would like to talk to the Sister in charge, she at once grew concerned about the cost of the international calls from Japan for which I would have to pay, and so she called out the Sister’s name loudly and hurriedly ran around searching for her. On realizing this I was terribly worried that she might fall and hurt herself. The Mother Teresa I knew was a humble, simple, and hard worker, just like the mother in a farmhouse.
Assisi who sought to become an instrument of peace, and the little way of St. Therese. Regarding St. Francis, as I stated earlier, she evinced a desire to become a religious on reading his biography. I thereupon surmised that in a similar way there probably arose within her the desire to become a nun like St. Therese after reading the saint’s autobiography, which was subsequently translated into fifty languages. Whenever asked the origin of her name, she would reply that the name originated, “not from the big Teresa of Avila but the little one of Lisieux.” As mentioned earlier, St. Teresa of Avila was the founder of the order of Discalced Carmelites that St. Therese of Lisieux joined. Since both Teresas are world-renowned saints, at times it is hard for us to know which one is being referred to. People tend to call St. Teresa of Lisieux the Little Teresa, and that of Avila the Big Teresa.

St. Teresa of Avila acquired international fame for her spiritual writings that spanned a period surpassing 20 years, and eventually in 1622 she was canonized by Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623). Her most famous works, that is her Autobiography, The Way of Perfection, Interior Mansions, The Book of Foundations, and Spiritual Relations are notable for their clear portrayal of her relationship to God, which was the outcome of her mystical experiences.\(^{107}\)

The Little and Big Teresa of Carmel left behind inspired writings, but Mother Teresa never wrote a book. True, a large number of her works have been published, but they were compiled from her lectures, letters, and interviews. Being of a self-effacing nature she rarely wrote anything about herself, and she seldom even spoke about herself. When journalists asked her how she felt about becoming globally famous through receiving the Nobel Prize, she always gave the same answer, “Sacrifice.” The journalists would laugh and treat this as a joke but she was serious, for the fame that others envied was an agonizing sacrifice for her who trod the little way. Despite desiring to be lowly and humble she became “Mother Teresa of Bengal,” and after winning the Nobel Prize she was beatified a mere six years after her death, which is an exceptionally brief period. It was 20 years earlier than St. Therese of Lisieux, who was beatified 26 years after her death.

**Beatification and Canonization**

As a rule, the investigative procedures involved in beatification and

canonization start five years after the candidate’s death, but in the case of Mother Teresa it started in the spring of 1999, just two years after her death, with the approval of Pope John Paul II.

Beatification is formally the final phase for a person who is being considered for ultimate canonization. The investigation is started when the religious congregation to which the deceased belongs applies to the Bishop of their parish for the investigation. The application is then studied by the Bishop, and later sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in the Vatican, and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints sets in motion the investigation of the life of the deceased. A vast quantity of applications have reached the Congregation for the Causes of Saints from all over the world, and I heard that there are many cases which were suspended without even starting the investigation. Hence it usually takes many years from the time of presenting the application, to the starting of the investigation. The investigation is conducted in three stages.

The first stage is the study and scrutiny of documents. Here the Congregation for the Causes of Saints asks the Bishop of the parish to which the deceased belonged to present records, namely written records such as the letters and diaries of the deceased, voice records, videos, and so on. In this case as I mentioned earlier, the vast text records that comprise Mother Teresa’s diary (which she wrote for 50 years or more), and letters and other documents that Fr. Van Exem had preserved, proved very useful and supportive of the cause.

The second is the field survey. The investigating committee visits the place where the deceased lived, receives the testimony of those who knew the deceased, and also conducts an examination of the situation of the grave or the corpse of the deceased in detail. After these investigations, the deceased is permitted to be referred to as a “Venerable Servant of God,” and to become an object of public veneration.

Next, the investigation of miracles supposedly performed through the intercession of the deceased is conducted, and only miracles believed to have definitely occurred as a result of the intercession of the deceased will be accepted. In the case of Mother Teresa, a young Indian woman named Monica who had a neoplasm problem in her abdomen visited the Mother House, and requested the Sisters to pray to Mother Teresa for her recovery. The Sisters and Monica prayed in the Mother House chapel on September 5, 1998, the day of her first death anniversary. While praying Monica felt a warm touch in her abdomen, and the next day when she visited the hospital her doctor found that her neoplasm had disappeared. This was reported as the first miracle performed through Mother Teresa’s intercession. The Congregation for the Causes of
Saints investigated the case, and it was also discussed at a medical consultation. Finally in December 2002, the Holy See accepted this miracle. Monica, the lady who experienced the miracle, participated in Mother’s beatification ceremony held in Rome on October 19, 2003.

The third stage is the Pope’s decision. After an enquiry meeting of theologians and cardinals, the final decision is left to the Pope. When the Pope recognizes that one of the faithful, owing to the fact that he or she led a life of virtue or underwent a heroic death of martyrdom was entitled to be declared a blessed, he signs the Beatification Declaration, and with this the deceased is declared a ‘Blessed’ of the Catholic Church.

In the case of St. Francis and St. Clare, their beatifications could be termed ‘exceptions among exceptions.’ Mother Teresa’s case too was special, because she was beatified in the shortest period of time in modern Church history. Six years after St. Therese of Lisieux was made the patron saint of missionaries Mother Teresa was beatified at the Vatican on October 19, that is, on World Mission Day in the year 2003.

Around 300,000 people gathered from all over the world for her Beatification, which was held from 10:00 AM onwards at St. Peter’s Square, and I also participated in the ceremony along with my mother. We received the red invitation letter from one of the Sisters, and so we waited at the entrance from 4:00 o’clock in the morning. Although it was six full hours before the ceremony began, yet since people already stood in line and some had even stayed up all night, the entrance was heavily congested.

I believe the words in the Bible, “for the one who is least among all of you is the one who is great,” (Luke, 9:48) symbolized Mother Teresa’s life, and I also think she proved in her life the practice of the little way, which as St. Therese of Lisieux explained was actually a lift that takes us up to Sainthood. However, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints needed one more miracle for recognition in order that Mother Teresa may become a canonized saint, and now, through the Grace of God the decision

108 On the 19th of October 2003, Mother Teresa’s beatification Mass was offered. Earlier Pope John Paul II declared in 1995:

“…Nothing helps us to face the conflict between life and death in which we are immersed more than faith in the Son of God who became man, and came among men so that they might ‘have life and have it abundantly’ (Jn. 10:10). It is faith in the risen Lord who has overcome death; it is faith in the blood of Christ whose voice is more eloquent than that of Abel, and which gives hope and restores to mankind its true image.”

Specifically, on this day the Church of each country appeals for financial and other contributions for the spiritual and material support of those priests, nuns, and other religious who work in foreign countries.

has been taken, and we will soon have a third St. Teresa in the Catholic Church.

**The Carmel order and Mother Teresa**

I now like to speak of the Carmel order of St. Therese of Lisieux, a group that exerted such a big influence on Mother Teresa’s life. I am of the opinion that St. Therese of Lisieux had a special influence on Mother’s spirituality, and the Carmel order also greatly influenced the Missionaries of Charity that Mother Teresa established.

Fr. Edward Le Joly SJ (1909-2002), a Jesuit who was one of the spiritual directors of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, states in his book *Mother Teresa of Calcutta. A Biography* that spiritually Mother was not a Carmelite. She followed St. Francis, the poor man of Assisi, and also St. Vincent de Paul.  

I personally have no objection to this statement, for as I remarked in the preceding chapter Mother Teresa in many ways imitated St. Francis of Assisi. The Daughters of Charity, a congregation that St. Vincent de Paul (1580-1660, canonized by Clement XII on June 16, 1737) started along with the Venerable Louise de Marillac Le Gras (1591-1660) in Paris in 1633, served the poor and sick with the intention of “serving the Lord in the poor.” This is similar to Mother Teresa’s own spirit of service, and hence I do not dispute the opinion of Fr. Le Joly. In fact, Mother herself often distributed the Medaille Miraculese, a medal the Virgin Mary is reported to have ordered St. Catherine Laboure (1806-1876, canonized in 1947 by Pope Pius XII) of the Daughters of Charity to create in 1830. Each time my mother and I went to Calcutta Mother Teresa would ask, “Where is Our Lady’s medal?” Then, she would check to see if the Medaille Miraculese was actually attached to the chain around our necks, and if not, she would give us each a medal along with her blessing. She certainly set great

---

111 The congregation approved by Pope Clement IX (tenure of office 1667-1669) on the 8th of June 1668.
112 Though some authorities have stated that he was born in 1576.
113 Since Mother Teresa had a special devotion to this Medal, my mother and I visited CHAPELLE NOTRE-DAME DE LA MEDAILLE MIRACULESE (140 rue du Bac) on October 11, 1998. This is the chapel in which Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Laboure, and asked her to create the medal for her. The body of St. Catherine Laboure is also laid out in the chapel. Since the day I visited was a Sunday, the Sisters were very busy with visitors and parish people who had come to hear Mass, and so I could not speak to them. However, my mother and I were able to hear Mass at the chapel. In spite of the rain many attended, and there was no vacant place. Also, the Church store was crowded with people who wished to purchase the medal in its birthplace. Mother Teresa gave my mother and me many of these medals every year. Even when we showed her the medal that she had given us years ago hanging around our necks and told her that we already had it, she would say, “share it with someone.” Then she kissed a new medal and gave it to us. When the great Hanshin Awaji earthquake occurred in the city of Kobe in Japan on January 17, 1995, my mother and I were in Kolkata. Mother Teresa gave us many medals in a
store by this medal. However, regardless of the spirituality of the Daughters of Charity I believe the trust she had in the Medaille Miraculese was an expression of her personal devotion to the Virgin Mary, a devotion she acquired from her mother as stated in the preceding chapter.

Nevertheless however, as to whether she desired her Missionaries of Charity to carry out the same type of activity as the Daughters of Charity or not, is a point where my opinion differs from that of Fr. Edward Le Joly. I am of the view that Mother Teresa considered her congregation to be different not only from the Daughters of Charity, but from all other active congregations as well. As she herself stated, “We are not social workers though we do social work.” She probably thought her congregation to be similar though not the same as many others. Furthermore, although I am aware that Fr. Le Joly had been the spiritual director of the Missionaries of Charity for a long time, yet I beg to differ when he states that spiritually Mother was not a Carmelite. As a matter of fact Mother Teresa frequently visited the Carmel convent of Calcutta, and consulted the superior of the Carmelite Sisters concerning the spiritual instruction she gave the members of her community.\textsuperscript{114}

The convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (an active congregation that concentrates on social service, education of girls, and medical nursing) is located close to the Mother House, about three minutes away by foot. Though Mother Teresa was devoted to the life and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, yet she did not visit the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary for spiritual advice as she did the Carmelite Sisters.\textsuperscript{115} For consultations on spiritual matters she chose the Carmel convent. Hereafter I shall briefly describe the workings of the Carmelite order, after which I shall discuss the ten-kilogram bag and said, “Please go home and share these with the people of Kobe.” Then she wrote a letter to Cardinal Peter Shirayanagi Seiichi (Tokyo Archbishop, tenure-of-office 1970-2000, who became cardinal on October 1994) of Tokyo immediately. She said in her letter that she was ready to send Sisters from India for relief work. Since a request from the Church in Japan was required for the Sisters to enter the country, she asked the Cardinal to send a letter requesting the help of the Sisters. The letter of Mother Teresa was entrusted to us along with the bag of medals. A Sister was dispatched from the Missionaries of Charity branch in Nagoya, and she participated in the rescue operations in an affected area immediately. The medals were sent to the Church in Kobe, where they were distributed among the people who suffered.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{114} See Appendix 2.

\textsuperscript{115}Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), dressed in saris of the colors of the national flag of India (orange, white, and green), performed a classical dance of India during the Mass for Mother Teresa’s beatification on October 19, 2003. The previous year they had danced with the same clothes during the beatification Mass on October 20, 2002 of the founder of their congregation, namely Blessed Mary of the Passion, Helen Marie Philippine de Chappotin (May 21, 1839-November 15, 1904). They danced during Mother Teresa’s beatification Mass because they were requested to do so by the Vatican, and not by Mother Teresa’s congregation.
reasons why Mother chose to consult them on spiritual matters, and later I shall consider how she felt about the Missionaries of Charity and their activities.

The Carmelite order was founded by a group of hermits residing on Mount Carmel in Palestine, in the early 13th century. The name Mount Carmel means ‘the ground of a rich crop,’ and in fact, ‘Carmel’ in Hebrew means the vineyard of God, and it is translated as ‘orchard’ in the English Bible (Isaiah, 32:15). Mount Carmel in the Bible was the mountain on which Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal who indulged in idol worship (1 Kings, 18:19-46), and where Elijah himself lived (2 Kings, 2:25, 4:25).

The Carmelite order that took the name of the holy mountain is a contemplative order, with the members having broken off relations with the world. In the beginning the members were male, and often the Crusaders chose to dwell on Mount Carmel “after the example of the holy and solitary prophet Elijah.” Around the year 1210, the hermits asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Albert, to give them a rule of life.

The Discalced Carmelites were established by St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591, canonized in 1726) in Spain. In this period the storm of the Reformation blew violently, and St. Teresa desired to call the Carmelite order back to its roots and to a more contemplative way of life, in keeping with the original rule given them by St Albert. It is said that the Discalced Carmelites strongly influenced the character of Castilla of Avila, which was a mixed region of European and Arab culture. The Sisters did not wear shoes as a practice of their vow of poverty, and so they were called shoeless Carmelites. The conventional Carmelites however were those who wore shoes. The following phrase in the constitution of the Carmelites may be considered the core of their spirituality, “Dwell in their cells pondering on the Lord’s law day and night.” The encounter with God in prayer is considered to be the soul of the order.116

While speaking of the history of Mary Ward’s congregation, I stated that Catholic religious congregations are mainly divided into Contemplative and Active. Generally monks and nuns live in monasteries or convents, and in the case of contemplative orders like the Carmelites, their contact with the world is severed. There are however groups that lead a community life and yet have contact with people outside a monastery, through various activities such as education, medical treatment, social welfare and so on. Among these we have the Society of Jesus, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the Loretto congregation of Mary Ward, and others. The

Missionaries of Charity that Mother Teresa founded would also fall in this category. However, I do not believe Mother Teresa considered her Missionaries of Charity as merely an Active congregation, for quoting once again what she herself said, “We are not social workers though we do social work.” As I stated earlier in the preface, the purpose of her activity was to put into practice these words of the Bible in a radical sense, namely, “I assure you, insofar as you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

It is clear from this that Mother looked upon the poor and sick as neighbors whose suffering had to be relieved, but it was God who was to be served. This would be like possessing the soul of the Daughters of Charity, something that Fr. Le Joly mentioned in his book. However, the point where Mother considered the Missionaries of Charity to be similar to other Active congregations was in “pondering on the Lord’s law day and night,” and serving God directly with the same spirit as the Carmelite order. The Daughters of Charity stand out firmly as an Active congregation, and they engage in social service. The Missionaries of Charity on the other hand stand out as Contemplatives, although they also engage in social work. In other words as I stated earlier, the two are ‘similar but not the same.’

Appropriate Categorization of Mother’s Activity

It took me 13 years to understand the meaning of the expression I quoted above, namely ‘similar but not the same.’ I now like to describe the development of my understanding and conduct an analysis of the activities I undertook for Mother Teresa, during the past 13 years.

The principal focus of my research on Mother Teresa was intended to be from the standpoint of social welfare, and I had planned on doing this against the background of my past study on her. It is regrettable to note that those who conduct research on Mother Teresa from a scientific standpoint are currently few, for as far as my knowledge goes there is only one other person in Skopje who has written a thesis on her, and that person’s specialty too was social welfare. I guess from now on theological analysis and research on Blessed Mother Teresa will begin, but right now I am unaware of any academic thesis on her written from the viewpoint of theology. I arrived at the understanding that to classify Mother Teresa’s work as social welfare, and to analyze it from that perspective alone, would be improper. It took 13 years for me to reach this

---

117 Violeta Cuetkovska, University of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, Macedonia.
conclusion, but unless I explain myself it would be difficult to understand why I feel so.

Mother Teresa herself remarked that researching her work from the viewpoint of social welfare was meaningless. The first research I conducted was from 1989 to 1992, and my purpose then was to obtain material for my Master’s thesis in social welfare. At that time when I met her in Calcutta she said:

“I am not a social worker. What we are doing is not work, but Christ’s love in action. So I think our work for God is not to be studied in order to write a social work treatise. The activity that we are doing is not work. Serving Christ in the poor is the same as Adoration in the chapel.”

On one occasion I heard that she had said to Sister who had kept watch over a patient overnight without sleeping, “You have done 24 hours of Adoration.” Her favorite expression was, “You did it to me.” She referred to this as palm preaching or five fingers preaching. She would bend each of her five fingers with the words “You, Did, It, To, Me,” and then she would ask the people she met to do the same. She even taught me this five fingers preaching. These words come from the Gospel of Matthew 25:40, where Christ says, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” These words present us with a basic idea of her activity, and as I mentioned before, in all her works she seemed to put these words into action.

I found it difficult to grasp the meaning of her words, “We are not social workers though we do social work,” but still I did not give up on my purpose of writing about her and her work, in order to write a treatise on social welfare. Then on another occasion she said to me,

“Once I had an offer from the ministry of health and welfare department in Delhi, to train their social workers for 3 months. The officers thought we had found new skills for social work. They came and observed our work, and finally gave up sending their workers to us. Maybe they thought that our God’s work and their work were different. Therefore, what we do may not be helpful for writing a thesis on social welfare.”

To study the religious and social activities that missionaries and Church people perform in their service of the poor and underprivileged, and other relief works, is not new in social welfare study. However, what Mother emphasized was that it was
irrelevant and wrong to study only their ‘activity,’ that is, to only pay attention to their practice and disregard the spirit that motivated them. Fr. Le Joly narrates the following episode where she came to him for consultation:

“I met in Delhi an official of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation who is very much impressed by our work. He gives us all the help he can. Now he has written to me, asking if I could train some of his officers. He would send a batch of some twenty to be trained by us for three months and would pay all their expenses. He hopes that thus they would imbibe our spirit and follow our methods. Do you think I should accept? And would you give them lectures if they came here? I cannot do the whole work myself.”

To this, Fr. Le Joly answered:

“Mother, I would suggest that you inform this gentleman that what activates your sisters is their motivation, which cannot be passed on to professional people who do not believe in Christ.” 118

Fr. Mataix also declares as follows:

“Mother is not a nurse. Furthermore, she is not a welfare worker, a person following the principle of human rights, or a social worker either. She herself has said so. You have to direct your attention to the source of her faith which is ‘the love of Jesus,’ for it is that which made the practice of self-sacrifice rational” (Author’s translation). 119

He suggested that we pay attention to the meaning of faith, that which was the source of Mother Teresa’s activity, and not the activity itself. However I noted a spirit of acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude in Mother, particularly in her dictum of “live well with all those differences” that I described in the preceding chapter. Acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude are key points in The Casework Relationship, which we refer to as the ‘Bible’ of all caseworkers and professionals of social welfare, written by

118 Edward Le Joly SJ, Mother Teresa of Calcutta. A biography, p. 35.
Fr. Felix Paul Biestek SJ (1912.7.22-1994.12.24). About Mother Teresa’s attitude, Fr. Mataix remarked, “She did not change her attitude with reference to people no matter what status those people may have” (Author’s translation). People who mainly study psychology and counseling may apply the ‘unconditioned positive regards’ of the client-centered approach of Carl Rogers (1902-1987), to this attitude of Mother Teresa that Fr. Mataix refers to. However, specialists of social welfare may apply the “individualization” of the “casework relationship” of Biestek.

I understand that Mother Teresa did not aim at social work, but I thought that if I analyzed her attitude towards the people of India from the standpoint of social welfare technology, an unconscious practice of the “casework relationship” which is thought to be the compass of the confidential liaison between the social worker and the client would appear, and I thought also that this was the reason for the success of her activity.

I was also under the impression that the fact that Mother was a Christian nun who had come from Europe, would be a negative element that would call forth a feeling of resistance from the Indian people, who had experienced a long and painful history of colonial rule. Why was it that Mother Teresa, a person who faced obstacles from both sides, namely of religion and race, became an individual who was venerated by the Indian people to the same degree as Mahatma Gandhi? Generally speaking the reason given was that it was because of her self-sacrificing volunteer activity for the relief of the poor and destitute. However, even assuming she began a splendid activity for the people, still, if the people did not accept her, she would not have been able to continue. When I reflect over the fact that her activity was not confined only to Calcutta but expanded to the whole of India, I feel the reason she was accepted by the people and gained their deep respect, was because she unconsciously adopted a professional attitude that was required for assistance, and managed to develop a confidential bond with others.

My analysis reveals that Mother’s attitude of acceptance and her non-judgmental approach towards the cultures, customs, and religions of India, was the key point in the success of her activity within the country. In particular, in her attitude of respecting the freedom of persons in choosing their own faith and never forcing the

---

121 Fr. Anselmo Mataix SJ, (Iesu wo aishita onna Maza Teresa), Mother Teresa: A Woman who loved Jesus, p. 38.
follower of a religion into becoming a Christian, “client self-determination” is applicable. For example, she did not baptize children at the Shishu Bhawan orphanage managed by her Sisters, because the children are adopted not only by Christian but also Muslim and Hindu families. She always kept in mind the welfare of the children, so that they may be adopted without resistance by families of any religion, and she also wanted to give them a chance to choose their own religion when they grew up.

Fr. Biestek in *The Casework Relationship* writes as follows:

“This the medieval saint Francis of Assisi, who had what may be described as a casework intuition to a high degree, saw through the external appearance what a man really was and used psychological means to help liberate the human soul.”

This could also be applied to Mother Teresa. It is well known that in the large number of people who came to see her, she spared more time in speaking to the poor than to courtesy visitors. However, I think she also had what Fr. Biestek describes as “the casework intuition” that discovers someone having a mental hunger, and she even perceived this problem in the many tourists and volunteers from wealthy countries who visited her convent.

I am of the view that with her self-effacing work for the poor, she constituted an ideal figure of a social worker. Her way of serving people was reminiscent of the way of Mary Ellen Richmond (1861-1928) who is known as the “mother of social case work.” Richmond’s book entitled *What is Social Case Work?* is a never fading textbook for those wishing to become social workers. She was the first to address the poor as “clients,” and she never looked down upon them as slothful but treated them with respect as human beings. Her modest professional attitude led to the progress of the Charity Organization Society’s activities and contributed to the growth of casework.

---

124 See Appendix 3.
*Social Diagnosis*, which Richmond brought out in 1917, and *What is Social Case Work?* brought out in 1922, are books all who studied social welfare know about. Richmond is the one who developed charitable activities into special assistance technology, such as what we call Social Work, and she started assisting people’s professional education. She was called “the mother of social work.”
skills, and built up a basic theory of social work. Mother Teresa’s voluntary welfare activities have something in common with the first intention, originally from the Richmond, which we social workers should not forget. She and her Sisters have a professional attitude overflowing with kindness, sympathy, and love, so much so that if they are not social workers, then we would truly have no one worthy to be declared a social worker. So, even though Mother claimed not to be a social worker, I feel that we social workers could indeed learn many things from her.

After the completion of my Master’s thesis, whenever I had an opportunity, in my thesis presentations I tried to view her activities and herself from the standpoint of social welfare study. I considered the case of the many non-Christians who write on matters useful for the average social workers of Japan, and I stressed the fact that their views were expressed in the form of case studies, in order that the religious element may not be stressed. In particular, I highlighted the fact that Mother used the word “serving” instead of “helping,” for this was a significant point that those who work in assisting others should not forget. I mentioned the common features that Mother Teresa had with Mary Ellen Richmond and Fr. Felix P. Biestek, and I insisted that the unassuming attitude of Mother was an ideal we all needed to aspire to. However, I had to endure various trials and experienced failure for over 13 years, and thus I came to

---

126 Hiromi Kudo, *A Consideration of Mother Teresa’s Voluntary activities in Calcutta*, Tokyo, Japan Women’s University, Faculty of Humanities, Graduate Course in Social welfare study, thesis for the Master’s degree. 1992.


127 Fr. Felix P. Biestek SJ is a Catholic priest. There are in Japan certain teachers who hesitate to teach their students *The Casework Relationship*. Fr. Biestek raised seven principles as constituting a caseworker’s professional attitude in *The Casework Relationship*. They are, Individualization, Purposeful Expression of Feelings, Controlled Emotional Involvement, Acceptance, Nonjudgmental Attitude, Client Self-determination, and Confidentiality. These seven principles are universal, and not confined to religion. So, they came to encompass all social workers when they face their clients. They are found in Japanese textbooks, and are also used in social workers’ state examinations. Personal information about Fr. Felix P. Biestek SJ as given in the textbook is that he is a professor at Loyola University in Chicago. No texts mention that he is a priest. However, in the original English book we find that he is a Jesuit priest. Perhaps those who do not teach the seven principles read the original book, and felt that a book written by a Catholic priest is religious and not scientific. Fr. Biestek wrote this book neither as a religious
realize that it was not appropriate to carry out research on her activity solely on the basis of social welfare. If the activity of Mother Teresa were compared to a tree, then the fruits that appear would be “active social welfare,” but the roots that support the tree would be “contemplation in action.” Hence, I repeat that this is a point where the Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa and the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, are “similar but not the same.”

**Missionaries of Charity as Contemplatives in Action**

Mother Teresa’s Beatification ceremony was held on October 19, 2003 from 10:00 AM onwards in St. Peter’s Square of Vatican City, and in the course of ceremony her following words were introduced:

“I believe that we are not really social workers. We may be doing social work in the eyes of the people but we are really contemplatives in the heart of the world.”

advertisement nor for believer acquisition. Occasionally however he had quotations from the Bible, as for example when describing the Nonjudgmental Attitude he said:

“The Hebrews in the Old Testament and Christians in the New Testament are taught not to judge their fellowman: “Do you accept his person, and do you endeavor to judge for God?”(Job 13:8); “Do not judge, that you may not be judged”(Matthew 7:1); “Therefore let us no longer judge one another” (Romans 14:13); “But thou who judgest thy neighbor, who art thou?” (James 4:12).”


About “Individualization,” he wrote:

“The medieval saint Francis of Assisi, who had what may be described as a casework intuition in a high degree, saw through external appearance what a man really was and used psychological means to help liberate the human soul.”


There may be those who think that such an expression is too religious. However, it is also a fact that he expressed himself according his faith, and this gave me the courage to undertake the research and presentation of Mother Teresa’s activity without being afraid to express myself from a Catholic point of view in academic circles. In the portion where he discusses “Client Self-determination,” he mentions the problem where the “Client decides to remarry” as an example, and states that: “The caseworker cannot cooperate in implementing the decision, because by so doing the caseworker would be cooperating in something which he considers wrong.” (Felix P. Biestek SJ, *The Casework Relationship*, p. 118).

For Fr. Biestek, the caseworker has no right to force his religion and sense of values on clients, but when the client makes his or her self-decision which disagrees with caseworker’s sense of values, especially faith, the case worker has the right to stop taking charge of that case.

Actually when I was working as a caseworker, a client who expected to have an “abortion” came to me. I was confused and wondered if I should support her request for the abortion or not. I introduced her to the group that provides medical information, and also to organizations that support free delivery and perform international adoptions. But I did not recommend nor introduce the hospital that conducts an abortion directly. Later I gave up taking charge of that case. It is because Fr. Biestek suggested in his book that I could work with my personal belief, that I did so. However, I can also understand the case of people who are opposed to imposing their ethical attitudes arising from their religion or faith, into their work.

These words also appeared during the election of the Superior General of her congregation on January 14, 1997, when she announced her formal retirement for reasons of health. Since she was elected Superior General in every election, her congregation was for the first time going to elect someone other than herself, since their establishment in 1950. But whom could they elect apart from her? I felt the person chosen needed to symbolize the charisma and soul of the congregation, and hence I would like to describe the situation prior to the elections and the results that subsequently emerged.

Eight Sisters were chosen as candidates. Sr. Agnes Das the first to join the Missionaries of Charity was not a candidate, due to the fact that she suffered from intestinal cancer. In fact, three months after the voting she passed away on April 11, 1997 at 5:45 AM, in the Mother House.

On December 22, 1996 the Asian Age a Calcutta newspaper named three who had chances of becoming Superior General. The vice-superior of the time was their first choice, owing both to the role she fulfilled when Mother was hospitalized, and her administrative skills. Yet, despite her experience and popularity she was 81 years old, and in view of this advanced age it was difficult to ask her to succeed Mother Teresa who herself was 86.

The next was a nun who had worked at the American branch of the congregation for over 20 years, and who was also the provincial superior in the USA. She had worked hard as a spokesperson in the Mother House, and was thought a likely candidate for Superior General. Among the members she was possibly the most well known after Sr. Agnes Das, for she was very energetic and seemed to portray the activity of the congregation.

As the third possibility the Asian Age suggested Sister Nirmala, who was the superior of the Contemplatives. Although different from other Contemplative groups like the Carmelites, the Missionaries of Charity Contemplatives are precisely “Contemplatives in Action.” Their lives are based on prayer, but the Sisters are permitted to go out of the convent for charitable works, and lay people may even visit their convent to pray with them. Hence service activities of about two hours are included in their official schedule.

The Asian Age reported an insider’s opinion saying, “Sr. Nirmala will bring about a more focused spiritual approach to the congregation.” Sr. Nirmala was a very

---

popular nun and a quiet thoughtful person. Also she was intimate with Sr. Agnes Das. However, although in the congregation everyone revered her high spirituality, yet at the time she was not known to the outside world. In this election the members were faced with a choice as to who they should elect, namely one who represented the active aspect or the contemplative aspect of the congregation. Finally it was Sr. Nirmala the superior of the Contemplatives, who was elected as the Superior General.

From this result it was clear to see what the congregation aimed at. The priority of Mother Teresa and her Sisters was not social work, and they were not social workers as she herself had stated. Yet they were not an Active congregation either. Mother Teresa who sought to serve Christ with perfect devotion wasn’t just Martha, but Mary (Luke 11:39-42). For her these two positions were compatible and in no way contradictory to each other, and so she strove to put this idea into practice in her life. The form and practice of the congregation was active, but in reality what she aimed at was the contemplative aspect. Accordingly, she adopted the constitution of the Carmelites in part and attempted to seek spiritual guidance at the Carmel convent in Kolkata, with the intention of bringing the spirituality of the Carmelites into her own congregation.

Through the investigation conducted for her beatification and canonization, it was obvious that Mother not only received directions from God for what we call her Second Vocation, but she also had dialogues with God. The letter that she sent on January 13, 1947 to Ferdinand Perrier who served as the Archbishop of Kolkata from 1924.6.23 to 1960.8.12 was shown to the public after the inquiry. It said that Mother Teresa received a revelation, what we call a Second Vocation from God, while she was traveling in the night train to Darjeeling for her retreat (a period of prayer and meditation), on September 10, 1946.

From this letter one understands that God conversed with Mother Teresa frequently, even after the revelation in the night train, and each time He gave her directions. The following sentence is from the letter of hers to the Archbishop. It contains the words that God spoke to her.

---

130 At the time of the last elections Mother Teresa formally announced her retirement. The Pope recognized her decision, but the Sisters who wished that she continue as Superior General were troubled. Before the election, Sr. Agnes and Sr. Nirmala visited Fr. Van Exem and asked his advice. Fr. Van Exem at that time gave them a quick-witted reply. He said, “Rome recognized Mother Teresa’s retirement, but Rome does not forbid your voting for her. You have the right to vote for whomever you choose.” Sr. Agnes and Sr. Nirmala then informed all the Sisters having the right to vote about this advice Fr. Van Exem gave, and so Mother Teresa was re-elected as the Superior General.
“I want Indian nuns, victims of my love, who would be Mary and Martha, who would be so very united to me as to radiate my love on souls.”  

From this letter it is clear that God ordered Mother Teresa and her Sisters to “become both Mary and Martha.” She followed His instructions throughout her life, and practiced them faithfully through her numerous activities.

Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk MC, a member of the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity who is a postulator for the canonization process of Mother Teresa, revealed yet another expression of hers that he wrote in a report entitled *The things that Mother Teresa left*, and this was published in a Japanese magazine called *Katorikku Seikatsu’ (Catholic Life)*. The expression is, “contemplatives in the heart of the world” (Author’s translation).  

From such cases I believe we have no choice but to accept the fact that Mother Teresa and her Sisters are Contemplatives, although they resembled other Active congregations throughout the world.

**Life at St. Mary’s School and Inculturation**

After taking her first vows on May 25, 1931 Mother Teresa was assigned to St. Mary’s school, an institution run by the Loretto Sisters of Kolkata. The subjects she was asked to teach were geography, history, and Catholicism. At that time she was twenty years old, and the religious life and educational activities she had dreamed about in Skopje now got a start in India. Here she promptly demonstrated her talent by obtaining the confidence and trust of Mother du Cenacle IBVM who was the school principal, and soon became her right arm.

The Loretto Sisters also ran an orphanage, where 300 children of a variety of religious backgrounds were raised and educated. In St. Mary’s school, a Bengali nun belonging to a congregation called the Daughters of St. Anne conducted classes in Bengali along with the Loretto Sisters for about 200 children of a poverty-stricken background, and these nuns wore a sari as their religious habit. Since Mother Teresa

---

See Appendix 4.  
133 The date of her first vows is recorded as the 24th of May. I took this date form the book by Sr. Wada who visited the headquarters of the Loretto for her research on Mother Teresa. Machiko Wada, *Mother Teresa*, p. 40.
was good at Bengali, she too was asked to help the Daughters of St. Anne by taking charge of the lessons in Bengali, as mentioned in the testimony of Sr. Rozario. I am of the view that the uniform now worn by the Missionaries of Charity, namely the white cotton sari with three blue borderlines, was acquired from her contact with the Daughters of St. Anne.

Mother Teresa, who hailed from a multi-ethnic city like Skopje, felt that the first step towards establishing good relations with people of a different race and culture was to get a grasp of their language. On this issue I believe she amply demonstrated in India the linguistic aptitude she had inherited from her father, who as stated earlier was fluent in a variety of tongues. Furthermore, I am inclined to believe that she felt the local people had built up a sort of a psychological barrier against her, and she probably surmised that the mental distance to them would be shortened if she wore the same dress as they, in imitation of the Daughters of St. Anne. In all such matters Fr. Van Exem, a Jesuit who was her spiritual director and who was instrumental in the realization of her Second Vocation, influenced her decisions.

As head of an Oriental Research Institute Fr. Van Exem devoted part of his time to the study of “Inculturation,” which is the adaptation of Christian culture to the cultures specific to each country. Inculturation involves language skills and acclimatization to the social customs of the local areas, and it is an issue that Jesuits have often tackled in the course of their history.

Certain scholars are of the view that inculturation was resorted to on account of failures experienced by St. Francis Xavier in the course of his work. In 1540 the Society of Jesus was a new order that had just been recognized by the Holy See, and St. Francis Xavier who was a leading member of the group learned from this experience of failure. Subsequently in 1548 he urged the Jesuit Enrique Enriquez SJ who was stationed in South India to learn the local language, namely Tamil, and to acquire also a grasp of the local culture. Inculturation is a process wherein one acquires skill in the

134 My mother and I wore sarees for our Baptism and Confirmation. Whenever Mother Teresa saw us in sarees, she looked very pleased. Later while serving tea to the Archbishop who had come for our Confirmation she said, “Look at them Archbishop. They have worn sarees. They look like real Indian Ladies.” She seemed really proud to see my mother and myself in a sari.

I think the reason she chose the cotton sari as her uniform, was to make the local Indians feel at ease with a European like herself. However, though she wore the same dress as the local people, I think what she loved more than anything else was the culture of India.

135 Translated as “the bloom in culture” and “cultural adaptation.”

136 Since the missionary did not understand the local language and depended on the interpreter, and also because his teaching of the doctrine of Christianity to the local people was inadequate, the local people received baptism, and after a short period of time they promptly returned to their former ways. Hisashi Kishino, *Zabieru to Nihon* (Xavier and Japan), Tokyo, Yoshikawahirofumikan Publishers, 1998, p. 93
local language and gets a grasp of the religious and social structure, and then, slowly but steadily one educates and helps the people in their own idiom.

The Italian Jesuit Robert de Nobili is famous for having applied this concept in South India, at Madurai. In 1606 he went to Madurai, learned Tamil which was the local language, and also Telugu and Sanskrit. He tried to uncover in these languages words and expressions that would correspond to general Christian ideas in order that the local people might understand them better, and translated the doctrine of Christianity in terms of the religious and philosophical concepts of India. Moreover, he adopted a lifestyle of temperance and the vegetarian diet of an upper class Hindu in his daily life, and called himself a Sannyasi which means ‘one who has renounced all.’ Thus he gained the trust of the upper caste people of India including the Brahmans who were of the priestly caste, and made efforts to communicate his message of love. However, his methods were not looked upon kindly by some of his compatriots, for they felt that he was going too far in the name of contextualization.

In 1623 Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) permitted Christians to follow certain Indian customs in the manner of Robert de Nobili, but later Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) placed a ban on the issue in 1744. However in the time of Mother Teresa Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) was open to the idea, and so eventually the practice of inculturation came to be accepted by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966).

---

137 New Catholic encyclopedia, pp. 547-548
138 In the Indian missions, terms used for the propagation of faith were usually Portuguese. However, the translations of such terms, was also tried in Japanese. St. Francis Xavier translated the word God by using a term which refers to a deity of the Shingon Buddhist sect, the Cosmic Buddha, and preached in Japanese saying “Dainichi vo uogamiare” which mean “Worship the God Dainichi,” when he first visited Japan in 1549. Consequently his group received a warm reception from the Buddhist priests of the Shingon sect. By such encounters he had a chance to discuss with Buddhist priests about their mutual religions, and he came to know the religion of Japan. Later however through understanding the Japanese culture and religion he found that “God” as understood in Christianity was not the same as Dainichi, the Cosmic Buddha, and so he stopped using the term Dainichi in his preaching. Hisashi Kishino, Zabiera to Nihon (Xavier and Japan), 1998.
Judging from these experiences of St. Francis Xavier in Japan, it is surmised that the Jesuits in those days were very prudent about transposing a Christian term into the local language, even when they found it necessary to communicate the teachings of Christ to the people.
Moreover, in the case of the method of Fr. Robert de Nobili, the Catholic priests who served the higher castes did not associate with untouchables and people of the lower castes. It appears as though Robert de Nobili perceived the discrimination that existed in the country, and understanding it as a part of their culture he followed it. This was the one of the points of criticism leveled against him. There were also Catholic priests who believed that propagating the Christianity that came from Europe by uniting it with the local culture was wrong.
139 The Second Vatican Council was a large conference of the Catholic Church held during 1962-1965, and it aimed at the modernization of The Church. Among other things dialogue with Protestants and people of other religions, and the pressures of the many present-day problems, were discussed. Holy Mass, which was so far said in Latin, was permitted in the local languages. This council had an
Mother Teresa in all probability never imagined that she would receive a Second Vocation from God, and leave the Loretto congregation in order to establish her own religious group. She certainly never planned it. Yet she did choose to wear the sari because it made it easier for her to adjust to Indian society, in particular the cotton sari that was worn by the poor, and which later became the uniform of her newly born religious community. I am of the view that this openness on her part was the consequence not only of her early life in Skopje and her links with the Daughters of St. Anne, but also the influence of Fr. Van Exem, who at the time was exploring the issue of inculturation. I guess when she accepted the poverty of the slums where most of the residents were Hindus she was following the counsel of Fr. Van Exem, since she often went to him for guidance.

Just before the gulf war began in January 1991, when Mother Teresa sent a petition to the 41st president of the United States Mr. George Herbert Walker Bush (president from 1989-1993), and a petition also to the president of Iraq Mr. Saddam Hussein (president from 1979-2003) begging them to avoid war, she visited Fr. Van Exem in order to obtain his advice. In those days I also used to visit Fr. Van Exem daily, and once when I was with him Mother Teresa came into his room with another nun. When I asked if I should leave she replied, “you may stay,” and so I was able to sit next to her and observe her consulting him eagerly on matters such as how the petition ought to be written, how she should take into consideration the feelings of the Islamic people, and other related matters.

I believe she was blessed with the gift of cultural acceptance, something she had cultivated while in Skopje as the preceding chapter has described, and I believe she always tried hard to avoid political, cultural, and religious confrontations. Each time she

---

epoch-making influence on the Catholic Church.

On December 8, 1965, just a few hours after the closing of the council, a bishop said:

“It is not only the words that are significant, but likewise the behavior, the movements, the gestures, the open arms, the hands joined, the kiss of peace; all of these are Roman gestures. If the Blacks or the Japanese ... wish to translate these gestures into their traditional mode of behavior, for that is necessary, one must translate them. Where will it end? In comparing an African Mass to a European Mass in 50 years time, will we observe anything in common? Certainly we will preserve the basic elements; the bread, the wine, but all else will be changed according to local traditions: the words, gestures, colors, vestments, chants, architecture, decor. The problem of liturgical reform is enormous, and it is difficult to imagine where it will all end.”


140 This petition was written on January 2 and sent to both the Presidents. And THE HERALD of Calcutta published it. *Mother Appeals to Bush and Saddam*, THE HERALD, Calcutta, January 11-17, 1991. See Appendix 5 for the full text of the letter.
was called upon to make an important statement she sought the advice and instruction of Fr. Van Exem, particularly regarding the words she should use and the attitude she should adopt. It is clear that she received his instructions and influence on various occasions, in particular when she had to deal with people who followed religions other than Christianity.

However, a new fact was discovered and released, in the process of conducting investigations for her beatification and canonization. Mother Teresa explained in a letter to the Archbishop that she had received a concrete revelation from God about the establishment of a new religious congregation aimed at serving the poor, and also about the uniform of the congregation.

“In the congregation girls of any nationality should be taken, but they must become Indian-minded and dress in simple clothes: a long, white, long-sleeved habit, light blue sari and a white veil, sandals, no stockings, a crucifix, girdle and rosary.”

According to this letter the uniform of Mother Teresa’s Sisters was the result of a revelation from God, and not some person’s suggestion or idea. However, although God instructed her about the “light blue sari and white veil,” yet the uniform she chose to wear was a white sari with three blue borderlines. Also, the Sisters do not cover their heads with a veil but with their saris. In order to avoid the sun, the women of India cover their heads with the hem of their saris instead of a veil, and if someone were to dress in a sari and also use a veil, it would without doubt look strange. Viewed from this perspective, I find that even assuming she received it from God, Mother Teresa did not follow the revelation verbatim but adapted it to the customs of the people of India. Working among the people of India with an Indian frame of mind as God had directed her, was merely putting into practice the inculturation taught to her by the Jesuits. Hence, in order for her to receive the full import of the revelation, I am of the opinion that Fr. Van Exem who was studying the issue of inculturation at that time, played a key role as her spiritual director.

The Second World War and Independence of India

On May 25, 1937, Mother Teresa took her final vows in Darjeeling when she was 26 years old. She wrote about this incident expressing her great joy to Fr. Franjo Jambrenkovic the parish priest of Skopje, who as stated earlier, had guided what we may call her ‘first religious vocation.’ In her letter she said, “If only you could know how happy I was…I want to be only for Jesus…I would give everything for him, even life itself.”

In order to become a nun there are stages of preparation that one must go through. After finishing her novitiate the candidate takes her first vows, and obtains a religious name and habit. She then moves on to the stage of final vows, which usually takes three to six years depending on the congregation, and the candidate during this period renews her vows every year until she is allowed to take her final vows. Final vows mean that she swears to spend her entire life as a religious, in the congregation she chose to join.

On taking her final vows Mother Teresa became a full-fledged nun, who pledged to live as a servant of God throughout her life. She took the religious vows of “poverty, chastity, and obedience,” and swore to live in accordance with the doctrine of Christianity and the constitution of the Loretto congregation, as an obedient and humble bride of Christ. Having become a member of a religious congregation, she now had to live a life of obedience. She had to act in recognition of the fact that her superiors were to be obeyed, and that performing any action without their permission was not allowed.

This was something she understood well and accepted. When she later heard the voice of God and received her Second Vocation, she was not able to leave her convent immediately and go to the slums as the voice had instructed her, without the permission of both the Superior General of the Loretto congregation and the Archbishop of Kolkata, and this was due to the vow of obedience she had freely taken.

After her final vows in Darjeeling, in obedience to the command of her superiors she returned to the Loretto convent in Kolkata and taught once more at St. Mary’s, the school where she had formerly worked. She was under the impression that she would have to spend her entire life as a Sister of the Loretto, though, as she herself

---

142 Her final profession is recorded as being on the 24th of May. I took this date from the book of Sr. Wada. Confer Machiko Wada, Mother Teresa, p. 40.
143 John Scicluna SJ, Madre Teresa et Gesuiti: un rapporto speciale, Roma, Popoli, Ottobre 2003. I obtained the English version through the good offices of Fr. Jose M. de Vera SJ who works at the Jesuit public relations office in Rome. I quote this line from the English version.
confessed later, her work as a teacher and her life as a Religious, were both substantial and fulfilling. Hence, when she eventually was forced to leave the convent and go to work in the slums it was a great sacrifice on her part, and this is something I shall now describe.

In September 1939 when Mother was 29 years old World War II broke out, owing to the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany. In March 1942 Rangoon (Yangon) fell to Japanese forces, and the invasion of India seemed imminent. The British government that was in control in those days established their strategic headquarters in Kolkata. The Loretto convent and St. Mary’s School were commandeered by the army and converted into an emergency hospital, and so the nuns were obliged to move temporarily to another location in Convent Road.

Gandhi demanded independence from the British, and the Indian National Congress adopted the Quit India resolution against the British on August 8, 1942. Seizing this opportunity Gandhi determined to set into motion a non-violent public movement, and thereby obtain independence for India. He expressed the desire that India cooperate in the war effort not as a colony of Britain, but as an independent nation. However the next day, that is August 9, Gandhi and members of the Indian National Congress were arrested in the early hours of the morning. His arrest sent shock waves throughout the nation, and the various protest movements that erupted soon developed into large-scale riots.

In addition to this, in 1943 a famine arose in Bengal that is reported to have been the worst in modern history. It is said that if we were to total the casualties that occurred as a result of the First World War, the independence struggle that followed it, and this natural disaster, it would amount to about 3 million or more deaths in the Bengal region alone. Also, people dying of starvation wandered into Kolkata, hunger and malnutrition gave rise to epidemics such as cholera, malaria, and smallpox, and many died on the roads without medical treatment. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), the poet and author born in Bombay and who was the first English citizen to receive the Nobel Prize for literature described Kolkata as a “city of dreadful nights,” for in those days the city had been transformed to such an extent that his description was certainly apt. In the first U.N. Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT) held at Vancouver in Canada in 1976, Calcutta was declared the worst habitation environment in the world, and it was dubbed “the dying city.” It seemed as if the entire city had turned into a refugee camp, teeming with people in search of jobs, both from the present-day Bangladesh area and the impoverished state of Bihar. Despite this however, it is said
that the city’s worst situation was earlier in 1943.

Shortage of food was a serious issue for the Loretto Sisters too, and it was in such an appalling situation that Mother Teresa who was then 32 years old, made a personal vow to God. She promised, “to give him anything he asked.” It was a personal issue between the Almighty and herself, and Fr. Lawrence Trevor Picachy SJ [later Cardinal Picachy (1916-1992)] a Jesuit who directed the retreat where she spent eight days in prayer and meditation under his guidance, recognized this vow of hers. Fr. Picachy later served as the second Jesuit Archbishop of Calcutta from May 29, 1969 to April 5, 1986, and he eventually was made a Cardinal on May 24, 1976. This personal vow of Mother Teresa’s might have been an expression of her gratitude to God, for her miraculous recovery from a serious illness. Ante Gabric, a close collaborator of hers wrote in a letter saying, “The reverend sister Therese Bojaxhiu was so sick that many thought that she would never recover again, but fortunately she recovered.”

In 1960, on the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity, Mother wrote the following words in a letter to Fr. Joseph Neuner SJ (1908-2009), one of her spiritual directors in those days.

“Since then I have kept this promise, and sometimes when the darkness is very intense and I am on the verge of saying “No” to God, the thought of that promise pulls me up.”

Due to this personal vow made in 1942, Mother Teresa was unable to say “No” to her Second Vocation, namely the special mission that God had directly called on her to embark upon in 1946, four years after the vow. Moreover, Fr. Picachy who later succeeded Archbishop Perrier, made great efforts for the fulfillment of this Second Vocation of hers. He was very supportive and encouraged her in her sufferings and during the dark night of her soul, urging her to act in accordance with her personal vow. In the following letter written to Fr. Picachy, the anguish she underwent at that

---

146 The funeral of Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy was conducted on the grounds of St. Xavier’s College in Calcutta, on December 2, 1992. There were about 3000 that attended, and Mother Teresa was also present. Cardinal Picachy was the intermediary of the promise between herself and God though her personal vow, and he supported her during her “dark night of the soul.” She was standing in the front row. Although in those days my mother and I did not know about the support Mother Teresa had received from Cardinal Picachy, yet on one occasion we recall her saying, “the Cardinal was a really holy man.” We too were allowed to participate in the funeral along with the Sisters. Although it was heavily clouded and it
time is obvious.

“I have been on the verge of saying, ‘No.’ It has been so very hard. That terrible longing keeps growing and I feel as if something will break in me one day. And then that darkness, that loneliness, that terrible feeling of aloneness! ... And yet I long for God. I long to love Him with every drop of life in me. I want to love Him with a deep personal love.”

Could it have been the critical social situation and famine that arose after World War II that goaded Mother Teresa to take this vow? It is not clear why she took the vow, but what is clear is that this vow was the major motivation in her life for the realization of her Second Vocation, that came to her so suddenly in 1946.

She experienced the agony of the dark night of the soul soon after she had founded the Missionaries of Charity, and again at the time of her death some 45 years later. This became clear while investigating her background for the purpose of her beatification and canonization. I am of the view that her personal vow and her spiritual directors, especially Fr. Picachy, proved a source of strength and support for her during that long and difficult period, both mentally and spiritually.

In 1944, when Mother du Cenacle the school principal fell sick and retired, Mother Teresa was appointed in her place. This was thirteen years after she had begun her teaching career in India, and at that time she was about 33 or 34 years old. As principal she unflinchingly coped with the wartime catastrophes, ceaselessly supplied food and other necessities for the children of the orphanage, and deftly managed the school boarders.

The war in Europe ended in April 1945, but new situations arose in India

---


148 Fr. Edward Le Joly SJ who was one of Mother Teresa’s spiritual directors, wrote in his book published in 1983 about her experience of the “dark night of the soul.”

“Mother has personally experienced that the Lord purifies us interiorly, in a subtle manner, depriving us of all spiritual consolations. Every loving soul must expect at times to be tried and deprived of all sensible consolation, of every feeling of God’s sacred presence, as it is made to pass through the tunnel of the dark night. In that noche oscura, as St. John of the Cross calls it, that Dark Night known by all mystics and many others, the marriage between God and the soul is being prepared.”

owing to the struggle for independence. In October, large-scale demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of people demanding the release of Indian prisoners took place in Kolkata, and the city was plunged into a state of anarchy for three days. Strikes and demonstrations were vigorously organized all over the country, and victorious nations of the Second World War (FSU) such as the United States and the Soviet Union, supported the independence of India. Also, the British who were greatly exhausted after the war showed signs of conciliation, and so the demands of the Indians grew by leaps and bounds and their efforts for independence accelerated.

On August 16, 1946, the general meeting of the Muslim League was held in Kolkata. The League declared this a ‘day of a direct action,’ a red-letter day. Apart from Gandhi’s Indian National Congress the Muslim League of Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) also sought independence from Britain, but they insisted on a separate state for Muslims. The meeting, which was held in a maidan (a wide open space), was transformed into a riot between Hindus and Muslims, and speedily escalated into a citizen’s war in Kolkata. The clashes between the communities continued for four days. No less than 4000 people are said to have lost their lives, and it is reported that the piles of decomposed bodies scattered on the roadside resembled small mountains. More than pillage or attacks on religious places the rioters seemed bent on homicide. To kill as many members of the other group as possible, seemed their sole purpose. Reflecting back now, we see that August 16 was the beginning of the dreadful event that is often referred to as the ‘Great Calcutta Killings.’

Mahatma Gandhi then traveled from East Bengal to Bihar on foot in order to erase the flame of communalism that had blazed up as a result of this rioting and slaughter, and to see to it that the yearnings of the people for nonviolence were not extinguished. He made a magnificent attempt to wipe away the hate that had so suddenly sprung up between these opposing religious groups. The Islamic people, seeking to protect their residential areas from Hindu attackers, had from the very beginning demanded a two-nation system, one Hindu and the other Muslim. This however was contrary to the desire of most Hindus, though eventually the subcontinent did get divided into two independent states, namely India where the Hindus formed a majority, and Pakistan where Muslims formed the greater part.

The state of Bengal in the East where Mother Teresa lived and worked as well

---

as the state of Punjab in the West were split, and the two nations of India and Pakistan were formed. Depending on their religion, about six million people were obliged to move on both sides, the Muslims to Pakistan and the Hindus to India. One million or more Hindus immigrated to West Bengal from East Pakistan, which later became the present-day nation of Bangladesh. Yet, sad to say even despite the division the cycle of hate, violence, and slaughter continued, due to confrontations on the basis of religion.

Such religious disputes took place even while I was in India, and I recall the army being called out in Kolkata during December (6-10), 1992, in order to maintain peace. In Kolkata, all public transport usually comes to a halt annually on December 1. However that day is usually peaceful, with parents and children playing badminton on the streets and youngsters flying kites, an ambiance of serenity and calm. In 1992 though the situation was different. It is said that even tiny squabbles became the causes of riots, and gave rise to conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. This is a situation that still continues to smolder, judging from the political tensions between India and Pakistan, and in certain parts of the nation even minor differences of opinion can lead to a citizen’s war between religious groups.

In front of the Mother House, which is located in a Muslim area, the citizens who had turned into a mob attacked vehicles and trucks and set them on fire. Certain Hindus set fire to mosques and Muslims did the same to temples, each group burning the other’s places of worship. Yet, it was noteworthy that nobody attacked the Mother House, despite the fact that the rioting had expanded across the town, and far from being settled the violence increased day by day.

On December 6 an incident occurred that caused the government to forcibly intervene. Here a group of Muslims attacked a temple of the Hindu goddess Kali, which was a very popular center of pilgrimage. The Indian government finally called out the army and mobilized extra forces in Kolkata in order to suppress the uprisings, and even more, they declared a curfew and placed the entire area under army control. Yet, even without the curfew it was useless to walk around the town during the riots. Due to fear of pillaging and plunder all stores were closed, and the common man was consequently unable to obtain food and other necessities. The poor in the streets had no refrigerators or places to stock their food, and hence even assuming they had the money for it, they were unable to eat during the four days of the curfew.

Mother Teresa, having got special permission from the army, on one occasion sat in the passenger seat of the truck belonging to the Missionaries of Charity and went out to obtain food in order to distribute it to the poor in the suburbs. There were only
two in the truck, namely the driver and herself. Although the army was enforcing law and order in the streets, yet bands of young Muslims and Hindus who had turned into mobs indiscriminately attacked and burned cars and other vehicles. Yet, nobody attacked the truck in which Mother sat, although she traveled alone and refused to permit her Sisters to come along with her, and in the evening she returned safely to the Mother house carrying the necessary food. Later when the law and order situation improved she distributed the food freely to the hungry poor, regardless of whether they be Hindus, Muslims, or of any other religious persuasion.

I am of the opinion that on encountering these religious riots in Kolkata, painful recollections of the “chain of hatred” she had experienced in her homeland arose within heart, despite the fact that the situation in the two countries was not the same. The courage and drive she revealed in the numerous crises that erupted in Kolkata were something she had cultivated in her hometown of Skopje, which as I mentioned earlier, was engulfed in war almost throughout the time she was born and raised. She grew up in the Balkan Peninsula where wars were frequent, but thanks to this experience, in times of crises she proved herself a leader who could respond to any emergency.

The trauma of division between India and Pakistan that is even now vividly recalled by the people of India, and especially of West Bengal, can perhaps never be entirely healed. Even now religious confrontations arise, and the life of the common man may be likened to a dormant volcano, that appears calm on the surface but is awaiting an opportunity to explode. However, I have also seen Muslims and Hindus pray together for the peace of Calcutta during the riots, and my mother who on one occasion happened to see the flames of a fire attack from the roof of her hotel, noticed

150 Mother Teresa said the following words to the Sisters and to us who worried about her coming out to town during the time of martial law, at the moment of her leaving the gate of the Mother House, “The abbreviation MC has another meaning apart from Missionaries of Charity,” she said seriously, “the other meaning is Military Captain. So do not worry about me.” Even under tense situations she joked in this manner and made us laugh. Mother went to town while Kolkata was under army control by truck, with the driver at her side. She always assigned to herself work that was most dangerous, and this time she saved the neighboring poor and people in her institution from the crisis of insufficient food. When martial law was lifted and free meals were offered, the hungry people turned into a mob and rushed to the entrance of Shishu Bhawan. She then came out of the gate coolly, approached the mob, and said, “I guarantee there will be food for all. I want you to trust me and wait quietly.” I followed Mother Teresa when she went out to talk to the people, and took a mop beside the gate to protect her from the mob, as though ready for a fight. People who were violent or who were throwing stones at the gate became quiet in an instant, and everybody followed her words. I who was going to fight with the mop was surprised. Mother was a person who was strong in crisis. She was a “Military Captain” who was always ready to face danger and protect her people and subordinates as the head of an organization, and one on whom we can rely the most.
the Muslim and Hindu hotel staff stand together in a line and pray to their respect Gods. The staff, both Hindu and Muslim, prayed that the hostilities subside early and peace come to the town again. I found that at the time of riots people pray for the peace and happiness of those who are different from themselves, because it is usually such differences that are the cause of these riots. I believe the number of people who desire to co-exist peacefully is far more than those who desire to fight, but because such peace-loving individuals do not find frequent mention either in the press or in television networks, we know very little about them. I recall from these heartrending incidents the kindly words of Mother Teresa, imploring us to “live well with all those differences.” What she sought for is not a dream but a reality, because clashes that break out as a result of differences are certainly a reality in today’s world. However, I am sure the world also contains many who desire to “live well with all those differences,” just as it contains those who seek the opposite.

After the “day of massacre” on August 16, 1946 Gandhi fought to overcome the hatred that existed between the opposing groups, and worked hard for peace and reconciliation. On September 10 Mother Teresa went by night train to Darjeeling from Calcutta for her eight days retreat, and at that time she was 36 years old. Suddenly she heard a voice in the train, which told her to, “Serve the poorest of the poor.”

When Mother mentioned this incident to me, I pointed to my ear and asked, “You heard a voice?” She however answered with a smile, “No, I heard it in here, deep inside,” and she pointed at my chest with her finger. She then added, “The voice was really clear. Not only inside the train but during the 8 days retreat, the voice continued within my chest.”

Mother Teresa referred to this experience as her Second Vocation. Usually vocation is the word used to express the call to become a Religious, and Mother Teresa thought she had received a second call from God for a special mission. It seems as though this call from God came suddenly and unexpectedly. She had never thought of throwing away her life with the Loretto Sisters and her work in St. Mary’s school, but she was convinced that God had ordered to her to serve the poorest of the poor. In some of her biographies it is stated that even before this Second Vocation arose, she had planned to leave the convent in order to carry out relief activities for the poor. I however would like to categorically state that this was not so. In my interviews with Mother, I clearly recall her saying that God had ordered her to do something she had never planned or thought of before. On this issue she confessed to Fr. Le Joly saying:
“To leave Loretto was my greatest sacrifice, the most difficult thing I have ever done. It was much more difficult than to leave my family and country to enter religious life. Loretto meant everything to me. In Loretto I had received my spiritual training; I had become a religious there. I had given myself to Jesus in the institute. I liked the work, teaching the girls.”

Also, after receiving medical training in Patna, on one occasion while going towards a slum she visited Fr. Julian Henry SJ (1901-1979) who had long experience regarding relief activities in slums, and she asked him, “Where is Motijhil?” The word Motijhil means ‘lake of pearls’ in Bengali, and it is the name of a slum located at the back of Loretto convent. Mother Teresa who had been living in cloister at the convent did not even know where Motijhil was, although she had heard the name.

The letter she addressed to the Archbishop of Calcutta was opened to the public, after the investigation related to her beatification and canonization had begun. Her letter tells us that God was revealed to her not only in the founding of a new religious congregation to nurse the illnesses of people and educate the children of the poor, but also as I mentioned earlier, in matters such as the uniform she chose for her Sisters, their life of poverty, and the type of activity they should engage in. Furthermore, she mentioned in her letter that when she hesitated to leave the Loretto convent, God even questioned her on that issue asking, “Wilt Thou refuse?” Later in 1942 God once again communicated with her, when she took her personal vow saying that she would “give God anything that he may ask.”

A certain biography declares that she witnessed the situation in the slums from the window of her convent, and thereupon decided to leave the convent to conduct welfare activities for the poor. The fact is the slum is visible not from the window of her convent but from the classroom, and even there possibly only the roofs of the houses would be visible. Another book declares that while conducting classes in Bengali for poor children along with the nuns of the Daughters of St. Anne, Mother developed the idea of going to the slums to conduct relief work for the children. She may have felt a deep sympathy for the poor and weak like the other Loretto Sisters, but I am of the view that she had no strong desire to leave her convent and start something new by herself.

---

She was good both as a nun and teacher, and she was happy in the convent. However, owing to her personal vow taken in 1942, namely to grant him anything that he might ask, she could not refuse what God was now asking of her. She now had no choice but to leave the Loretto convent and go to the slums, since she felt that it was the will of God.

**Mother’s Second Vocation**

Shortly after returning from Darjeeling to Calcutta, Mother Teresa wrote down the details of the activity she planned on doing in the slums in the form of a résumé and presented it to the spiritual director of the Loretto convent, namely Fr. Celest Van Exem SJ.

In December 1990, I for the first time visited Fr. Van Exem who lived in the Jesuit residence of St. Xavier’s College, and then continued my visits every day for about five months. At that time, since rats had gnawed his foot he had become bedridden, and besides he was 83 years old. As I mentioned already, I was aware that the success of Mother Teresa was to a large extent due to the contribution of the Jesuits. In order that Mother might be able to carry out her Second Vocation, the efforts made by Jesuits like Fr. Van Exem were indeed great. I would like to have written more about Fr. Van Exem in this chapter, but unfortunately I rarely found books that described him or his work in detail, even though he had played a significant role in the life and activity of Mother Teresa.\(^\text{154}\)

Fr. Van Exem was born in Flanders in Belgium on October 4, 1908, and joined the Jesuit order on September 23, 1927 at the age of eighteen. His brother also joined the Jesuits and became a priest. He was able to speak and read freely not only the language of his homeland of Flanders but five other languages as well, namely French, Latin, Greek, German, and English. He had studied oriental languages such as Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanskrit at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) in Belgium, which was founded in 1425. He went to the Middle-East for the purpose both of language research

\(^{154}\) My mother and I received baptism in the Mother House on March 9, 1990, but the confirmation ceremony was not carried out along with the baptism. Usually in the case of adult baptisms confirmation is also given simultaneously. So my mother and I returned to India again the next year, and we studied for the reception of confirmation in the Mother House, just as we had studied for our baptism. Mother invited the Archbishop of Kolkata to the Mother House, and our confirmation Mass was held on January 18, 1991. At that moment we requested Fr. Van Exem to be our sponsor along with Mother Teresa. He developed a paralysis of an end nerve owing to diabetes, and since rats had bitten his paralyzed foot he could not walk freely and was usually bedridden. However, since he had no problem with his health other than the foot, it was great joy to attend his talks every day as a preparation for confirmation.
and priestly work, and here he rode on camels, traveled in various countries such as Syria and Egypt, and lived among the local tribal people in the desert, while engaged in Islamic study.

That was one of the reasons why Mother Teresa visited Fr. Van Exem to get his advice, when she wrote a petition seeking to prevent the outbreak of hostilities during the Gulf War of 1991. Since Fr. Van Exem was an expert on matters concerning the Middle-East, she felt that he could give her the most suitable guidance. Fr. Van Exem, speaking of his experience of living in the desert remarked on one occasion, “Lawrence of Arabia (1888-1935) was in the opposite side of the desert from where I was in those days.” He was both an adventurer and a Jesuit, with a gift for languages and a talent for scientific research. He refused the proposal of his superiors that he become a professor in the University of Louvain, and instead strongly insisted that he be sent to India as a missionary. On asking him the reason for his he replied, “I felt that a special mission was awaiting me in India.”

Like Mother Teresa, Fr. Van Exem also deliberately chose to go to India, and he was not sent there by chance. Rejecting the road of scholarship at a university that had been prepared for him in Belgium, he chose like Mother Teresa to come to India. He landed in India in 1938 when he was 30 years old, and eventually was appointed the first director of the Oriental Research Institute of Boitakhana, and together with this he lectured on Islamic matters at St. Xavier’s College in Kolkata. His research on Inculturation presented in the writings of Fr. Johanns SJ and Fr. Dandoy SJ in works such as, To Christ through the Vedanta, and the Light of the East series, are still read in India. However, he believed that such work was not the special mission that awaited him in the country.

Eventually he was ordered by his superiors to become the spiritual director of the Loretto Sisters in Convent Road, which was about 5 minutes walking distance from St. Xavier’s College, where he resided and taught. Though he accepted this assignment in fidelity to his vow of obedience, yet the fact was that the adventurer who had flown all over the Middle-East at the time of Lawrence of Arabia, could not discover in himself any incentive to work among the nuns in the convent. Reflecting back however, it now seems as though this work, undertaken without any real motivation on his part, was the very one that guided him towards his special mission.

On July 12, 1944, Fr. Van Exem visited the Loretto convent which had

---

155 Edward Lawrence.
temporarily moved to Convent Road owing to their buildings having been commandeered by the army, in order to offer Mass. Just two months earlier Mother Teresa had received her Second Vocation, and on that day he met Mother for the first time. The impression he had of her at the time was of a “moderate and calm person,” but in actual fact the impression was not very strong.

In October 1946, Mother Teresa who had returned to Calcutta after her eight days retreat in Darjeeling handed over her résumé to Fr. Van Exem, early in the morning after prayer. With reference to this Second Vocation given to her by God, she concretely wrote down all the activities she intended engaging in while working in the slums, after she had left the convent. Fr. Van Exem brought the paper handed over to him to his room, and without reading it he placed it on his desk and completely forgot about it until nightfall. However, just before going to bed he recalled the résumé, and so placing it under the lamp he began to read. On reading it he felt an immediate conviction, that this at last was the special mission that awaited him in India.

The Sister who said to him that she had heard the voice of God, had brought him her written plans about leaving her convent and working among the poor in the slums, just a month after the Great Calcutta Killings. I was curious to know why Fr. Van Exem who was such an excellent scholar cooperated so readily with this plan, and so I asked him whether or not he had thought it to be foolish. He answered, “I trusted her immediately. Because she was a modest person I felt that this is not her own desire but God’s.” Fr. Van Exem thought that bringing to fulfillment the Second Vocation that Mother had received, was the special mission that he himself had waited for in India. At that time he was 38 years old and Mother Teresa was 36, and the challenge facing this young priest had just begun.

The Catholic Church of those days, which was more than ten years before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966) wherein Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) had advocated “Aggiornamento” or “renewal” and insisted on reforms, was governed by a strict doctrine that does not compare with what we see in the Church today. Just as it was in the days of Mary Ward, nuns of Active congregations were not allowed to go outside their convents without special permission, and unlike the nuns of today they could not work outside convent walls. Moreover, as mentioned above, Mother Teresa had taken her final vows as a nun, and so she could not leave her convent of her own free will and could not engage in any special activity without official permission. She had to be obedient both to her superiors and to the constitutions of her congregation, for this is what was expected of every religious who had taken vows.
As a scholar, Fr. Van Exem was interested not only on subjects linked to the Middle-East and Inculturation, but also Canon law (the law of the Catholic Church). At first he planned for Mother Teresa to write a letter to Mother Gertrude Kennedy who was the Superior General of the LorettoS, asking for ‘exclaustration’ or permission to live outside the houses of the congregation. However in January 1947 he decided to consult the Jesuit Archbishop of Calcutta namely Ferdinand Perrier, and so on January 12 he asked her to write a personal letter to the Archbishop, describing in detail this Second Vocation. Mother Teresa thereupon wrote the letter the very next day, namely on January 13.

She received her Second Vocation in the night train that goes to Darjeeling on September 10, 1946, and after she had finished her eight days retreat in Darjeeling she returned to Calcutta on September 20. Later she wrote down the résumé of the work she planned to do, and gave it to Fr. Van Exem. During the three months that elapsed from the time she handed in the résumé until he directed her to write to the Archbishop, Mother Teresa described the attitude of Fr. Van Exem as follows:

“(He) put me off. Though he saw that it was from God, still he forbade me to even think about it. Often, very often during the four months I asked him to let me speak to His Grace, but each time he refused...” \(^{156}\)

Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk MC of the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity, who as stated earlier is a postulator for the canonization process of Mother Teresa, has remarked as follows concerning the matter:

“It was not until January of 1947 that Fr. Van Exem was fully convinced that Mother Teresa’s experience was “from God and from the Immaculate Heart of Mary”\(^{157}\)

I personally saw an objection here. Fr. Van Exem himself confessed to me that he immediately believed that it came from God, and he felt that this was his special

---


mission. So what was he doing during those four months from October to January when Mother Teresa felt that he was putting her off? I am of the view that he was exploring ways and means whereby her Second Vocation might be carried out, under the organization of the Church and within the code of Canon law. For even if Mother Teresa had confessed directly to the Archbishop that she had received a revelation from God, Fr. Van Exem probably felt that the matter was not something that could be settled easily, and that sufficient time was required to knead a suitable strategy.

Fr. Van Exem was also worried that this story might enter the ears of the Archbishop in the form of a rumor, and so he strictly “forbade her to even think about it.” Before permitting Mother to write the letter to the Archbishop, Fr. Van Exem himself spoke to him about her. He explained to the Archbishop that she had personally received a revelation from God, and he also revealed to him the contents of the revelation. God had commanded a nun from Europe to engage in charitable activities in the slums, and this was after the Great Calcutta Killings that still remained vividly imprinted in human memory. The Archbishop was initially rather perplexed over the matter, but when Fr. Van Exem began to insist strongly and sought to convince him saying, “this is the will of God. You cannot change it,” the Archbishop is said to have reacted irately, “How come a young priest like you knows the will of God and I who am an Archbishop do not?”

A long time after these incidents when Archbishop Perrier had retired to St. Xavier’s College, he is said to have remarked to the Jesuit Fr. Henry SJ as follows:

“One day, as I was making a visit to the Entally convent, someone told me that a young nun of the community had some queer ideas. Now, whenever anyone tries to put me on my guard in this way, I always ask myself whether the hand of God might not be there, and give full freedom to the person to explain his or her case. If the religious is humble, obedient, and dutiful, the impulse may come from God.”

It was probably because a scholar and religious like Fr. Van Exem had taken the matter so seriously, that the Archbishop felt he should not deal with the issue in a slipshod manner. Even though the two were closely linked as members of the same Society of Jesus, yet he doubted whether the hand of God was present in the words and

---

activities of the 38 year old priest, who had tried so hard to persuade an Archbishop who was 72 years old at that time.

It was through such a process that on January 1947, Fr. Van Exem directed Mother Teresa to write a letter to Archbishop Perrier. He no longer put her off as he had done during those past few months. The Archbishop on reading the letter called her for an interview, and after having spoken to her he forbade her to even think about the matter, just as Fr. Van Exem had ordered. After that Mother Teresa was suddenly transferred to a convent in Asansol which is about 175 kilometers away from Kolkata, but later she was promptly recalled to Kolkata.

Archbishop Ferdinand Perrier then summoned Fr. Julian Henry, a Jesuit who worked in the Kolkata slums, and asked his opinion regarding the matter. Fr. Henry like Fr. Van Exem was a Belgian national hailing from Dampremy, and the two had taken the same ship while coming to India in October 1938. He was 45 years old, seven years older than Fr. Van Exem. Fr. Julian Henry served the poor of the slums as the assistant pastor of the Church of St. Teresa, and he also taught catechism at the St. Mary’s school of the Loretto Sisters. Hence he knew Mother Teresa, and needless to say he was also intimate with Fr. Van Exem since the two came from the same province. About Fr. Julian Henry, Fr. Van Exem remarked, “He was like my own brother.”

In fact, Fr. Henry also contributed greatly to Mother Teresa’s activities in the slums, and like Fr. Van Exem he was partly instrumental in her later success. When Fr. Julian Henry was 12 years old he received a revelation from God while on his way to the church to attend Mass, and he explained the experience in the following words:

“In 1913, I was on my way to Mass, joyous like all the young boys with me, when I heard the call. I would become a missionary. Go to India never to return home. Just like that. Never to return home.”

Following God’s call he joined the Jesuits expecting to go to India, and he left his homeland of Belgium with Fr. Van Exem, who like him also desired to go to India.

Mother Teresa imbibed the spirit of tolerance and reconciliation embodied in the words “live well with all those differences” in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula, the land of ethnic conflict, and she was an example of the “good seed” mentioned by Christ that was sown in India. It seems to me that those two Jesuits, namely Fr. Henry

---

and Fr. Van Exem, were specially chosen in order to protect and raise this good seed, for without them the seed could not have sprouted and grown.

**Mother Teresa and the Five Jesuits**

There were mainly Five Jesuits who aided and encouraged Mother Teresa’s religious vocation during her early days. The first was Fr. Franjo Stefano Jambrekovic, who guided her during her adolescent period and first suggested to her the idea of going to work in India. If this Jesuit who had just returned from India had not become the pastor of her church, perhaps things might have turned out differently for her.

Next, there were four other Jesuits who helped in actualizing her Second Vocation, after she had reached the shores of India. These were Lawrence Trevor Picachy (later to become Archbishop and Cardinal), who acknowledged her personal vow and assisted her while she experienced the anguish of the ‘dark night of the soul’ owing to which she suffered greatly in life, Fr. Van Exem who worked hard to obtain from her superiors approval for her ‘exclaustration’ or permission to live outside the houses of the congregation, Fr. Julian Henry who buoyed up her activities in the slums with his experience and care, and finally Ferdinand Perrier, who was the Archbishop of Calcutta.

I personally believe that without these five Jesuits there would have been no beatified individual by the name of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in the Roman Catholic Church. Even if she had been naturally blessed in many ways, I am of the view that she could not have fulfilled her vocation without the cooperation of these men. These Five Jesuits, like the ‘Seven Samurai’ in the well-known movie by the world-renowned Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, protected Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity with unrelenting fortitude and zeal. It was a re-enactment of the story of the Seven Samurai, each endowed with a different character, who protected the farmers of a poor village from bandits. It is indeed interesting also to note that all these men who played a prominent role in her life and work were members of the same society, namely the Society of Jesus.

Of the Roman Catholic Archbishops that Calcutta has had until now, two were Jesuits, namely Ferdinand Perrier and Lawrence Trevor Picachy. Since the spirit of the Society of Jesus demands that they avoid ecclesiastical positions in the Church like that of bishop or archbishop, they accept such offices only in cases of extreme necessity, prompted by their vow of obedience.

Since September 1, 1886, when the archdiocese of Calcutta was formed six
archbishops have taken office, but the only Jesuit archbishops are the above-mentioned two. Considering the rule of the Society of Jesus, the possibility of Jesuits continuously being appointed archbishops is unlikely. Yet it is gratifying to note that during the most critical period of Mother’s life, namely the time when she received her Second Vocation and the time of the establishment of the Missionaries of Charity, the Calcutta archdiocese was managed by the afore-mentioned Jesuit archbishops.

The view has also been advanced that the primary reason why the principal supporters of Mother Teresa were Jesuits, was the fact that they are a widely distributed congregation with many working in parishes and engaged in a variety of occupations. However from 1986 the members of the Diocesan clergy in Calcutta have been roughly 64, while those belonging to Religious congregations have been about 135. In other words compared to the Religious, the Diocesan clergy are about half in number. Yet it must be noted that the number 135 refers not just to Jesuits but includes non-diocesan priests of other Religious congregations as well, and so in actual fact the number of Jesuits in Calcutta in those days was not overwhelming.160

Furthermore, it is said the person who encouraged the dispatch of Jesuits from countries in the Balkan Peninsula to India in those days, was Archbishop Perrier. If it had not been for Archbishop Perrier, the dispatch of Fr. Franjo Stefano Jambrekovic to West Bengal in 1925 would not have come about. As I explained in a preceding chapter, it was the report of Fr. Jambrekovic’s activities in West Bengal that enkindled in Mother Teresa a desire to work in India. One observes here a clear link between these three persons. Without the encouragement of Archbishop Perrier Fr. Jambrekovic may not have arrived in India, in which case Mother Teresa would not have appeared in India either.

It is said Archbishop Perrier like Fr. Van Exem and Fr. Julian Henry was Belgian, but the homepage of the Kolkata Archbishop’s office introduces him by saying that he came from Anvers in Belgium. Also, it is not certain as to whether he came to India of his own desire or under obedience. What is indeed clear however, is the fact that Mother Teresa, Fr. Van Exem, and Fr. Julian Henry all strongly wished to come to India, and it was with such an intention that they left their homelands.

**The Gamble of Archbishop Perrier**

With regard to the revelation of God that Mother Teresa received, the

Archbishop questioned Fr. Julian Henry as follows without mentioning her name.

“What would you think of a European woman who dressed in Indian style and went out to work among the very poor in the slums, at the head of a group of Bengali girls?”¹⁶¹

Fr. Julian Henry however approved of the plan, and he replied to the Archbishop saying, “Undoubtedly this is a gamble. There is a real risk of arousing opposition, but it could be tried, especially if you have the right person.”¹⁶² Although he did not know who it was, yet he assured the Archbishop that he would cooperate with that unknown person.

Fr. Julian Henry however being deeply enthused over the matter informed Fr. Van Exem about it, and asked him whether he knew who that person was. Fr. Van Exem could not say anything carelessly, since he had been cautioned by the Archbishop never to speak of the matter, but at that moment he realized that the Archbishop was considering “the revelation of God” seriously, and it appeared as though no one had so far expressed any adverse opinion about it. Fr. Julian Henry then started to pray for that unknown person that she might turn out into a reliable worker, one who would strive for the poor of the slums along with the people of his parish at St. Teresa’s Church, and Fr. Van Exem too like Fr. Henry prayed daily that her wish might one day come true.

From 1947 to 1948 over a period of one year, Archbishop Perrier consulted qualified theological scholars such as Fr. Sanders SJ, Fr. Joseph Creusen SJ, and also Fr. Jan Baptist Jansens SJ the Superior General of the Society of Jesus (tenure of office 1946.9.15-1964.10.5), and pondered over the question as to whether the Church would accept the type of life and activity that Mother planned to embark upon. The Archbishop also warned Fr. Van Exem who was attempting to persuade him, not to write letters to people whose opinion he was going to ask. He insisted that neither prior negotiation nor persuasion of any kind would be allowed. He was keenly examining the possible implementation of this “revelation of God,” within the framework of the Catholic Church. He pondered in particular over the possibility of carrying out the type of activities that Mother Teresa planned, and he expressed his feelings of those days in the following words:

---

“I must be able to say that I have prayed much and long, that I have studied the issue carefully, that I have consulted different experts in these matters, that I have placed myself in a state of complete indifference as regards acceptance or refusal, and that my judgment is based solely on the merits or demerits of the case…I shall do the will of God; but that must be clear to me.\(^\text{163}\)

Mother Teresa though maintained an attitude of silent obedience, and waited for the Archbishop’s decision. Eventually however on January 6, 1948, a year and a half year after she had received her Second Vocation, Archbishop Perrier finally granted her permission to write about the matter to Mother Gertrude Kennedy, the Superior General of the Loretto Sisters. He allowed Mother Teresa to commence the formal procedures of leaving her congregation for the sake of her Second Vocation, but he insisted that she show the letter to him before shipping it. However, when Fr. Van Exem typed out the handwritten letter of Mother Teresa to Mother Gertrude Kennedy which proposed ‘Exclaustration’ and showed it to the Archbishop, he insisted on replacing the word ‘Exclaustration’ with ‘Secularization,’ which had the meaning of resigning one’s Religious vows. Fr. Van Exem was shocked and disappointed by this order, since it seemed to exclude Mother from the Church. Resigning her vow was not at all her intention, but out of obedience to the Archbishop Mother Teresa changed the wording her letter from Exclaustration to Secularization. She had already spoken of her agony and her dialogue with God in a letter to the Archbishop of January 13, 1947, a portion of which I present below.

“Wouldst Thou not help? How can I? I have been and am very happy as a Loretto Nun. To leave that what I love and expose myself to new labors and sufferings which will be great, to be the laughing stock of so many.

I tried to persuade Our Lord that I would try to become a very fervent holy Loretto Nun, a real Victim here in this vocation—but the answer came very clear again. “I want Indian Missionary Sisters of Charity, who would be My fire of love amongst the very poor —the sick, the dying, the little street children.”\(^\text{164}\)


Quote from the English version obtained through the help of Fr. Jose De Vera SJ.

It was not that she personally desired secularization or the leaving of the convent as mentioned above, and the Archbishop too was aware of this fact through this letter. The letter shows that it was God and not herself that desired her leaving the Loretto Sisters and beginning a new Religious congregation, namely the Indian Missionary Sisters of Charity.

On January 10, 1948, Fr. Van Exem retyped the letter Mother Teresa had written changing the word Exclaustration to Secularization, and sent it to Mother Gertrude Kennedy the Superior General of the Loretto. He told me that he was truly disappointed at that time. However, Mother Gertrude Kennedy who knew Mother Teresa well answered that she thought Mother Teresa’s call was from God, and so she permitted Mother to present her proposal to Rome as Exclaustration and not as Secularization. The permission to write a letter to Rome came directly from the Superior General of the Loretto, and in addition the Superior General had kindly asked her to apply for Exclaustration and not Secularization. Fr. Van Exem on hearing this was pleased that the religious vows of Mother Teresa were protected, and so he asked her to write to Rome directly.

Archbishop Perrier thereupon took some action that appears rather mysterious. He called Mother Teresa and told her to write to Rome for Secularization, even though Mother Gertrude Kennedy had told her not to do so. However, he at the same time called Fr. Van Exem and told him that as the Superior General had given permission to apply for Exclaustration, she could write a letter applying to Rome for Exclaustration. That is to say, the Archbishop issued opposite commands to the two of them, and the decision to select the one to follow was left to Mother Teresa herself.

Fr. Van Exem who realized that Mother Teresa did not wish to resign her vows, tried to persuade her with the following words.

“Mother Gertrude replied that you could ask for Exclaustration. Archbishop Perrier said the same to me. So let us write asking for Exclaustration.”

However, as a nun who had taken the vow of obedience she decided to follow the command given her directly by the Archbishop, and so she wrote the following words to Fr. Van Exem, who was once again deeply disappointed:

“Please do not be so disappointed Father. God will arrange the best way, since this is the will of God and not mine. He will take care of it.”
Hence he reluctantly wrote her letter asking for Secularization, and brought it to the Archbishop.

On January 30 1948 Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation was shot dead by a fanatic Hindu, at seventy-nine years of age. India had lost its ‘Mahatma’ or great soul, and the domestic situation in the country once again experienced a continuous state of turmoil and strain. In February 1948, in such an overwrought domestic state of affairs, Archbishop Perrier sent Mother Teresa’s letter to the Nuncio who was the ambassador of the Vatican stationed at the Vatican embassy in Delhi, after attaching his own letter to it, and five months later in the middle of July 1948 the Archbishop called Fr. Van Exem, and communicated to him the reply of the Vatican. The Holy See had permitted her Exclaustration, but not her Secularization. However the condition was added that the Exclaustration was only for one year, after which the Archbishop could decide whether she should go back to the Loretto convent or continue her activity in the slums. The Vatican had entrusted the matter entirely into the hands of Archbishop Perrier.

Having said this much Fr. Van Exem smiled and said to me, “I do not know what Archbishop Perrier wrote to Rome.” However we can easily guess what he wrote, and the meaning of the mysterious command spoken of above. The Archbishop on a certain occasion had remarked to Fr. Julian Henry saying, “If the religious is humble, obedient, and dutiful, the impulse may come from God.” In other words, the Archbishop first of all keenly investigated the matter and consulted many specialists, in order to find out if the activities Mother planned were possible under the present conditions of the Church. Later, he checked to see if it were possible for her to leave her congregation while keeping her religious vows and work freely among the poor, if she received permission for Exclaustration from the Holy See. The activities she planned were fraught with danger, but he was convinced that it was a worthy challenge for her. On this point Fr. Julian Henry remarked,

“Undoubtedly this is a gamble; there is a real risk of arousing opposition. But it could be tried, especially if you have the right person.”

Fr. Julian Henry had from the very start offered positive cooperation, even

---

though he did not know the name of the person involved. He had also prayed for the realization of this plan along with his parishioners, and besides, Fr. Van Exem had kept insisting to him that this was the will of God. My own guess is that Archbishop Perrier needed to discern by himself as to whether this was truly the will of God or not. He needed to investigate the matter until he had acquired firm belief that Mother Teresa had truly gotten her Second Vocation from God. Was it the will of the Eternal God? Or was it merely a devoted sister’s hallucination and illusion? These are the questions that probably plagued him. Then, he tried to ascertain as to whether Mother Teresa was truly a humble, obedient, and dutiful nun.

In order to test whether she was truly humble, obedient, and dutiful, and knowing full well that Mother Teresa did not desire Secularization, he nevertheless ordered to her to apply for it. Furthermore, he created a situation where she herself could choose between Exclaustration and Secularization, and thereby tested her obedience. Mother Teresa was indeed “humble, obedient, and dutiful” with regard to the command of the Archbishop, and it was this that made him sure that the impulse came from God. I am of the view that he expressed this idea in writing in his own letter to Rome, and he encouraged the authorities in Rome to accept Mother Teresa’s Exclaustration, and not her Secularization.

In biographies and movies on Mother Teresa, occasionally details of the incident just narrated concerning her choice between Secularization and Exclaustration are presented rather impressively as a miracle in her life, and each time Archbishop Perrier is depicted as a villain who forced her to accept Secularization although it was not what she wanted.\footnote{In particular, in the TV program in which Charlie Chaplin’s daughter Geraldine Chaplin played the role of Mother Teresa, entitled “Mother Teresa: In The Name of God’s Poor” that was broadcast from 7:00 PM-9:00 PM on October 5, 1997, by the Family channel, the Archbishop appears like a villain. Besides, the sari the actress wore was wrong. As a dramatic production I think it was interesting, but it differed very much from the truth. Not just in this program but in other places also it is stated that the Archbishop ordered Mother Teresa’s secularization, and books that speak of his cooperation are few. This interpretation in the TV program was possibly made to impress viewers.} I personally though would characterize him as a gambler who bet carefully and took a bold risk, and most certainly not as a villain. As proof of this, we may offer the fact that Mother Teresa’s work in the slums did not come to a stop at the end of the year but continued, and this was because the Archbishop was a great advocate of her apostolate. If he had truly desired her Secularization, he would probably have ignored her work and not given her any positive cooperation at all.

The Archbishop had the authority to extend the single year permitted by
Rome if he felt it advisable to do so, and in fact he did become a firm defender of Mother Teresa and saw to it that her work went on indefinitely. Also in 1950, just two years after her work had begun, the Archbishop worked hard to obtain Rome’s approval for the official establishment of the Missionaries of Charity, and in 1953 when their funds were insufficient he lent them the required money without interest, for the purchase of the present Mother House. He became one of the greatest champions of Mother and her Sisters. In his position of responsibility he investigated the matter thoroughly until he was convinced that it was the will of God, and once convinced he was determined to carry out God’s will. I am of the view that he tested Mother Teresa as God tested Abraham, when he ordered him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:2).

Mother however continued with her approach of humility, obedience, and duty to the very last. The following sentence presents us with a glimpse of that attitude.

“To imitate the perfect joy of St. Francis in complete surrender to God and full trust in his divine majesty, such is the program of life Mother proposes to her sisters”

The “Perfect Joy” mentioned here is the motto of the Franciscans. Besides, I feel she had also been practicing “Little Way” of St. Therese of Lisieux, leaving everything to God. Among these five Jesuits, Archbishop Perrier was in my opinion the most ardent collaborator of Mother Teresa.

**Beginning of the Missionaries of Charity**

On August 16, 1948, Mother Teresa, clothed in a white cotton sari with three blue borderlines emerged from the gates of the Loretto convent, where she had lived for twenty years. This was the time when the desire of Mary Ward the founder of the Loretto congregation of working as a nun outside the walls of the convent, was to be realized by Mother Teresa. A new Mahatma or ‘great soul’ had been sent to the people of India, two years and a day from the time of the Great Calcutta Killings, a year, ten months, and twenty-five days after she had received her Second Vocation, and exactly

---

168 The Archbishop lent Mother Teresa the sum of 125,000 rupees without interest, and Mother later duly repaid the amount. Of that amount, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, for 85,000 rupees Mother Teresa and her Sisters prayed the Memorare to the Virgin Mary 85,000 times, until it was obtained.
170 Her final profession is recorded differently depending on the source. August 17 is the date given in the note of Fr. Julian Henry SJ.
eighteen days and seven months after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

She had only five rupees\textsuperscript{171} given to her by the Loretto Sisters, and with that money she traveled to Patna to the convent of the Medical Mission Sisters, in order to learn nursing and acquire basic medical skills needed for her work in the slums. Fr. Van Exem, reflecting back upon those days, remarked to me as follows:

“After permission for exclaustration came from Rome, I thought that it would probably take another two years before she finished her medical study, so I would not have to be busy with her for a while.”

However just four months later in November 1948, Mother Teresa sent him a letter saying she had finished her training and wanted to return to Calcutta, to begin full-scale work in the slums. He was greatly surprised and went to Patna to see her, when Dr. Elise and Sr. Stephanie who were in charge of the training informed him that Mother had indeed obtained the required knowledge and mastered the necessary nursing skills, within a brief period of time.

On December 9 1948 she returned to Calcutta with Archbishop Perrier’s permission, and so Fr. Van Exem’s work with her started again on a daily basis. He prepared lodgings for her at the St. Joseph’s Home,\textsuperscript{172} a home for the aged run by a congregation of Catholic nuns called the Little Sisters of the Poor, and when he saw that she was anxious to begin work in the slums immediately, he advised her to begin from Taltolla (a part of the town in which middle-class people lived), since many former students of St. Mary’s school and many of her own students lived there. Mother Teresa however would not hear of it, saying that it was not the place where the real work lay. Late in December she decided to go to a slum named Motijhil (a Bengali word meaning ‘the lake of pearls’). However, as stated above she did not know where Motijhil was at that time, and so she visited Fr. Julian Henry at the church of St Teresa in order to find out where it was located. Fr. Henry was aware that a European lady dressed in Indian style was working among the very poor in the slums, but when the Archbishop told him that it was Mother Teresa, he was astonished. Earlier he had even prayed for that unknown Sister and wondered who she could be. However, since Mother Teresa was not

\textsuperscript{171}I suppose the cotton sari was about 2 rupees per sheet in those days. Since the cost of a cotton sari is around 100 rupees at present, 2 rupees in those times might have been about 8 US dollars.

\textsuperscript{172}The religious congregation which the French nun Jeanne Jugan (Beatified on October 3, 1982, by Pope John Paul II) founded in Brittany, France, in 1839, especially to care for poor widows and elderly people.
in Fr. Henry’s list of Sisters likely to embark upon such activity, he later while speaking to Fr. Van Exem remarked that he was twice surprised, first at Mother Teresa’s question as to where Motijhil lay, and second by the fact that the European lady dressed in Indian style and working among the poor in the slums, was Mother Teresa. However, he realized that God had chosen her to do his will, and so these two Jesuits together decide to assist her in her activity.

Mother Teresa walked about an hour to visit Motijhil from the St. Joseph’s home. The Little Sisters of the Poor kindly contributed towards her transportation, but she used the money received from them for her work. Two weeks after starting her activity she established a small school and clinic, and in order to secure the necessary funding and goods she wrote to the church and to people who were likely to offer support, or she visited them begging for charity. Of course, the Loretto Sisters also supported her, and Sr. Rozario offered her the classrooms after school to be used as a clinic.

Yet it was impossible for her to be dependent on the Little Sisters of the Poor forever, and so Fr. Van Exem along with Fr. Julian Henry looked around for another suitable lodging place where she could settle down. One day he spoke of this matter to a certain Mr. Alfred Gomes who helped him in his work as a secretary saying, “Could you find some place for Sr. Teresa to stay?” In the large house in which the families of Alfred and his brother Michael Gomes lived there was a vacant room, and so on February 28 1949, two months after she had begun her activity, she left the St. Joseph’s home of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and moved to the house where the Gomes brothers lived along with their families.

In February 1990 I visited the house of Mr. Gomes along with some of the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, in order to see the room where Mother Teresa had lived. It was on the third floor of the house. Mr. Gomes’s house is located about 20 minutes by foot from the Mother House, and Mr. Michael Gomes has carefully maintained the room where she had lived in those days. The room was possessed of

---

173 On September 5, 1997, the day Mother Teresa passed away, she had worked as usual, meeting visitors and so on. It is said that Mr. Michael Gomes was the last visitor who met her. Mr. Michael Gomes did not visit the Mother House frequently, but he met Mother Teresa along with his wife in the afternoon of that day merely by chance. Mother Teresa chatted with Mr. Gomes for a long time, and thanked him for his support of those early days. Later she took supper as usual after the evening prayer. However, at 8:30 PM, she suddenly fell ill and passed away. The time of her death was 9:30 PM. She had hoped while alive, “to work until I died,” and her wish came true. I think her last words expressed her gratitude once more to the early advocates of her activities, namely Mr. Michael Gomes and his wife. Mr. Michael Gomes died in 2004.
elegance and simplicity, with faint traces of British and European grace. I felt that it was a truly suitable place for a religious to reside in, though perhaps a bit too large for a single individual.

Since Mother Teresa had been ordered to write an activity report by Archbishop Perrier, she wrote it in the form of a letter and handed it to Fr. Van Exem, who brought it to the Archbishop’s house. Here she described the gloom she experienced at the time she moved into her new residence.

“February 28—Today, my God, what tortures of loneliness. I wonder how long my heart will suffer this. Tears rolled and rolled. Everyone sees my weakness. My God give me courage now to fight self and tempter. Let me not draw back from the Sacrifice I have made of my free choice and conviction. Immaculate Heart of my Mother, have pity on Thy poor child. For love of Thee I want to live and die a Missionary of Charity.”

This was the first time she used the term “Missionary of Charity.” The Archbishop had suggested that if she really wanted to serve the poor in the slums, she could transfer to some religious congregation that was already dedicated to such activities. She however flatly rejected this proposal, because from the very beginning she felt that God had ordered her to start the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity, when she received her Second Vocation. She considered herself the first member of this congregation, and she believed that other women who had received the same call would follow her.

She probably experienced an intolerable loneliness while living in that large room, yet she steadfastly hung on to her hope of establishing her new congregation. On March 1 1949 a former student of St. Mary’s named Subashini Das visited her, and it happened to be the day after she had cried for sorrow and prayed to the Virgin Mary imploring her pity and help. She told the former student who requested permission to live and work with her to come on the feast of St. Joseph, which was on the 19th of March. On that day Subashini Das joined her, and later she took Mother’s own name of Agnes and became Sr. Agnes MC.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ According to Fr. Van Exem, the wealthy parents of Sr. Agnes blamed Mother Teresa and took her to court when their daughter left home and began to live with her. The court verified the intention of Sr. Agnes who appeared for the case along with Mother Teresa, and later the judge decided that Sr. Agnes had chosen of her own free will to live with Mother Teresa, and so her parents’ petition was dismissed.
A week later on March 26 another former student of hers named Magdalena P. Gomes joined her, and she subsequently became Sr. Gertrude MC. At that time these two women probably never imagined that 30 years later in 1979 they would both attend the Nobel Prize awarding ceremony of Mother Teresa, for when she flew to Norway where the ceremony was held, she was accompanied by these two early companions of hers.

Within a period of two years 12 girls had gathered. Fr. Julian Henry presented Mother with a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and his own handmade altar, and every day he visited the third floor of the house of Mr. Gomes where the women led a community life in order to offer Holy Mass. This was convenient for him, since the house was about 10 minutes by foot from St. Teresa’s Church where he himself lived.

On a certain occasion Fr. Van Exem wrote a letter to the English newspaper *The Statesman* entreatin people for economic support, both for Mother Teresa’s activities and for the community life of the girls who had joined her. At that time in India there were several charitable organizations engaged in relief activities for the poor, just as there are now, and the newspapers consequently received many requests for support. Despite that however *The Statesman* willingly accepted the request of Fr. Van Exem, and published a report introducing Mother Teresa and her activities and appealing for financial help. The first to respond was Mr. B. C. Roy the Chief Minister of the State of Bengal, who made a financial contribution. Later the wife of a British businessman in India named Mrs. Anne Blaikie read the report and established an association called the Co-workers of Mother Teresa, in order to prop up her activities.

Fr. Julian Henry made a public appeal in the church of St. Teresa for contributions, and Fr. Van Exem, in conjunction with his educational and research activities spoke of her work and appealed for contributions or cooperation, whenever he offered Mass.

Around the beginning of 1950, Archbishop Perrier considered approving and constituting Mother Teresa and the girls who lived and worked with her as a religious congregation, and accordingly he ordered Fr. Van Exem to create a draft of the constitution for this new congregation. Fr. Van Exem thereupon making full use of his knowledge of Canon law consulted other Jesuits, and wrote the draft in such a way as to convince the authorities in Rome to accept the idea.

Late in March 1950 the constitution was ready. Its characteristic feature, that which is not to be found in other congregations of nuns is the fourth vow, the “vow of charity,” which the members take along with the other vows of poverty, chastity, and
obedience. This fourth vow implies a “wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor,” and the words used concretely express the Second Vocation of Mother Teresa.

Fr. Van Exem sent the draft of the constitution to Archbishop Perrier, and in April, shortly after receiving it, the Archbishop flew to Rome where he requested Cardinal Petrus Fumasoni-Biondi the official in charge of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith at the Vatican, for permission to establish this new congregation in his archdiocese. He was aware that the Vatican tended to take a rather prudent posture with regard to the establishment of new women’s congregations, and hence he decided to go to Rome himself with all the necessary documents and strongly request the approval of this group. Finally in October 1950, Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) approved the Missionaries of Charity as a formal religious congregation of nuns.

On October 7, the feast of the Holy Rosary, Archbishop Perrier and Fr. Van Exem visited the home of Mr. Michael Gomes, where Mother Teresa and her associates lodged. The Archbishop offered Mass, and after the document that had arrived from Rome approving the congregation had been read out by Fr. Van Exem, the Archbishop affixed his signature to it.

The girls with Mother Teresa at the head then walked like brides to St. Teresa’s Church, and the poor of the town eagerly followed them. There the girls made their first profession as nuns in the church dedicated to St. Therese of Lisieux, in the presence of Fr. Julian Henry. During the ceremony the church was packed with the poor and the destitute that they served, with many standing outside owing to lack of space. After their first profession all the girls wore the same type of white cotton sari as Mother Teresa and came out to greet the assembled crowd, who cheered loudly and blessed them all.

With this, Mother Teresa’s Second Vocation was finally realized. Judging from the time of her returning from her medical training in Patna and going over to work in the slums, it was about a year and ten months, and judging from the day of the arrival of Sr. Agnes who became the first entrant in the congregation of the Missionaries of Charity, it worked out to a year, six months, and twenty days. In other words, the Pope permitted Mother Teresa and her 12 girls to be constituted a formal religious

---

175 Pope Benedict XV (1854-1922) asked Cardinal Petrus Fumasoni-Biondi (1872-1960) to assist the Christian missions. Pope John Paul II announced the reorganization of the Roman Curia on June 28, 1988, in the Apostolic Constitution. Although Cardinal Petrus Fumasoni-Biondi is no longer alive, yet I think the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples carries on the same type of work that he started. Pope Benedict XV appointed him Secretary to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in 1922.
congregation within a space of less than two years, which was indeed a miraculous speed. Even in the case of the Society of Jesus, six years had elapsed from the time they presented their petition in 1534 until they were approved as a religious order in 1540, and besides, there are other congregations that were forced to wait for many years to obtain approval. At the time of the 25th anniversary of their foundation, Mother Teresa reflecting on this matter remarked, “God was good to me, he gave me good priests to help me in my work: Father Henry and Father Van Exem.”

Mother Teresa and her Sisters referred to Fr. Van Exem as their “co-founder” or “cardinal,” thereby expressing their deep appreciation for his wholehearted cooperation at the time of the founding of their congregation. Yet sad to say despite his magnificent work, he has remained relatively unknown to the world. Even now perhaps he is known only as the editor of the prayer book of the Missionaries of Charity that is used by the Sisters, and from the epitaph on his grave. Fortunately however Mr. Navin Chawla with whom he actively cooperated has written mentioning his name and the notable services he rendered, and besides references to him are to be found in the several volumes written about Mother Teresa and her work.

Yet, not many are aware now of his existence or services, and even nuns of the congregation, in particular the new nuns are ignorant of him and his contribution to their cause. On September 20, 1993, Fr. Van Exem passed away in his room on the fourth floor of the Jesuit residence at St. Xavier’s College, at the age of 85. On September 22, Archbishop Henry D’Souza of Kolkata (tenure of office 1986-2002), Bishop Linus N. Gomes, Bishop Joseph Rodrigues, and 45 Jesuit priests conducted his funeral at the church of St. Xavier’s College. The church overflowed with those who knew and loved him, and of course the Missionaries of Charity attended and sang at the funeral Mass, mourning the death of their co-founder. However Mother Teresa herself was not able to participate, since her own physical condition had reached a critical state.

Followed by many who loved him, his body was slowly carried in procession

---

177 The cemetery of Mother Teresa’s congregation is not only in St. John’s Church but also in the Entally cemetery near the Loretto convent. Historically, this Entally cemetery was older. From the time their congregation was founded in Calcutta to the early 90s, the Sisters who had expired were buried in the Entally cemetery, and hence the cemetery got filled. I proposed making an epitaph for the dead Sisters to Mother Teresa, and I also told her that I would happy to pay for it, for if there were no epitaph in the cemetery those who came to visit the graves would not know who was buried there. However Mother Teresa was not too open to the idea. I then petitioned Fr. Van Exem who smiled and said, “I agree. I shall put pressure on Mother Teresa,” and with that he wrote a letter to her. When I brought Fr. Van Exem’s letter to Mother, she accepted the idea of the epitaph. We see from this the extent of his influence on her.
from St. Xavier’s College to the Jesuit cemetery at St. John’s Church, and when the body passed the front of the Mother House, Mother Teresa herself got up from her sickbed, sat in a wheelchair, and witnessed the funeral parade from the window of the chapel. The weekly newspaper *The Herald* displayed his obituary on the front page, introducing his life’s achievements in the following words.

> “From the high academic formation he received, one could project that he was destined to become an intellectual luminary of the Society of Jesus. But his life work will be remembered for his pastoral concern for the poor and needy of the city of Calcutta and its neighborhood.”

In fact, in 1953 Fr. Van Exem was appointed parish priest of Howrah church located in front of Howrah station, which is described in the novel *The City of Joy*. Later he became the headmaster of St. Aloysius School and St. Aloysius Orphanage Day School, which Fr. Peter Gomes founded and the Howrah church manages.

The Howrah station as I mentioned earlier, is the destination for trains passing through the state of Bihar. Because of its proximity, people from the neighboring nation of Bangladesh and the Indian state of Bihar, come in quest of jobs. In those days the area around the station resembled a vast refugee camp, and even now (in 2006) the situation hasn’t altered much. It is in such a neighborhood that the Howrah church is located, and Fr. Van Exem worked tirelessly both for the parish and its people. The funds needed to establish the parish were all obtained through his own efforts, and through his patience and diligence he was soon able to clear all the accumulated debts in a brief space of time.

In the 1970s, making full use of his experience acquired during his days in the Middle-East, he directed his attention to the service of the poor Muslims in the Kidderpore area where many of them lived, and he also introduced the system of foster families, in order to support the poor in India with money obtained from his homeland of Belgium. His work, which transcended differences in religion and served the poor like that of Mother Teresa continued until the late 1980s, and his final job in the parish was when he was appointed assistant pastor at Bowbazar. Yet, despite all these other responsibilities, as co-founder of the Missionaries of Charity he continued his spiritual instructions to Mother Teresa and her Sisters, until the end of his life. Since he had a deep devotion to the Virgin Mary, *The Herald* speculated that Mother Teresa’s own devotion to the Virgin was probably the outcome of his influence. As *The Herald* stated,
it is obvious that from the high academic formation he received he was destined to become an intellectual luminary of the Society of Jesus, and yet he decided to donate his time and efforts freely for Mother Teresa and her poor. Fifty-seven years earlier, if Mother Teresa had not given him her résumé concerning her Second Vocation, his life would probably have turned out very different, and possibly he would have led the life of an academician and scholar of merit. However it is plain that such triumphs held little or no value for him, since the major concern of his life was the development of the Missionaries of Charity. In fact, I believe that if he did not seek to do what he perceived was the will of God, Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity might never have existed.

As I mentioned earlier, Mother Teresa sent reports of her activities from December 25, 1948 to June 13, 1949 to Fr. Van Exem in the form of letters, and he reported the matter to Archbishop Perrier. Although she later wanted him to return her letters, he did not do so. On January 30, 1957 she appealed to the Archbishop saying, “I want the work to remain only His. When the beginning will be known people will think more of me, and less of Jesus.”  

Mother’s intention was undoubtedly to repossess the reports that Fr. Van Exem kept and burn them all, but the Archbishop turned down her petition. Later however these reports were made into a booklet, and preserved both by Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem.  

Navin Chawla explains this matter as the “disagreement between Mother Teresa and Father Van Exem over the return of the letters,” and he explains the reason for this disagreement by saying that Fr. Van Exem wanted to keep her letters because, “He wished to keep them to record the genesis of her congregation.” This is possibly true, but as a matter of fact, Fr. Van Exem had another reason as well. He showed me a huge file with records such as the letters of Mother Teresa and other documents and said, “I protected and kept them for the investigation dealing with her beatification and canonization. She tried to burn such an important thing. This data must be helpful. Mother Teresa will surely become a Saint.”

Right from the start of her activity Fr. Van Exem felt that Mother Teresa would become a Saint. His Special Mission in India was not only to clear the way for

---

179 Mr. Navin Chawla introduces the whole record. Although books and newspaper articles exist that partly deal with the matter, yet Mr. Chawla’s book has presented the most details. I regret that when I obtained the whole record from Fr. Van Exem, I took notes only of the portions I required.  
her to move out of the Loretto convent into the slums and help her in the establishment of her congregation, but also to prepare her for sainthood. Hence, however much Mother Teresa might complain, he could not return her letters and allow her to burn such important evidence for her future beatification and canonization. It was perhaps for this reason that ultimately the Archbishop also refused Mother’s request for the letters, and consented to the request of Fr. Van Exem. The Archbishop proposed that her activity reports and letters be formed into a book, of which Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem may both keep a copy.

I am inclined to believe also that Fr. Van Exem would have been globally famous, if only he had written a book on Mother Teresa. I myself as I stated earlier, was greatly bothered by the differences that abounded in the numerous descriptions and references to Mother Teresa that are seen in various writings, and so I thought that since he had a vast amount of data and was a witness to her life, his book would be the most reliable record. To my question as to why he did not write a book on Mother Teresa, he replied:

“If I write a book, it may become absolutely authoritative, and so I do not want to do it. However, I am pleased if other people want to know about Mother Teresa, or wish to write a book, and so I tell them about Mother Teresa.”

Since I have yet not found the “absolutely authoritative” book on Mother Teresa, I regret the fact that he did not write a book while still alive. If such a book existed, possibly I would not have written this thesis.

Fr. Van Exem’s prediction proved correct. The vast quantity of data he had accumulated from 1948 until he passed away in 1993, served as important evidence for the beatification and canonization of Mother Teresa. The investigation started in 1999, two years after her death, and she was beatified in the shortest time in Church history. When I attended the Mass for her beatification in Rome, someone remarked that if the data preserved by Fr. Van Exem had not existed, the investigation would have taken much longer.

Fr. Franjo Stefano Jambrekovic expired in 1965, Archbishop Perrier in 1968, Fr. Julian Henry in 1979, Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy in 1992, and finally Fr. Van Exem passed away in 1993. When the process for Mother Teresa’s beatification and canonization started in July 26, 1999, the first witness to be called was the Jesuit Fr.
Jose Cukale SJ (1915-1999) from Croatia, who had come to India in 1950 when Mother Teresa’s religious congregation was established. Although he was 84 years old at that time and in a critical state of health due to cancer, yet he testified regarding Mother Teresa’s holiness as a witness, and passed away soon after that.

The awards Mother received from all over the world do not count in the process of beatification and canonization, but they indeed were many. Chief among them were the Nobel Peace Prize, the Pope John XXIII Prize, the Padma Shri and Bharat Ratna from India, the Ramon Magsaysay award from the Philippines, and the Templeton Prize from the British Royal Family. Honorary doctoral degrees were also conferred on her by many Universities around the globe, such as Cambridge University, San Diego University, Harvard University, the University of Madras, and Vishva Bharati University that was established by Rabindranath Tagore. She was chosen also as an honorary citizen in many cities around the world, such as her hometown of Skopje, Washington, New York, Miami, Scranton, Toledo, Newark, San Francisco, San Jose, and others. In addition to all this, if we were to count other accolades she received such as the “Woman of the Year” granted by magazines and newspapers, we see that she indeed won a huge number in her lifetime. Navin Chawla who attempted making a list of the awards that Mother Teresa received has stated, “Mother Teresa deserved an entry in the Guinness Book of records on this count alone!”\(^{181}\) She has probably received many more awards and decorations than those I have mentioned, but even her Sisters don’t seem to be sure about them.

In Mother’s private room\(^ {182}\) I happened to discover an aluminum biscuit tin on which was written the words ‘Mother’s Award’ with a black marker. I was surprised to note that the Nobel Peace Prize medal and the award from the Queen of England were kept in that biscuit tin. This has convinced me that neither Mother Teresa nor Fr. Van Exem were interested in the laurels of the world. Nevertheless however, while Mother Teresa received numerous accolades Fr. Van Exem’s foot was bitten by rats, and the wound eventually developed into paralysis of the peripheral nerve. The co-founder of the Missionaries of Charity thereupon became bedridden, and passed away without receiving any of the world’s laurels. I feel sure however that he regarded the honors bestowed upon Mother Teresa and her Sisters as his own, for he too offered up his life for the service of the poor.

In 1990 Mother wrote the following letter to a Jesuit priest:

182 Now, Mother Teresa’s room serves as a small prayer room for the Sisters.
“Nearly every member of the Missionaries of Charity owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Society of Jesus, for allowing their priests to take care of our spiritual formation and growth in holiness. Out of our deep gratitude to each one of them all over the world and especially in Calcutta, we pray that the Society of Jesus may give many Saints to our Holy Mother the Church. We pray for this.”

The Society of Jesus has been sending Jesuits to the Missionaries of Charity as their spiritual directors to hear their confessions and offer daily Mass, from the time of the founding of the congregation until today. When Mother wrote that letter about her gratitude to the Jesuits of Kolkata, I am convinced that her gratitude to Fr. Van Exem was foremost in her mind. Furthermore, in the year this letter was written she happened to receive a Jesuit visitor while she was in retreat, a period when she avoided contact with all and spent her time solely in prayer and meditation. The visiting Jesuit who had no idea at all that she was in retreat immediately apologized, but Mother said to him, “I will always have time for the Jesuits.”

There now exists a male branch of the Missionaries of Charity. It was established in 1984, when a priest belonging to a congregation called the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate joined Mother Teresa’s congregation. Now they too accept general applicants and prepare their men for priesthood. Consequently, these new priests of the male branch serve as spiritual directors and also say Mass, jobs that were formerly performed by the Jesuits. However until June 2004 the total number of their priests was only 31, and so it will take a long time for them to spread out and serve the 710 branches of the Mother Teresa Sisters distributed in 132 countries. Hence the cooperation of the Society of Jesus regarding spiritual direction and Holy Mass will continue to be indispensable for some time.

It is my earnest hope that the relationship that existed between the Jesuits and Mother Teresa, and in particular the services performed by the afore-mentioned five Jesuits, be passed down from generation to generation along with her work. I would like to repeat once again that the first among the five was Fr. Franjo Stefano Jambrekovic,

---

183 John Scicluna SJ, Madre Teresa ei gesuiti: un rapporto speciale, p. 7.
185 Quoted from the English version.
186 This is the religious congregation that Fr. Eugene de Mazenod established in 1816, to convey the good news of Christ to poor laborers who suffered from the effects of the French Revolution. Formal approval of the congregation was granted in 1826 by Pope Leo XII, (tenure 1823-1829).
who guided Mother Teresa’s religious vocation and gave her the idea of going to India. The second was Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy, who aided her in her Second Vocation, who recognized her personal vow, and who assisted her in her experience of the darkness of faith due to which she suffered most of her lifetime. The others are Fr. Van Exem who struggled to obtain her exclaustration and the approval of Rome, Fr. Julian Henry who supported her activity in the slums, and Archbishop Perrier, who in his capacity as archbishop took a bold decision for her. Even if the links between the Jesuits and the Missionaries of Charity were to weaken in the future, I would like to insist to everyone and especially to the male and female members of Mother Teresa’s congregation, that these Jesuits have indeed played a major role in her life.

On the occasion of Mother’s beatification, about 300,000 people gathered in Rome from all over the world. The sight of the crowds that filled St. Peter’s Square in the Vatican where the ceremony was held made me wonder even more. Before Mother Teresa became a world-renowned figure the wisdom of the Jesuits was indispensable for her, especially when she took her early steps towards saintliness. Nonetheless however, the fact is that information detailing her relationship with the Jesuits, and also the relationship that existed between the Loretto congregation and the Society of Jesus, are as far as I know to be found only in Madre Teresa ei Gesuiti, published by John Scicluna SJ in the Italian magazine Popoli of October 2003.

“Live well with all those differences,” the principle that governed Mother Teresa’s life and which she learned while in Skopje, blossomed in India with the cooperation of the Jesuits, at a turning point in the history of that multi-religious nation. If there had been no cooperators to enkindle her genius, no matter how much genius Mother Teresa may have possessed it would never have bloomed and borne fruit. The support the Jesuits offered her was varied, and included matters such as obtaining the permission of Church authorities, instructing her on her work, advising her on matters of consequence such as Inculturation and so on, besides regular spiritual direction and Holy Mass. I firmly believe that the good seed from Skopje would have terminated its lifetime by merely remaining a seed and never blossoming into a flower, if it had no suitable gardeners to tend it like the Jesuits. It is my earnest hope that the services rendered by the Jesuits be widely recognized by the world.

The following is a letter addressed to Mother Teresa and written by Fr. Van Exem, three days before his death. Concerning this letter, Fr. John Scicluna wrote in
Madre Teresa ei Gesuiti the words, “che non si realizzo,” which translates as “that which did not materialize.” When this letter was written Fr. Van Exem’s health was stable in comparison with that of Mother Teresa who was in a critical state, nevertheless he passed away three days after writing this letter.\textsuperscript{187}

Dear Mother,

Tomorrow morning I shall say Holy Mass for the following intercessions:

1) That you may have no operation.
2) That you may be in China by the 7\textsuperscript{th} October 1993.
3) That the Lord may take me and not you if that be His will. His will, not mine.

I am with you and the Sisters, all of them. There is a Calvary for every Christian. For you the way to Calvary is long. But Mary has met you on the road. You did not go up the hill; this is for later.

I adore the Blessed Sacrament, which, I am sure you have in your room. Pray for me and for all my companions, especially the companions of Jesus with whom I am.

Yours sincerely in Our Lord

C. Van Exem, SJ

\textsuperscript{186} John Seicluna SJ, Madre Teresa ei Gesuiti: un rapporto speciale, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{187} There are two people who offered their lives for Mother Teresa. See Appendix 6.
Principal Activities

Mother Teresa and her Sisters provide a diversity of services to people in numerous parts of the globe. However the spirit embodied in the words of Jesus Christ, “You did it to me” (Matthew, 25:40) is observed to pervade these many activities, and her inspiration too appears to be propelled by her recollection of the words that she heard, namely that her service be reserved for the poorest of the poor. In this chapter I would like to touch upon the principal activities that she and her Sisters carry out in the city of Calcutta, and also ponder over some of the critical remarks that have been directed against her from certain quarters.

The Mother House

The Mother House, which constitutes the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity is located in an Islamic residential area in Calcutta called Bamboo Villa. It is a modest building of 3 stories, located next to a small mosque and facing Lower Circular Road. Over 200 Novices and around 20 Sisters occupy the place. The room on the first floor facing the courtyard with a gate was the Novice’s dormitory, when Mother was alive. A part of the dormitory has now been converted into a small chapel, and Mother Teresa’s body has been laid there in a coffin of concrete.

There are many complications that arose concerning the resting place of Mother Teresa’s body. Mother herself wished to be buried in St. John’s Church cemetery that adjoined the residence of the Missionaries of Charity Contemplatives, and as stated earlier Sr. Agnes who was the first to join the congregation and Fr. Van Exem the co-founder, were both buried there. However, arranging a 24 hours vigil in the cemetery in order to prevent the body from being stolen or desecrated was difficult, and so the Church authorities, realizing the possibility that Mother might become a canonized saint of the Catholic Church, felt that she should be buried at the altar of the Kolkata Cathedral. But non-Christian groups opposed this idea. They protested that since Mother Teresa through the state funeral had become a national symbol like the ‘Mother of India,’ it would be difficult for visitors belonging to other religious groups to visit her grave freely, if her body were laid inside a Catholic Church.

Also, the President of Albania insisted that her body be conveyed to his country. He presented an official request to this effect to the Indian government, but the fact is that her home country was not Albania. The arguments concerning her final
resting place continued thus for a period of eight days, namely from her death on September 5 to the day of the state funeral on September 13, and finally it was decided that her body be placed in the Mother House in Calcutta, the headquarters of her congregation. This was a solution acceptable to all, because her body would thereby remain in the Mother House forever, and besides, a 24 hours vigil was not necessary since her grave was located within the precincts of the convent.

The Mother House was originally a mansion owned by a Muslim. In February 1953 when a pious Muslim called Dr. Islam shifted to Pakistan, he said to Mother Teresa, “God gave this house to me, and so I now return it to God.” He then sold his mansion to her at a very special price. As I explained earlier, Ferdinand Perrier the Kolkata Archbishop lent Mother the money to purchase the house, interest-free. The number of Sisters had by then risen to 26, and although the room in the house of Mr. Michael Gomes was too narrow for them, yet they felt that this mansion of three stories was too large. However it did not take long for them to realize that the mansion was not so large after all. Girls wishing to join the congregation appeared in steady succession, so much so that even though Mother extended the mansion on numerous occasions, it was yet not sufficient to house all the members.

A typical day’s schedule at the Mother House would be as follows:

**AM**
4:30 Prayer of rising  
5:00 Morning prayer and meditation  
5:45 Beginning of Holy Mass  
6:45 End of Holy Mass  
7:00 Breakfast (chapatti, chai, and a banana)  
7:30 Washing clothes with a bucket  
8:00 Prayer before work and singing of a hymn before the statue of the Virgin Mary at the gate, after which the members left for the various institutions for work.

**PM**
12:00 Completion of the morning work  
12:30 Lunch [vegetable curry, dahl, and rice]  
1:30 Reflection and rest

---

188 Chapatti is a form of unleavened Indian bread made out of wheat. It is the staple food of a large section of the South Asian population.  
189 Chai. Milk tea sweetened with sugar.
2:30 Tea (biscuits, chai)
3:00 Beginning of the noon work in each institution
6:00 Completion of the noon work
6:30 Adoration [(6:00-7:00) PM on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays]
7:30 Supper (dahl,\textsuperscript{190} a side dish, and chapattis)
8:10 Reflection
8:30 Evening prayer
9:30 Bedtime

On Friday, September 5, 1997, Mother suddenly decided to go to bed right after supper and before the evening prayer, after explaining to the Sisters that she felt a bit unwell. A Sister of the congregation then took a glass of water to her bed, but while receiving the glass she suddenly lost consciousness. It was 8:30 PM, and one of the nuns who was medically qualified along with a female doctor from a nearby hospital attempted to revive her for about an hour, but she did not regain consciousness. In addition there was a sudden power failure, and so the revival device for the heart that had been set up in her room could not be used, and so by 9:30 PM the doctors gave up on their efforts. She had passed away after duly fulfilling her duty. By that time her congregation and their activities had spread beyond Kolkata to the rest of India and the world, and they now had over 700 branches in 131 nations around the globe.\textsuperscript{191}

Not just in India but in all other countries as well the schedule of the Mother House is faithfully followed. In Kolkata their main institutions are Shishu Bhawan, or ‘Children’s House’ which (in 2006) accommodated more than 400 orphans, Nirmal Hriday or ‘Pure heart’ which is a home for dying destitutes, Prem Dan or ‘Gift of Love’ which is an institution for the mentally handicapped, and Gandhiji Prem Niwas or ‘Gandhi’s house of Love,’ an institution for leprosy patients. Shanti Dan or ‘Gift of Peace’ is an institution dealing with miscellaneous works built on land leased to Mother by the government of India for the price of a rupee a year. Nirmal Hriday, Shishu Bhawan, and Prem Dan were built on a 7-acre site leased by the Indian government, and rehabilitation facilities for women released from prison are also located there. Thus we see that the basic activity of Mother Teresa in India was oriented towards the sick, the

\textsuperscript{190} Lentil bean soup
\textsuperscript{191} The statistics are of November 2002. The Missionaries of Charity continued growing after Mother Teresa’s death, and 103 new branches were formed five years after her death.
dying, orphans, the mentally and physically handicapped, the elderly, and other afflicted groups.

I would now like to introduce these different institutions, each of which performs a specific service for the people. These descriptions are based on my personal records, taken when I visited and worked at these institutions from 1988 to 1997 as a volunteer.

**Shishu Bhawan**

Shishu Bhawan is an institution in which 400 or more children of various ages live. It approximates to an orphanage, and may be viewed as a combination of a nursery and a juvenile detention center in Japan. It is located about 5 minutes by foot from the Mother House.

The daily activities of the institution are as follows:

**AM**

7:00 Children’s rising time
7:30 Serving of breakfast to the school children (bread, milk)
8:00 Children’s morning prayer at the statue of the Virgin Mary.
9:00 Children’s bathing time
9:30 Serving of breakfast to babies (rice porridge), changing diapers, toilet assistance
10:00 Serving of snacks (fruit, protein biscuits)
11:30 Serving lunch to school children (vegetable curry, rice, fruit) and to babies (rice porridge with a curry taste, milk), changing diapers, toilet assistance
12:00 Children’s nap, conclusion of the morning work

**PM**

3:00 Playing with children and bringing in the laundry.
4:00 Serving of snacks (candy, Indian sweets, etc.)
5:30 Serving of supper to school-going children (meat or fish curry, rice, fruit) and to babies (rice porridge with a curry taste), changing of diapers, toilet assistance
6:00 Washing dishes, conclusion of the afternoon work.

---

192 Seeing infants eat curry as their baby food surprised me very much. However the rice porridge of this curry was not so spicy, since it was made using the exact amount of spice needed. It seems spices are used as seasoning for baby food in India, just as a Japanese mother spontaneously uses bean paste and soy sauce for seasoning of baby food in Japan.
Many of the children are those that have been abandoned by their parents owing to poverty, and because of their mother’s state of malnutrition during pregnancy many of the babies are either premature or possess a weak constitution. Since the poor do not have the means of giving birth in a hospital they do so at home without the presence of medical staff or doctors, or sometimes the homeless even deliver their children on the streets. In such cases, when problems arise in the body of the mother or in the newborn infant, they are unable to receive immediate medical attention, and hence in many cases babies that are born expire almost at once. It is families like these that give up their dying babies, and sometimes babies are even found abandoned in the streets or with the garbage. It is such children that are taken by the Sisters to Shishu Bhawan.

I once came across a child that had been abandoned by its parents at the gate of Shishu Bhawan, while I happened to be working there. It was a little boy of five years of age. His parents had dressed him in what was perhaps his best clothes and had even given him a roll cake, which was special delicacy for a child of a poor family. He was standing at the gate alone and crying, and although the Sisters took care of him immediately, yet he cried without eating the roll cake in his hand. When families that cannot afford medical treatment bring along a sick child, the Sisters freely take care of the child until it recovers. Also, parents who have many children and who are under severe economic strain, at times entrust a child temporarily to the care of the Sisters at Shishu Bhawan.

Mother Teresa nonetheless believed that however poor the parents may be, a child should as far as possible be raised at home. Hence, by providing food for the family or by employing a family member at Shishu Bhawan, she tried to support them economically and urged them not to give away their child. Moreover, since she was opposed to abortion, she welcomed unmarried pregnant women at Shishu Bhawan. Here, the Sisters support the women, see to it that they get the necessary assistance during the delivery of their child, and free medical care. Both during her Nobel Peace Prize reception speech and on other occasions, whenever she found an opportunity to do so, she publicly expressed her opposition to abortion. On this issue there are some who blame her as being a “Religious Imperialist.”193 In particular, an organization in favor of

---

193 Fr. Anselmo Mataix, *Chuzetsu Mondai no Hamon*, which in English would translate as *Ripple of the Abortion Problem*, in Chapter 6, *Maza no Sugao* meaning *Mother’s Smiling Face*, of his book *Jesu wo aisshita onna Maza Teresa, Mother Teresa: A Woman who loved Jesus*. He conscientiously recorded her
abortion comprised of a group at Carnegie Mellon University severely criticized her as favoring Catholic propaganda over the dignity of life. Also, their Student’s Union criticized Mother Teresa’s “fanatical pro-life stance,” shortly after her death.\(^{194}\)

Mother Teresa sought to enable her children to re-enter family life through adoption, not only by Indian families but even by those from abroad. An adoption agency called Joy Sowers has its headquarters in Belgium and arranges international adoptions, especially among countries of Europe. This group has cooperated a long time with Mother Teresa, who considers the atmosphere at home as being more conducive than that of an institution for the upbringing of children. However, criticism has been voiced about the whole question of international adoption itself. This is owing to the fact that there are certain crime syndicates that indulge in human trafficking in the name of international adoption.

On March 18, 1990 I personally met the people involved with Joy Sowers when they visited Calcutta, and interviewed them concerning their activities. Their work proceeds as follows. First, the agency staff members show the Sisters the report of an investigation conducted on the family that desired to adopt a child from Shishu Bhawan. The Sisters in turn then show the agency people the case record of the child in question, they explain the child’s problems and physical defects if any, and give them an idea of the environment in which the child was raised.

This being done the situation of the family and child are both studied, and the most suitable combination is sought. Once the candidates have been determined the Sisters seek the will of the child, and if the child agrees to be adopted the agency staff show the child’s photograph to the family and confirm their intention. Finally, after everything has been settled and the adoption procedures are all completed, the families either pick up the child from India by themselves, or the Sisters and agency staff send the child to them. With regard to international adoption, every detail dealing with the

---

\(^{194}\) Mostly very left-leaning articles included some fiction.
child’s passport and so on is the responsibility of the Sisters. At one time I used to worry that finding a family for a sick or handicapped child would be hard, but I soon realized how wrong I was. Although the child’s handicaps or disabilities are clearly emphasized in the report, yet there are many families who specially desire to adopt a handicapped child.

In this international adoption work of Mother Teresa and Joy Sowers, I believe there was no room for any unlawful activities. Furthermore since the Sisters and agency staff scrutinize the family and child very carefully before agreeing to the adoption, they informed me that to date they have never encountered a maladjusted case. I myself met a girl who was adopted by a family in France, and who subsequently became a nurse. During vacation time she returned to Shishu Bhawan to work as a volunteer. The Sisters told me that she was a premature baby who was so small that she could be held in the palm of one’s hand, and that she was found abandoned in a garbage can.

I understand the feelings of people in favor of abortion. Yet when I recall the case of a child like this who received a fine education from her foster parents, grew into becoming a wonderful adult, and then decided to work as a volunteer nurse at Shishu Bhawan in order to save other lives, I am inclined to be in favor of Mother Teresa’s view that no one has the right to snatch away the life of an unborn child. Moreover since there do exist cases of successful international adoptions, we cannot dismiss them all as being wrong.

If a child does not desire adoption, he or she will be raised in the institution. The girls live in Shishu Bhawan until they are married, but the boys on reaching the age of 12 or 13 move to ‘Boy’s Town,’ which is run by the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity. The Sisters and Brothers of the congregation serve as foster parents to the children, until they are married or employed, thereby becoming independent.

---

195 The custom whereby a bride’s father pays a dowry to the groom at the time of marriage still exists in India. The marriage of a daughter is a very expensive matter for her family, for it is customary for the bride’s people to pay all the wedding expenses. Arranging for a girl from Shishu Bhawan to get married is a big financial burden for the Sisters. If the groom is a son from a rich family, the Sisters have to prepare the dowry and wedding ceremony so as to balance the wealth of the groom’s family. Since the children who are raised in Shishu Bhawan have not had a family life, the Sisters are anxious that their girls marry into good families for the sake of their future security. However, in the case of a good family, they would also need to prepare a higher dowry and arrange a bigger wedding. Good matches depend largely on money. When a girl in Shishu Bhawan reaches the age of marriage, the Sisters begin a marriage fund and look around for a suitable match for her. So far I have personally financed the marriages of three girls of Shishu Bhawan. The amount of dowry that is paid and the amount of money that is spent for the wedding, will determine the treatment that the new bride will receive from her in-laws. In the case of the three girls whose weddings I financed, the money for the wedding dress, the silk sari, the gold bracelets, gold nose
**Prem Dan**

This building was a research institute and factory belonging to the Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) in Britain.\(^{196}\) It was presented to Mother Teresa in 1973, and she renamed the building Prem Dan or ‘Gift of Love’ and used it as an institution mainly for the intellectually and mentally handicapped. The yield of the vegetable patch and coconut trees located in the yard of the institution serve to feed the patients, and the coconut fiber obtained is used to weave mattresses and such which are then sold in the market. An occupational training center for the neighboring poor women is also located in the precincts of this institution. A workshop attached to the institution is used to recycle discarded material gathered from the town, and so this institution serves not only for the rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped, but also as a place of work for the poor of the locality. Prem Dan is a huge institution housing a total of 300 persons, 150 in the male ward and 150 in the female. Those accepted by the institution include victims of senile dementia, alcoholism, drug related problems, and so on.

The daily schedule of Prem Dan is as follows.

**AM**

8:00 Serving of breakfast (bread or chapattis, milk)
9:00 Sweeping (the floors of all the wards need to be disinfected every other day)
10:00 Serving of snacks (protein biscuits or fruit)
10:30 Washing of the clothes of the patients, changing of diapers, assistance with toilet and bath
11:30 Serving of lunch (vegetable curry, rice, or chapattis)\(^{197}\)
12:30 Washing of dishes, completion of the morning work

---

\(^{196}\) Astra Zeneca in England

\(^{197}\) For Vegetarian patients and also the others, two types of curries are prepared. The staple food is divided in accordance with the patients who need a rice diet and those who need foods made of flour, such as chapattis. This depends on the food of their respective hometowns. I once attempted making chapattis in the kitchen, and soon my ability progressed to such an extent that I could make about 100 chapattis daily.
PM
4:00 Bringing in the laundry, changing of diapers, assistance with the toilet
5:30 Serving of supper (vegetable curry or meat curry, rice, or chapattis)
6:30 Washing of dishes, completion of the noon work

Since there are a large number of patients, daily washing is the most difficult task in Prem Dan. The clothes and sheets of those with skin diseases such as scabies are set aside, boiled, and disinfected, while those of the others are placed in a large tank, trampled by foot, and then washed by hand. Carrying clothes that are heavy with water to the roof in order to dry them is also very hard work.

When I washed the sheets, pillowcases, pajamas, and diapers of about 150 female patients almost daily by hand, I realized how convenient washing machines were, and while drawing water from a tank with a bucket for the daily washing, I realized the expediency of the water service in my country. These were facts that had never dawned upon me while I was Japan, where life was easy and we took many things for granted. Despite being busy owing to the morning washing, life in Prem Dan is generally quiet and peaceful. There is no isolation space or room such as one normally finds in institutions for the mentally handicapped, and the patients may freely walk over to the other wards and into the yard. I believe this type of openness is conducive both towards creating a peaceful atmosphere, and stabilizing a patient’s condition. Hence, even patients whose cases are acute do not explode or turn violent.

In the afternoons, while tidying up washed cloths in the company of older patients under the shade of the coconut trees in the yard, I felt that Prem Dan was indeed a peaceful paradise, free from stress, and aptly named the ‘gift of love.’

Although it was a digression from the rule, generally it was the Asian volunteers who were responsible for the harder work such as drawing water, washing, drying etc. The volunteers are mainly Europeans and Americans, but from around the middle of the 90s I also found some from economically developed Asian countries such as South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan.

I remember once while gazing at the surroundings in the course of my work, at the people who were washing, carrying articles, or drying clothes on the roof of a female ward. I noticed that those who worked were Asian volunteers. Then suddenly a joyful cheer arose from the patients in the direction of the courtyard, and on looking down from the roof I noticed some volunteers from European countries singing and dancing the flamenco. On observing this, all of us, that is the South Koreans, Malaysians, and Japanese (of whom I was one) had the same feeling, namely that when there was so much work to be done was it proper for people to waste time singing and dancing. However we were also in agreement over the fact that we should finish our work early, and join the rest in the flamenco dancing.

However there are some who gave up working here after three days. I stayed in a room that was a converted warehouse on the second floor of the ward of this institution for about two months, and my weight increased by about 5kg due to the life I led in this paradise. The food offered by the institution and especially the chapattis were delicious, and so for me the daily life in Prem Dan was pleasant.
Gandhiji Prem Niwas, Home for Leprosy Patients

Gandhiji Prem Niwas is an institution specially named so by Mother Teresa, out of the deep reverence she had for Mahatma Gandhi. The first institution for leprosy patients started by her was called Shanti Nagar or the ‘city of peace.’ The government of the State of West Bengal lent her 44 acres of land at the rate of one rupee a year in 1961, and on that land she built Shanti Nagar. Although she obtained the land almost free of charge from the State governor, yet she did not have the finances necessary to carry out the construction.

From November 28 to December 6 1964, the 38th International Eucharistic Congress was held in the city of Mumbai in India, and Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) who was present for the occasion was gifted a white Lincoln Continental by certain Americans, to be used as his private vehicle during his stay in the country. On his leaving India the Pope presented the vehicle to Mother Teresa who then sold it through a public lottery, and with the money thus obtained (which amounted to about 45,000 rupees), Shanti Nagar was built. The building of Shanti Nagar has this unique background, but since it is located four hours from Kolkata by train I did not have an opportunity to visit the place. Gandhiji Prem Niwas however is situated in the town of Titagarh, which lies just about an hour from Kolkata by train, and consequently I was able visit there sometimes.

Owing to resistance by neighbors who feared infection, it was not possible for Mother Teresa to construct Shanti Nagar and Gandhiji Prem Niwas within the confines of Kolkata, like Nirmal Hriday, Shishu Bhawan, and Prem Dan. Hence they were built in the suburbs as self-sufficient institutions, supporting themselves through activities such as agriculture, poultry farming, hog rising, fisheries, and so on.

Gandhiji Prem Niwas is under the supervision of the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity, namely the Brothers. The extensive site with a variety of equipment is divided into the clinic for outpatients, wards, and the rehabilitation section. In the clinic for outpatients medical examinations are carried out thrice a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, and about 100 leprosy patients living on the streets are treated free. The wards have 117 beds in all, and they are divided into four male and two female wards. The female patients are roughly about 30 years of age, and they are

---

200 In June 1881 the 1st Eucharistic Congress was held, and the purpose was to deepen our grasp of the mystery and theology of the Mass, and faith in the Eucharist. Since not the Pope but his special envoy had attended the Eucharistic Congresses that were held outside Rome, the one in Bombay of December 1964, was the first Eucharistic Congress in which Pope Paul VI himself was present.
few in number compared to the males. This is because many women need to stay at home to take care of their families, and most of them hide their illness and do not receive medical treatment. In fact, when I found that a female patient had entered along with her child, I realized that for a woman to leave a house and get herself hospitalized is much more difficult than for a male. Among the males some were as old as 70 and some as young as 10, but on an average they were about 30 to 40 years of age.

The condition of the aged patients was indeed serious. Some had lost their eyesight or had suffered the loss of their nose, hands, or feet, but in the case of the younger patients such losses were less common. For many patients the early medical treatment offered by this institution halted the advance of the disease, before they received any serious physical loss.

The rehabilitation section is a work place for the patients. Apart from the patients in the ward, about 350 patients in whom the condition had stabilized lived in the yard of the institution engaged in various jobs, and the crops obtained and the goods they produced were not only used for the maintenance of the institution, but were sold in the outside market.

The details of each section may be described as follows.

**Textile factory:** Here are produced cotton goods such as sheets, tablecloths, saris and so on by using 45 handlooms. The saris with the blue borderline that are the distinguishing mark of the Missionaries of Charity are woven here, and it takes about 6 hours to weave a single sari. All the clothing used in the institution is produced here, and surplus goods are sold in the wholesale market.

**Shoe factory:** Here custom-made shoes are produced for patients who have lost their limbs, besides prosthetics and other such necessities for the patients.

**Carpentry section:** Furniture, daily necessities, farming implements, and other articles necessary for work or life are produced here.

**Dressmaking section:** Here are made the clothing used in the institution.

**Dining room:** This was opened for outpatients who were refused entrance in hotels or restaurants for fear of infection. The patients themselves cook and work as waiters.

**Agricultural work:** The vegetables eaten in the institution are prepared here, and this place is also used as a dining room for outpatients.

**Stock-raising place:** Fowls, goats, and pigs are bred here. The eggs and mutton obtained are used as food in the institution, while the pork is sold in the wholesale market.
**Fisheries:** The fish used for food are raised in a pond.

In these rehabilitation sections the neighboring poor work with the patients, for these sections are meant not only for the occupational training and rehabilitation of the patients but also to provide job opportunities for the poor of the neighborhood. It was found that through sharing their work with the local people an attitude of tolerance concerning both the disease and the patients gradually spreads among the people of the area, and hence service to the neighboring poor which was not originally planned, was also gradually started. Consequently, free lodgings for about 55 homeless families, free meals to 500 poor families of the neighborhood, and free schooling for poor children also began in the institution, and in this way an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation was formed between the people of the institution and the local residents.

**Shanti Dan—The Comprehensive institution**

On April 21, 1990, the opening ceremony of Shanti Dan was held. The Archbishop of Calcutta, Henry Sebastian D’Souza (tenure of office: April 5, 1986-April 2, 2002), attended the ceremony, after which he gave his blessing to all the institutions of Shanti Dan.

The different institutions are constructed in an area of seven acres, lent to Mother Teresa by the government of West Bengal. This was done at the cost of a rupee a year, and the institutions are as follows:

1. Nirmal Hriday (home for dying destitutes)
2. Shishu Bhawan (children’s home)
3. Prem Dan (institution for the mentally and intellectually handicapped)
4. A Rehabilitation center for female prisoners who have served their prison terms
5. A Rehabilitation center for drug addicts
6. A job-training center for poor women
7. A free school for poor children

In Shanti Dan, despite the existence of these seven institutions there is still a lot of space, and so the Missionaries of Charity will probably erect even more institutions once they obtain the necessary finances.

**Nirmal Hriday**

Nirmal Hriday is the most famous of Mother Teresa’s institutions, one that reveals clearly her spirit of “free service to the poorest of the poor.” In August 1952, the
city office of Calcutta permitted her the use of a rest house located next to the Kali temple, a building that was formerly used by Hindu pilgrims. She renamed the institution Nirmal Hriday, a word that means ‘Pure Heart,’ and used it to take care of the dying. However, since the building was located close to Kalighat, a place where corpses were cremated and the ashes scattered in the river in accordance with Hindu teaching, she and her Sisters too began to refer to this institution as Kalighat.

At first some of the local Hindus resented her and her Sisters, but on coming to know that her acts of love transcended religious barriers and that people of all religious groups cooperated in her activities, their attitude changed. When I worked in Nirmal Hriday as a volunteer, I recall having seen Sisters read the Quran to a dying Muslim, and calling a Hindu priest from the temple to say the final prayers for dying Hindus. Her mission was not to convert non-Christians, but simply to serve the poorest of the poor in accordance with her Second Vocation.

Nirmal Hriday is situated in the middle of a busy street near the Kali Temple. When I visited there the first time I lost my way, and so I asked an old beggar to help me find the place. He thereupon promptly guided me there, mumbled the words “God bless you” to me, and quickly disappeared in the crowd without receiving my tip. I felt then that Mother Teresa and her Sisters had indeed received the full acceptance of the local people. Everyone entering the institution cannot help but note the strong odor of disinfectant pervading the place. I myself while working there frequently take deep breaths of it, for I believe it purifies my heart and infuses within me a greater energy and stronger spirit, to enable me to work among the sick and suffering.

The men’s ward with 50 beds is located close to the entrance. The medicine storehouse, the kitchen, and the room to preserve bodies are located in the center, while at the back is positioned the women’s ward, also with 50 beds. Every bed is constantly occupied, and an empty bed would mean that someone had died. The moment a bed is

---

201 Kali is a Hindu goddess and wife of the god Shiva, the lord of destruction. She is the female aspect of Kala, a word with two meanings, namely ‘time’ and ‘black.’ Hence she is called the ‘goddess of time’ or the ‘black goddess.’ Kali does not appear in the earliest scriptures of the Hindus, namely the Vedas, but appears in a set of scriptures called Puranas.

Myths concerning Kali appear also in a scripture called the Devimahatmya, which means literally the ‘great goddess.’ According to a myth, the gods asked the gentle goddess Parvati, the wife of Shiva, for help in their struggle against demons. On hearing their prayers Parvati appeared as the ferocious goddess Durga. Durga then also took the form of Kali, a much more fearful personality, and the two joined together in the fight against the demons. Kali is the personification of anger. She is a great goddess and a warrior, and she engages in the destruction and slaughter of demons and evil doers. In Bengal, she is immensely popular among the common people.

empty either the Sisters fill it with a new dying patient brought in from the streets, or the sick on their own come in and crawl into the bed.

The Sisters try to send younger patients and those whose cases are not too serious to the local hospital, but most of those sent are rejected owing to their poverty. On the other hand however the hospitals often send patients to Nirmal Hriday, as for example women with burns over their bodies, young drug addicts who prove difficult to control, and so on. All the beds are numbered, and the patients are divided according to their disease. Hence on seeing the number of the bed, we can at once make out the illness of the patient. They are treated by Sisters who are medically qualified, and by volunteer doctors from the local hospitals. The diseases in most cases are tuberculosis, leprosy, malaria, cancer, skin ailments, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, hernia, venereal disease and AIDS. Many patients reveal complex symptoms embracing two or three diseases from the above list.

At times Sisters and volunteer workers too pick up the ailments of the patients, especially when they are greatly exhausted and their immunity system weakens. I myself fell a victim to skin disease, malaria, and hepatitis, but since I received proper treatment with antibiotics the hepatitis did not make me too ill.

The daily schedule is as given below:

**AM**
8:00 Serving breakfast (chapatti, biscuit, milk, chai) to the patients
9:00 Washing of dishes, bathing assistance, bed-making, sweeping
10:00 Medication and treatment, washing and hanging out of clothes
11:00 Serving of lunch (vegetable curry, rice, fruit) to the patients
12:00 Washing of dishes, change of diapers, toilet assistance
12:30 Patients’ nap, conclusion of the morning work

**PM**
15:00 Bringing in the laundry, talking to patients, changing diapers, toilet assistance
17:30 Serving of supper (meat or fish curry, side dish, dahl, rice, fruit) to the patients.
18:30 Washing dishes, conclusion of the afternoon work.

Since there were no washing machines we had to wash the clothes and diapers of 100 patients by hand, just as in Prem Dan. We also had to clean infectious wounds and sometimes remove worms, but otherwise the nursing and care in Nirmal Hriday was not too different from that of any hospital or institution for the old and handicapped in
Japan. However, of all Mother Teresa’s institutions I found this to be the most taxing, physically and spiritually.

Sr. Luke who had worked at Nirmal Hriday as a superior for over 25 years, is a tough Singaporean nun with a nursing license. She happens to be the only one who can instantly spot a blood vessel in the skinny arm of the poor, and give them injections without causing needless pain. She herself fell a prey to various diseases, but each time she recovered and kept on working as usual.

One day Sr. Luke and an American volunteer nurse had a grave difference of opinion over the treatment to be given to a female patient with a terrible bedsore. Since the woman in question found it hard to digest food, I mashed the meal every day, converted it into a paste, and poured it into her mouth, because there was no equipment for tube feeding. The bad state of nutrition worsened her bedsore, and as a result her body got paralyzed and stiff and she grew incapable of moving by herself. To make things worse a bone protruded from an affected part of her body, thereby emitting a very bad odor, and since every part of her body was in pain it was difficult to change her clothes and diapers without making her scream. To move her body was most distressful, and her bedsores become worse day by day. The American nurse was anxious to heal her wound, and so every morning she disinfected the part and made the patient lie with her face down upon the bed, in order that the wound may dry. However, such a posture was hard for the woman, and so she started to moan with pain. Soon Sr. Luke happened to notice her suffering, and turning her body she helped her to lie on her back once more. Nevertheless when the American nurse returned she once again made the woman lie on her face, causing her again to feel pain. On observing this, Sr. Luke for the second time made her lie on her back. Since this situation was repeated over and over again, they both felt the need to discuss the issue. The American nurse insisted that she needed to make the patient lie on her face in order to treat her bedsore, but Sr. Luke replied, “This is not a hospital. We need to see to her suffering rather than her treatment.” The patient eventually died lying on her back, with a peaceful expression on her face.

Many volunteers come from abroad to work with Mother Teresa and her Sisters, and they are free to choose their place of work when they apply for registration as volunteer workers in the Mother House. Nirmal Hriday is the most popular institution and many volunteers wish to work there, especially medical and welfare professionals, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and others. Some Japanese nursing colleges too send their students there for training and hospice study, before their final graduation. Not only people but also medical donations come in from all over the world. From 1992 to
1997, I took along 25,000 injectors and needles every year I went to the Mother House, for it is such donations and offerings that support their work. In Calcutta there are two Sisters who are doctors, namely Sr. Andrea from Germany, and Sr. Shanti, an Indian. What I am trying to emphasize is that Mother Teresa’s institutions are indeed giving appropriate treatment to their patients, with specialists, medicines, and appliances. When Sr. Luke declared that their place was not a hospital, her statement recalled the words of Christ, “You did it to me.” (Matthew, 25:40). The Sisters are in contact with Christ through their patients, and so they choose the most appropriate way of treating Him who is present in the body of the poor.

One day on seeing a bottle of medicine injected into the body of a dying patient, a Japanese volunteer nurse remarked, “What a waste! This patient may die tonight. It is no use wasting medicine on him. Save it for another.” To this Sr. Luke replied, “I want him to know that he is not unwanted or forsaken, that there is someone who loves and cares for him.”

**Criticisms against Mother and her Activities**

It is a fact that medical facilities in Mother Teresa’s institutions are sub-standard when compared to those of advanced nations. A British journalist named Christopher Hitchens who lives in the United States, has criticized these shortcomings in his book *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*, published in 1995, and the TV program *Hell’s Angel* was also based on this book. Besides, even with regard to Sisters having the qualification of doctor or nurse, there are criticisms stating that their correspondence is irrational, and there are people who feel that prescribing medicines for patients with hardly any hope of recovery is absurd. Also, Mother Teresa’s attitude of respecting and serving the patient as though he or she were an incarnation of Christ, may give the impression that as medical workers she and her Sisters are non-professional. However, as I stated earlier, even though their activities may appear to be nothing other than medical welfare, they are in truth much more than that.

For example, Nirmal Hriday differs greatly from an ordinary hospital, where curing the patient is the only thing that matters. This may be exemplified in the case of a patient whom I knew, who was transferred from Prem Dan to Nirmal Hriday. The woman was physically handicapped with the lower half of her body paralyzed, and though she personally had no mental problem yet her son was mentally handicapped. Since her son was institutionalized at Prem Dan she had no one to look after her, and so
Mother Teresa, on coming to know of the situation, permitted the woman to be treated in the same institution as her son. One day, the son having had a bad fit of epilepsy, struck his head against an object and died. His mother on hearing this was deeply distraught, and expressed her desire to go to the House of the Dying. While I was taking care of her daily she would say to me, “I want to die. I want to see my son in heaven.” Yet, at times she also said, “When I am in the grip of death, I feel afraid to die.” Since she couldn’t fall sleep during naptime I was greatly confused not knowing how to take care of her, and I wondered whether I should pray for her peaceful death or her speedy recovery. While pondering this issue alone in the chapel, Mother Teresa herself came and asked me what I was praying for. When I explained the case to her, to my great amazement she was able to recall details of the case, even though she had more than 1000 people to care for. She then said to me, “I spoke to her before she moved to Kalighat. Her name is Konica and her son who was named Deepa died a month ago. I remember her.” When I described her condition and asked what I should pray for, she replied, “Life and death are both the gifts of God. So let us ask God in prayer to give her the best gift.” With these words, she also knelt beside me and prayed. Konica eventually recovered and left Nirmal Hriday. She now she lives in the house of a relative whom the Sisters discovered for her.

In the case of an ordinary hospital the death of a patient may be regarded as a sign of failure. In the institutions of Mother Teresa however, death is also a gift of God. This type of an attitude where one looks upon death not as something negative but as something positive, is in my opinion specifically needed in terminal care. It must not be forgotten that Nirmal Hriday is a house for the dying, and not a house of death. Of the 50,000 and odd that entered although about 25,000 experienced a peaceful death, yet the remaining 25,000 received the gift of life, and Mother Teresa and her Sisters are the self-effacing intermediaries of both these gifts.

In every situation, Mother and her Sisters would leave the outcome in the hands of God, after having done their best for the patient. They try all possible efforts for the recovery of the patient, but they also simultaneously struggle hard to make the patient’s final moments as peaceful as possible. I am of the view that it is impossible to compare ordinary hospitals with Mother Teresa’s institutions and thereby criticize the latter, for the simple reason that their missions essentially differ. I personally have no intention of criticizing the manner in which general hospitals function. All the same though, I must state that while hospitals by and large are concerned with the state of a patient’s health and the appropriate medical treatment needed, yet they tend to shut their
eyes to certain key aspects of the patient’s welfare, such as his way of life, his sense of values, and so on. The Sisters however give priority to such overlooked aspects, since they consider the patient’s spiritual and material needs as a whole, and determine the best that could be done for him. Mother Teresa’s attitude of viewing a sick person as an embodiment of Christ, transcends the approach generally adopted by the average doctor or nurse. As we know, organizations striving for the relief of the poor are many, and they are distributed all over the globe. I am of the view that the reason why Mother’s activities attract special attention from all around the world with many offering to cooperate with her Sisters, is due to their meek and unassuming posture that moves the hearts of people, regardless of religion, nationality, or race.

**Criticisms against Mother’s Christian Mission**

Mother Teresa, in a letter to the late Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai (tenure of office 1977.3.24-1979.7.15) dated March 26, 1979, begged as follows:

“Religion is not something that you and I can touch. Religion is the worship of God and therefore a matter of conscience. I alone must decide for myself, and you for yourself, what we choose. For me the religion I live and use to worship God is the Catholic religion. For me this is my very life, my joy, and the greatest gift of God in His love for me. He could have given me no greater gift.

I love my people very much, more than myself, and so naturally I wish to give them the joy of possessing this treasure, but it is not mine to give, nor can I force it on any one. So also no man, no law, no government has the right to prevent me or force me, nor anyone, if I choose to embrace the religion that gives me peace, joy, love.”

---


Her letter was an objection to making abortion a policy for population control in India. She also sent letters to police stations and hospitals, requesting that if they came across a pregnant woman who desired an abortion or wished to abandon her child, they should contact her. She constantly opposed abortion. She established Shishu Bhawan in 1955, just 7 years after she had started her activity, and that institution was built in order to protect the lives of children, particularly from being aborted by unwed mothers. It was also meant to protect children from abandonment and from being killed due to poverty. From the very beginning her opposition to abortion was not only through her words, but also through her practice.

Concerning abortion she said, “I feel the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion.” This statement was made during her speech while receiving the Nobel Prize in Oslo, on December 10, 1979. There she also spoke of enlightening the people on crucial issues such as family planning, and fighting abortion through adoption. She begged the people saying, “Please don't destroy the children. Give them to us and we will
She believed that the conversion of any person from one religion to another was the work of God, and not something that she could handle or control by herself. In fact, there do exist among members of the Catholic Church some who are critical of her negative attitude towards conversion to Christianity. To such people she said, “I convert you to be a better Hindu, a better Catholic, a better Muslim, or Jain or Buddhist. I would like to help you to find God.” She believed that each person needed to experience God personally. As regards God, to merely accept what others said without having a personal experience of Him, was something that Mother did not approve. She once told me that she always gave the following advice to Sisters who made their first vows in the congregation.

“I always tell the Sister who is newly professed that she was not a number. We have so much work to do, but I do not need another number. You came here to find your vocation. What you are doing is not your work, but your vocation. If you do not realize it or if you do not feel it is your vocation, pack and go home. There is no need for you to stay here.”

St. Francis Xavier initially failed in his efforts to communicate the word of God to large groups, and it was this failure that directed him into establishing suitable means of providing Christian education to the local people. Mother Teresa did not aim at gathering hundreds of workers. She merely sought people with a genuine vocation, and like St. Francis Xavier she trained them suitably in order that they may be transformed into true religious. Similarly she did not count the number of baptismal ceremonies that were performed. Having been raised among diverse religious groups and having had ample experience of religious strife, it is not surprising that she developed a broadminded attitude towards religion. An attitude like that was responsible for winning her the esteem of many non-Christians, and it was spontaneously acquired from her hometown of Skopje. Since she knew from experience that adherents of religions that promise love often also indulged in violence, she tried as a Catholic nun to “live well with all those differences,” but she did not neglect her Christian duties.

---

On recalling the energy she expended in preparing for the baptism and confirmation of my mother and myself, I can state from experience that she felt a great joy in inviting us into the Catholic faith. She referred to us as “God’s gift from Japan,” and she was convinced that our decision to become Catholics was not because of her personal charisma, but because God had specially called us. Mother Teresa was not indifferent to Christian conversion. However her efforts were directed not so much towards confronting differences, but towards living well with them. As a result of this she was accepted not only all over India, but scores of collaborators and volunteers, transcending religious and political barriers, gathered from far and wide to assist her, people who were ready to ‘work well with those differences.’

Those representing the Calcutta branch of Mother’s co-workers, namely a Mr. & Mrs. G. D. Agarwalla, are pious Hindus. Moreover, we often found members of non-Christian religious groups participating in the Mass or saying the Rosary in the Mother House. I frequently came across a German Buddhist nun who joined in the daily Mass in the chapel, and also saw some neighboring Muslims participating in the evening prayer of the Sisters. Mother Teresa’s activities served to bring about an

---

204 See Appendix 7.
205 On July 26, 1954, Anne Blaikie, the wife of a British businessman who lived in India was moved by Mother’s activities and especially her work in Nirmal Hriday (Home for Dying Destitutes), and started a support group for her that later became the Co-workers of Mother Teresa. It is a secular group that shares in her spirituality, and supports her activities both materially and spiritually. Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) recognized the group on March 26, 1969. The Co-workers of Mother Teresa developed on a worldwide scale, but their relationship to Mother later underwent a change. However, the older members still continued with their unchanging support for her.
206 Mr. G. D. Agarwalla the president of a Cooking Oil Corporate and his wife are devout Hindus. They invited us to their house for the first time on February 9, 1990. I was impressed by the fact that the statue of the Virgin Mary that was given to them by Mother Teresa was respectfully positioned next to the statues of the Hindu deities in their room.
207 A Muslim who used to participate in the Benediction at the Mother House once asked me curiously, “Why do you people worship a cookie?” I answered, “It is not a cookie but the body of Christ, and it is called the Holy Eucharist.” The next day after the Mass, the same Muslim came and asked me another question with a surprised expression on his face, “Why do you eat the body of your God?” I thought of replying to the question by remarking that this type of communication was good for the understanding of one another’s religions. Even if he were not a Christian, I thought it would be good for him to know something about Christianity. Worshipping a crucified man as God and eating his body in the symbolic form of bread during Mass, may appear strange to others. Earlier when Christianity was not well known, the local people who heard about the Eucharist from missionaries for the first time were probably also puzzled. The Muslim who questioned me listened to my explanation and seemed convinced, for he said, “God is great in giving his body to people.” However, after some thought he asked, “Is it allowable to eat God?” I answered, “Receiving Holy Communion converts our body into a tabernacle and we thereby carry God with us, so I think it differs from eating a cookie.” I answered him thus out of desperation, since I did not know whether this answer was correct or not. However he seemed convinced. I then recalled the *Yamaguchi no souron*, of September 1551, which is viewed as a dispute between followers of Christianity and Buddhism in Japan. Mother Teresa’s convent was a place of encounter with an atmosphere of
encounter of mutual understanding between people of dissimilar religions and races, and her institutions were an open arena of Christian teaching, a place where the dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism as promoted by the Jesuit Georges Dandoy SJ (1882-1962) of Belgium, was concretized. I personally believe that she was never of the view that a pious Catholic could not accept another religion. On this issue, Michael Gomes who had provided a room in his house to Mother during her early years remarked, “Although Mother’s greatness lay in the fact that she was a good Catholic nun, yet she did not eliminate other religions. Mother esteemed all religions and people.”

Those critical of Mother Teresa say that since she did not recommend that people become Christian, one could not say that she carried out her role as a Christian missionary. In response to this I declare that missionary work consists in revealing the truth through one’s character, and not in accumulating converts. Mother Teresa through her character revealed the truth to the entire world, and this is undoubtedly the reason why despite all such accusations she was beatified on October 19, 2003, which was World Mission Day.

She once remarked that Christ who is God was not understood by the people of his time. On the contrary, he was often misjudged. It was to be expected therefore that she too would receive criticism. Yet she never attempted to justify herself or offer arguments to counter such criticism.

In 1965 she obtained permission from the Vatican to start a branch abroad, and thanks to her reception of the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1979, her activities began to attract global attention. Now the Missionaries of Charity have branches in many nations, with all conducting activities in accordance with local needs. In India, most of their works are for the dying, the orphans, the mentally handicapped, lepers and drug addicts. Also, they offer free medical service and distribute free food to the local poor. In the 70s she started activities in the USA. There she opened a house for the homeless, and in the 80s she built a Home for AIDS patients. She visited Japan in 1981 and again in 1984, and opened branches in the cities of Tokyo (1981.5.24), Nagoya (1986.10.1), and Beppu (1993.8.15), to serve the homeless, unmarried mothers and their children, and migrant workers. She and her Sisters provide a variety of services in numerous countries, but always with the same spirit embodied in the words of the Gospel, namely “You did it to me.” She also took care to orient her activity in

acceptance for all, where everyone could gather without any form of discrimination.

accordance with the voice that she heard, commanding her to serve only ‘the poorest of the poor.’

Nonetheless, as her activity spread worldwide, along with the criticism also come the approval of people. The fact that she grew up in Skopje, an area of many races and religions, and chose to work in India, which is also a land of many races and religions, indicates that she was a person who believed in leading her life in accordance with the dictum, ‘live well with differences.’ Realizing that even within the same religion or race people may have differing viewpoints and opinions, she sought to coexist with those who differed from her not only in religion or race but also with regard to opinion, such as those who criticized her.

All the same however, although she was conscious of the views and opinions the others, she yet had the strength to follow the path she believed to be true. Accordingly she was not shaken by criticism when it came, but accepted it in humility and silence. Whenever misunderstandings or problems arose for me in the convent, I would recall Mother telling me to “forgive and forget.” I believe her very way of life teaches us to live well with differences, whatever form those differences may take.
In the first chapter I analyzed the reasons why Mother Teresa came to be viewed and revered as a “Mother of India,” but I did so only from the standpoint of Mother herself. As I stated earlier she was blessed with the gift of ‘living well with differences,’ a gift she received via the influences of history, the environmental pressures of her birthplace of Skopje, and her family background.

In the second chapter I explained the fact that this gift cultivated in her hometown came to bloom within the multi-religious settings of India, and I also spoke of the support she received from Jesuits like Fr. Van Exem, who helped nurture this gift of hers. I am inclined to believe that her ability to cultivate this gift in an appropriate growth milieu, was due to supporters like these Jesuits. Without them it would have remained a seed never to bloom, since she herself did not realize what a gift she possessed.

In this final chapter I would like to consider the question as to why the government of India decided to conduct a state funeral for this Roman Catholic nun from Europe, on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi the Father of the Indian Nation. As I had explained earlier in the preface, possibly the unanimous approval of the Indian cabinet was obtained only due to the fact that she was globally famous, and she had acquired Indian citizenship. Although all the cabinet members eventually gave their approval, yet some bureaucrats are said to have voiced doubts as to whether it was proper to conduct the funeral of a citizen who was not a politician, as a state funeral. To this, Prime Minister Gujral replied, “Gandhiji had been given a state funeral in 1948, though the Father of the nation held no office of state.”

This being done, he requested the bureaucrats to refer to the papers relating to Gandhi’s funeral. The Telegraph reported on September 11, 1997, that the government, as ordered by the Prime Minister, did its best to collect the existing data on the state funeral of Mahatma Gandhi, in order to carry out Mother Teresa’s funeral in conformity with his.

Thereupon the authorities conducted a prompt appraisal of her life and

---

activity, from her birth in Macedonia until she came to be universally known as Mother Teresa. Although the Padma Shri (Order of the Lotus) was awarded to her in September 1962, yet it was twelve years after she had begun her work, though she was the first recipient of the award who was foreign born. Then, on March 22, 1980, she went on to receive India’s foremost decoration namely the Bharat Ratna or ‘Jewel of India,’ and the following year she won the Nobel Prize. Here again, though 17 people have so far been granted this highest honor of India, the only recipient not born in the country was Mother Teresa. Taking into consideration factors such as these, the government ultimately expressed to the world its acceptance of her as the “Mother of India,” by granting her the same type of state funeral as given to Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of their nation.

The Great Indian Vote

The BBC once reported the results of the “Great Indian vote,” which Outlook, an English language magazine published in India brought out in August 12, 2002, after carrying out a survey involving 50,000 Indian citizens. Here, Mother Teresa ranked first. She was the choice of the (25-45) age group, namely the youth and the middle-aged. Mahatma Gandhi was excluded from this vote as a token of respect. I have presented below the ranking of the individuals chosen.

1. Mother Teresa
2. Jawaharlal Nehru
3. Vallabhabhai Patel
4. Indira Gandhi
5. JRD Tata
6. BR Ambedkar
7. Dhirubhai Ambani
8. Sachin Tendulkar
9. Jayaprakash Narayan
10. Atal Behari Vajpayee

Mother Teresa obtained more votes than either India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, or Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel a revered leader during the independence movement and close collaborator of Gandhi. What is thought-provoking here is that a lady from the far-away town of Skopje in the Balkan Peninsula was chosen as a “Great Indian” by the country’s own people, even surpassing two of the
nation’s founding fathers.

Would it be right for us to say that Mother Teresa was chosen as a Great Indian merely because she won the globally prestigious Nobel Prize? The fact is that of the six Indians who succeeded in winning the Nobel Prize, Mother Teresa alone was foreign born. These six are Rabindranath Tagore, C. V. Raman, Hargobind Khurana, S. Chandrasekhar, Amartya Sen, and Mother Teresa. However, neither Tagore who was the first Asian to win the Prize and who won it for literature in 1913, nor Sen who won it for economics in 1998, nor any of the others are seen among the ranks of the ten great Indians. Hence it is obvious that she was not chosen solely for her globally evaluated achievements, but for something far more precious than that.

**Who is an Indian?**

When asked about of her nationality, Mother would always answer in fluent Bengali, “Ami Bharater Bharat Amar,” which would translate as, “I am Indian and India is my country.” She acquired Indian nationality and described herself as an Indian, and besides she loved India and served the poor of her country with deep devotion. Yet, she was a Roman Catholic nun and foreign born. This leads me to believe that there was something in her that appealed to the Indian people, something apart from her global prestige and humane nature. It was something that caused the people to accept her as an Indian, regardless of her race or religion.

In September 1999, a dispute arose in Indian political circles with regard to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi (1946-), who despite being Italian born was appointed President of the Indian National Congress, before the country’s general elections in October of

---

210 1913, Rabindranath Tagore, Literature
1930, Chandrasekhar Venkata Raman, Physics
1968, Hargobind Khurana, Medicine
1979, Mother Teresa, Peace
1983, Chandrasekhar, Physics
1998, Amartya K. Sen, Economics
Sen is the first from Asia to win the Nobel Prize for Economics. He was born in Bengal in 1933. Tagore was the first from Asia to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

212 The Indian National Congress (INC), founded in 1885, instituted the Indian National Movement. S. C. Raychoudhary, *History of Modern India: A detailed study of Political, Social, Cultural and Economic Aspects*, Delhi, Surjeet publications, 1980, p. 111. They were the political party that led and controlled the politics of India over many years. However they lost power in March 1977. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s assassination in October 1984, and later Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination in May 1991 led to a return of their power, but they lost it again. Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the daughter-in-law of Mrs. Indira Gandhi was nominated president of the party after her husband Rajiv’s assassination.
that year. However, some politicians who were members of her party insisted that the
country’s prime minister should be a person who was Indian born, and Mrs. Gandhi on
hearing that resigned as president. Later however when the majority of the party
members agreed to stand behind her she withdrew her resignation, and as a result
certain politicians who had opposed her left the party in protest. This indicates the
upsurge of nationalism, a trend that has begun to threaten the harmony of race and
religion that have so far been the backbone of India, and this nationalism has gained
power with the concomitant rise of nationalism in neighboring Pakistan, with which
India has often had an edgy relationship. It was under such precarious conditions that
not only the members of the Indian cabinet unanimously approved Mother Teresa’s state
funeral, but the common citizens ranked her as the foremost among the great Indians.

Michael Gomes, who had freely lent a room in his house to Mother at the
beginning of her activity in the slums, informed me that her greatness lay in the fact that
she was a devout Catholic. However, (as stated earlier) he added that this did not mean
she disregarded other religions, for it was indeed true that she esteemed all religions. On
this point he also remarked to Navin Chawla saying,

“We cannot view her through Catholic eyes, or Hindu eyes, but only through
human eyes, for she does not discriminate. She respects all religions and all
people. It is not as if she is not a good Catholic. She is, but she does not make it
exclusive.”

Professor Hajime Nakamura, speaking of the concept of ‘people’ in his book
*Indojin no shiihouhou* which roughly translates as ‘the way of thinking of Indian
people,’ declares that with respect to Indians, “national consciousness was not clear”
(Author’s translation). He further states, “Indian people did not pay attention to racial
problems. Indians did not have the consciousness of an Indian race for a long time.
Hence, the amazing thing is the word ‘Indian’ did not exist in ancient India” (Author’s
translation). His analysis was that for Indians, commonality in spirit with regard to

213 The Congress party was rejected in the general elections of 1996, 1998, and 1999, and the Bharatiya
Janata Party (BJP) came to power. Their target was the realization of a Hindu state, which lies at the
background of the upsurge in nationalism. It would be ideal in India to separate religion from politics. It
is said that Hindu nationalism arose in India because of the Islamic nationalism of Pakistan, with which
India for a long time has had political problems.

214 Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, p. 53


216 Hajime Nakamura, *Indojin no shiihouhou*, p. 217
thought, philosophy, and religion, took precedence over national or racial awareness. From this I guessed that since the Indians discerned the same spirit as their own in Mother Teresa’s words and actions, they readily accepted her as one of their own. Nevertheless however, the fact remains that Mother was a foreign born Roman Catholic nun, and so what precisely was this spirit that the Indian people discovered in her? This is a point I would like to study.

**The Indian People’s Feelings toward Mother Teresa**

In India, as an expression of veneration for a person, one gently touches the person’s feet with both hands, and then raises the hands to touch one’s forehead. When greeting a saintly individual such as a Hindu religious leader, it is sometimes customary to prostrate at the foot of the individual. However, when I was with Mother Teresa, I frequently saw people not only prostrate themselves at her feet (something she always vehemently insisted that they refrain from doing), but they even took the soil of the ground on which she stood to their homes. I realized then that according to Hindu belief “even the dust which a saint’s feet has touched was sacred, and it had the power to heal” (Author’s translation).\(^{217}\) Also, some Islamic people told me that the power of a supernatural blessing dwells on the things touched by a saint.\(^{218}\) I often noticed both Hindus and Muslims take the dust her feet had touched to their homes, which indicates that both communities venerated her as a saint even during her lifetime.

Seven years after her death the Catholic Church beatified her on October 19, 2003, an event that was accomplished with exceptional speed, and soon on September 4, 2016, she will be formally recognized as a saint. Yet, regardless of whether the Church formally accepted her as a saint or not, the Hindu and Muslim people of India had already made their decision and accepted her. I was surprised to see her photograph next to pictures of Mahatma Gandhi, in stores that sell religious articles such as the images and pictures of the deities of Hinduism. A storekeeper told me that many Indians regardless of differences in religion often purchased pictures of Mahatma Gandhi or Mother Teresa, and respectfully offered wreaths or incense before them.

When I once visited the residence of Mr. & Mrs. G. D. Agarwalla who often cooperated with Mother in her work, I was greatly astonished to note that despite being

---


\(^{218}\) Jutta Ströter-Bender, *Heilige : Begleiter in göttliche Welten*, Tokyo, Translated by Hideki Shindo, Seidosya Publisher, 1996, p. 112
devout Hindus, they yet venerated a statue of the Virgin Mary placed just next to that of the Hindu God Ganesh.\(^{219}\) I noticed that they prayed before both images with great devotion. I learned later that Mr. Agarwalla was a person who respected Mother Teresa greatly, and who always granted her his full cooperation. He respected her for her holiness, and he and his family revere the statue of the Virgin Mary that Mother had presented them. Naturally, I was pleased to observe that Mother Teresa was esteemed so much by so many people, and even happier to note the respect shown to the Virgin Mary by a non-Christian couple. Yet what moved me more than anything else was the magnificence of the religious tolerance shown by that pious Hindu family.

**The Catholic Church and Hinduism**

On January 25, 1959, the late Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) announced the Second Vatican Council and 21\(^{st}\) Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. The purpose was the spiritual renewal of the Church, and it was also an occasion for Christians separated from Rome to join in the search for reunion. The work of the Council continued under Pope John’s successor, namely the late Pope Paul VI (1963-1978), and the Council that began in 1962, was eventually concluded in 1965. Among the documents issued were some concerning religious freedom, and the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards non-Christian religions. I shall now quote certain relevant passages from the council document *Nostra Aetate*, or ‘Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian religions,’ a document promulgated on October 28, 1965.\(^{220}\)

“Thus in Hinduism men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an unspent fruitfulness of myths and through searching philosophical

---

\(^{219}\) Ganesh appears in the *Puranas*, a set of Hindu scriptures that materialized from the 4\(^{th}\) to the 14\(^{th}\) century, the time when ancient Brahmanism changed to Hinduism for the first time. Western scholars declare that he was one of the gods who appeared in folk religions and local traditions, who was absorbed into Hinduism. It is in the *Ganesha Purana* and *Shiva Purana* that the story of Ganesh is mentioned. Faith in Ganesh was consequently linked to faith in Shiva. According to a myth, he was the son of Shiva and his wife Parvati. Accidentally his father Shiva cut off his head while he was guarding the entrance of the house, while his mother was bathing. In order to comfort his wife’s sorrow, Shiva promised to fix the head of the first person that passed by on his son’s body, and in this way revive him. No human being passed by but an elephant did, and so Ganesh was revived with the head of an elephant. Ganesh is worshiped widely in India as the god of wealth, wisdom, and as one who removes obstacles. His mount is a rat, and so a rat is carved at the foot of most of his statues.

They seek release from the anguish of our condition through ascetical practices or deep meditation or a loving, trusting flight towards God.”

Fr. Walter M. Abbott SJ, the General Editor of the “The Documents of Vatican II,” explained in his footnotes saying,

“The Declaration selects certain key elements of Hinduism without attempting the impossible task of describing in a short space the complex nature of Hinduism, the distinctions between Vedanta (scriptures) and Puranas (lesser sacred books), the six philosophical systems, the innumerable sects, etc. Mention might have been made of the similarities between Hindu and Christian beliefs—e.g. the concept of God’s appearance on earth; the concept of grace; sacraments; and similarities between the Christian Trinity and the Hindu ultimate reality—but all this, it was legitimately felt, could be left to the work of dialogue that was endorsed and commended at the end of the Article.”

Concerning Hinduism, Nostra Aetate states,

“Likewise, other religions to be found everywhere strive variously to answer the restless searching of the human heart by proposing “ways,” which consist of teachings, rules of life, and sacred ceremonies. The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all man.”

These documents clearly indicate that the Catholic Church does not by any means exclude other religions, but rather, looks upon them with respect, and admits the existence of truth in them. Nostra Aetate also states,

---

“The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral good found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.”

The Church therefore recognizes the value of other religions and positively encourages “dialogue and collaboration.” Fr. Abbott explained this in his footnote saying, “Now, for the first time, there is recognition of other religions as entities with which the Church can and should enter into dialogue.” With this Nostra Aetate declaration, one may conclude that the Catholic Church officially recognized the process of Inculturation started by Robert de Nobili, and which other Jesuits continued.

Concerning Hinduism, which is the religion of 80% of the Indian people, Hajime Nakamura an authority on Indian religion and philosophy in Japan summarized the main features of the religion in his book *Hindu kyoushi*, which may be translated as the *History of Hinduism*.

1) The existence of many gods is accepted. An individual or a group may worship a particular god, but other gods are not rejected. In general respect is shown to other gods, and tolerance to other beliefs. Certain schools of Hinduism are noted for their highly advanced philosophies, and others are not so advanced. Yet, there is in general an atmosphere of tolerance among these various schools. (Author’s translation)

2) Each Hindu is usually devoted to one god though he recognizes the existence of others. In this sense Hinduism is a monotheistic religion. Many also accept the existence of an Absolute Principle. (Author’s translation)

3) Religion is not separate from the daily life of the people. Religion dominates their lives from birth to death. Religious leaders and members of the Brahmin caste (the topmost in the caste system of India) are highly respected. In the Hindu caste system, the Brahmans occupy the highest place. However, many reformers declared that the caste system was not an essential part of Hinduism. In Hinduism’s long history, many

---

223 Hajime Nakamura, *Hindu kyoushi*, Tokyo, Yamakawa syuttpansya publisher, 1979, pp. 329-332
opposed the caste system, even though they were considered Hindus. (Author’s translation)

Indian people refer to their country as ‘Bharat,’ or sometimes as ‘Hindustan.’ The term ‘Bharat’ derives from the name of an ancient king who was believed to have ruled the country several centuries ago, and even today some traditional Indians consider themselves the descendants of this ancient king. The word Hindustan means the ‘land of the Hindus.’ When the ancient Aryans, migrating from probably Caucasus in Asia, crossed the Himalayas and entered India, they came across a mighty river that they named ‘Sindhu.’ This river Sindhu is the Indus, and from the name of this Indus river we have the words Hindu, Indus, and Hindustan, which could be translated either as the land of the Hindus, or the land on the far side of the river Indus.

When exactly did the Aryans enter India? This is a point which even scholars today are not very certain of. Also, by the time they entered India, the country had already enjoyed a highly advanced civilization, what we refer to as the Indus Valley civilization, which lay on the banks of the river Indus. Today the ruins of this civilization are still to be seen, chiefly in the towns of Harappa in the state of Punjab and Mohen-jadaro in the state of Sindh, both of which are now in Pakistan. Some scholars are of the view that the Aryans on entering India saw the cities of the Indus Valley civilization, whereupon they destroyed them and built their own. However others are of the view that by the time they reached the river Indus that civilization had already ended, and what they saw were only ruins. In any case, the Aryans on entering India built up several mighty civilizations of their own on the banks of the Indus and Ganges rivers, and these one might say were officially the start of Hindu civilization and culture. Unlike Buddhism or Christianity Hinduism does not have a clear-cut founder, and an organization such as a single all-embracing Church has never existed.

In India there is no language having a word that corresponds exactly to “Religion.” There is the Sanskrit word ‘Dharma,” but this means more morality than Religion. Hinduism has its own ethics and philosophy, and is deeply united with both individual and common life. In general, kings and rulers of past dynasties who followed religions other than Hinduism never forced the Hindu people to convert, and the Hindus too did not impose their beliefs upon others. Of course, in matters such as these there are always exceptions.

---

224 See Appendix 8
225 Hajime Nakamura, Hindu kyoushi, pp. 18-19.
Buddhism prospered in the Mauryan dynasty of the third century BC, the time when India had its first great empire. The Emperor Asoka (268-232) BC who was the third Mauryan ruler embraced Buddhism, and actively encouraged its growth, but he was tolerant towards other religions such as Hinduism. Emperor Kaniska (129-152) AD of the Kusana dynasty was also a devout Buddhist and encouraged Buddhism, but he too like Asoka respected other religions. During the time of the Gupta dynasty that followed, Buddhism was seen to gradually decline and Hinduism prospered, but the Hindu rulers never persecuted the followers of other religions.

**Tolerance and Reconciliation in the Ellora Cave Temples**

As Nakamura states in his book *Hindu kyoushi*, or *History of Hinduism*, a hallmark of that religion was the respect shown to other gods, and tolerance of other beliefs. This remarkable feature is presented concretely in the Ellora cave temples, located in northwest India. Among the 34 cave temples of Ellora, Nos. (1-12) are Buddhist, Nos. (13-29) are Hindu, and Nos. (30-34) are Jain. Nakamura analyzes the situation as follows.

“Even when Buddhist influence disappeared from the Ellora cave temples and the Hindus came to build their own, they did not destroy the Buddhist temples located there. Later when the Jains built their cave temples in the locality, again, the temples of Buddhism and Hinduism that had existed from of old were not destroyed. One may say they practiced ‘tolerance’ in a literal sense. Since neither heresy nor paganism was persecuted, even the word ‘tolerance’ was not necessary in the Indian languages” (Author’s translation).

The Ellora cave temples were built from the 7th to the 10th century, during the heyday of Hinduism. Buddhism, which was born as a reform movement of Brahmanism, the religion of the ancient Aryans of India, started the construction of the temples. Buddhism was founded by Prince Gautama or Siddhartha, who was also referred to as the Buddha (463-383) BC.

Jainism was a religion of which Nigantha Nataputta (444-372) BC whose real name was Vardhamana, was the founder. He is also known as Mahavira or Jina, and like the Buddha he too was a prince. His life in many aspects resembles that of the Buddha, and since they are believed to have been contemporaries, it is possible that the actions of one influenced the other.

---

228 Buddhism was founded by Prince Gautama or Siddhartha, who was also referred to as the Buddha (463-383) BC.
229 Jainism was a religion of which Nigantha Nataputta (444-372) BC whose real name was Vardhamana, was the founder. He is also known as Mahavira or Jina, and like the Buddha he too was a prince. His life in many aspects resembles that of the Buddha, and since they are believed to have been contemporaries, it is possible that the actions of one influenced the other.
cave temples. Classical Hinduism that later developed continued their construction, and finally Jainism which was also a reform movement of Brahmanism, completed the temples.

When I traveled to India for the first time around October 1988 I visited the Ellora cave temples, and frankly speaking on seeing them as a tourist, I felt that each cave looked the same. Since I was without a guide, I could not see the difference between the last Jain temple and the first Buddhist temple, or for that matter even between the Hindu temples and all the others. Every temple looked the same to me.

As Nakamura points out, the members of the religious group that followed not only built their temples without destroying the previous ones that were located there, but rather, they learned a great deal from the Architecture, Fine Arts, and other such features of the former temples, and imitated their techniques in a variety of ways. The Buddhists in India now comprise only about 0.5% of the total population. Not only foreign tourists like myself but also many Hindu and the Jain believers visit the Ellora cave temples as pilgrims, and gaze upon the frescoes with reverence and wonder. These Ellora cave temples are indeed a place where followers of different religions meet, exchange ideas, and learn from one another, and so they may be looked upon as symbols of the spirit of tolerance and reconciliation, that pervades India.

**History and the Background of Religious Disputes**

However, even people with the soul of tolerance and reconciliation will rise and resist when threatened. The history of India shows that in the past the Hindu Rajputs fought the invading Islamic armies that came in from abroad, and local Indian rulers too fought one another when invaded, regardless of religion. An unforgettable year for the Indians is 1857, for that was when almost the entire north rose in revolt against the British East India Company, which by then had come to control almost the whole subcontinent. This is what the British history books refer to as the Sepoy Mutiny (the word sepoy means soldier), but the Indians refer to it as the First Indian war of Independence. The causes of the revolt were many, but one of the causes concerned the bullets used for the Enfield guns that were handed out by the British to the Indian soldiers. These bullets were coated with a kind of grease, and they had to be inserted into the mouth before using them in the rifle. The leaders of the uprising told the Hindu soldiers that it was the grease of a cow (a sacred animal for the Hindus), while they told the Muslims that it was the grease of a pig (an unclean animal for Muslims). Both the Hindus and Muslims misinterpreted this as a deliberate attempt to destroy their religion.
During the uprising, Hindus and Muslims fought side by side and for one another’s leaders. All question of religion, caste, and culture were brushed aside, and they fought as one against the common enemy, namely the British. However, sad to say the division of India and Pakistan took place when the British quit the subcontinent, and since then political disputes between Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan regularly occur.\(^\text{231}\) The ethnic conflict in the homeland of Mother Teresa, namely Macedonia, resembles the situation in India. India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers, and hence a touch-and-go situation continues even now.

Does this mean that disputes are bound to occur if people of different races or communities live in the same country? Is it not possible for people of diverse religious persuasions to peacefully co-exist? Religion differs from race, and in the context of a nation that is both multiracial and multi-religious, does it mean that disputes will never cease? I refuse to accept such an idea. The history of India shows that there were times when people of different races and religions lived together for extended periods, without fighting. The Hindus and Muslims had long lived together in peace and harmony in Kashmir, which was a model area, symbolizing the possibility of India becoming a multi-religious state. In the late 1950s when China occupied the Aksai Chin region of the Himalayas in the northeast of Ladakh, relations between India and China deteriorated. Viewed from this perspective, the Kashmir conflict too is not just a dispute between Muslims and Hindus. I am of the view that more than religious it is economic interests that lie at the bottom of this conflict, and religion was merely a tool used by interested parties to ignite the hostility between them. Such a background may also exist for other disputes occurring all over the world, where interested parties, prompted by selfishness or greed, take advantage of human hostility or ignorance to achieve their ends.

Professor Yoshinori Murai, in his book *Umi no Asia 3, Shima to hito no Dynamism*, which translates as, *Marine Asia volume III, Dynamism of the Island and its People*, writes as follows with reference to the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan.

\(^{231}\) There was a time when Kashmir was a place where Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony, and was a model area symbolizing the possibility of India becoming a peaceful multi-religious state. Besides the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, China occupied the Aksai Chin area of the Himalayas in the northeast part of Ladakh in the 1950s, and so relations between India and China also deteriorated. At the bottom of the Kashmir dispute possibly lie economic interests. Many believe interested parties are manipulating the Muslims and Hindus for reasons of economic gain.
“To all outward appearances it resembles a dispute between religious and ethnic groups. However, the essence seems more complicated, and appears to involve political or economic collision” (Author’s translation).

Coming back to the analysis of Nakamura, I believe that the long history of India reveals that there was more of tolerance and understanding in the country than hatred and fear. Such tolerance was frequently revealed in Mother Teresa’s words and actions, particularly in those words of hers that symbolized much of her life, “Live well with all those differences.” It is not surprising therefore that the people of India accepted her as one of the greatest Indians, since she shared the same spirit as they. Indian people have a tendency to transcend religion and race, and to accept as Indians all who share their spirit of tolerance and reconciliation. It would not therefore be an overstatement on my part to say that if Mother Teresa had not been in India, she would not have been accepted and valued so much.

**Trust between a Hindu Believer and Mother Teresa**

However, to be understood and accepted was not always easy for Mother, a fact exemplified in the following incident.

As I mentioned earlier Mother rented from the city office a rest house for pilgrims visiting the temple of the goddess Kali, and Nirmal Hriday (Home for Dying Destitutes) was started there, on August 22, 1952. This however promptly evoked a reaction from the Hindu community. In those days governmental agencies were unable to cope with the situation of people dying on the roads, and so an official of the municipality named Dr. Ahmad who was the Chief Medical Officer, gave her permission to use the place as an institution for the dying. On receiving complaints that she had given a Christian burial to a Hindu who had passed away in her institution, he came investigate. Dr. Ahmad however on coming to know that Mother and her Sisters respected the religion of their patients, and that they treated each case in accordance with the person’s religion, was deeply impressed, and attempted to convince those accusing her that they had misunderstood the situation. However the complaints did not cease, and Hindu priests in particular thought her actions constituted an offense by a

---

232 Yoshinori Murai and others, *Umi no Asia, Vol. 3, Shima to hito no Dynamism*, Tokyo, Iwanami syoten Publisher, 2001, p. 52

233 Please refer to footnote number 201 of Chapter III.
Christian against the worshippers of the goddess Kali, and demanded of the municipality the immediate removal of her institution. At that time however a Brahmin priest of the Kali temple developed tuberculosis, and since he was denied medical treatment at the hospital owing to his being an advanced case with no likelihood of cure, he was carried to Nirmal Hriday, since there was no other place where he could be taken. The priest eventually passed away after being nursed by Mother and her Sisters, but before dying he gazed at Mother and said, “I have seen with my own eyes the goddess Kali whom I have served for years.” Mother Teresa thereupon arranged for him to have an appropriate funeral in accordance with Hindu rites. With this the situation dramatically changed and the complaints ceased, for the Hindu people had now obtained a glimpse of the spirit that motivated her.

**Mother Teresa as an Incarnation of a Hindu Goddess**

The Indian people believe that Mother Teresa’s spirit of tolerance and reconciliation was inherited from the past, and they respected her as a saint who was close to God. Yet, there is an even stronger feeling about her that some Indians have.

After her death, numerous signs and posters appeared in the streets expressing the grief of the people, and most had statements such as, “We have lost our Mother,” or something similar. This was understandable, because many people referred to her as ‘Mother’ in their daily conversation. They called her Mother not only because her name was Mother Teresa, but also because many looked upon her and loved her as a mother. I am of the view that the feeling of the Indians towards Mother Teresa, was expressive with the love they had for their own mothers.

Fr. Cyril Veliath, a professor of Sophia University in Tokyo, has stated in his article entitled *The Mother Goddess in Indian Sculpture* that India may be described as a land of goddesses.²³⁴ He declares that it was the female rather than the male that was used as a symbol of authority and power in India. In the many temples of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism are to be found numerous statues of a variety of deities, among which when compared to the males, the females are seen to be in overwhelmingly larger numbers.

In a set of Hindu scriptures referred to as the *Puranas*, a Sanskrit word which means ‘ancient or legendary,’ and which were produced from the 4th to the 14th century, it is said that the creator god Brahma creates the universe, Vishnu the preserver god

---

rules the universe and protects it, while it is eventually destroyed by the god Shiva, who is the destroyer. These three gods together are called the Trimurti. Each god has his consort. For example, the consort of Brahma is the goddess Saraswati, Vishnu’s consort is Laksmi, and Shiva has Parvati as his consort.

Saraswati, the wife of Brahma, is the goddess of crops and wealth as well as the goddess who symbolized a sacred river mentioned in the Vedas, the earliest scriptures of the Hindus. She possesses numerous names and manifestations such as Bharati, Brahmi, Sharada, Vagishvari, Mahavidya, Dhaneshvari, and others, and she is worshipped as the goddess of learning, wisdom, speech, and music. The goddess Parvati, who is the wife of the destroyer god Shiva, is the goddess of the Himalayas, and people believe she is the symbol of Shiva’s power. She too has various manifestations, and as each manifestation she receives the adoration of the people. Her famous manifestations are Kali, Durga, Uma, Bhavani, and Bhairavi. Laksmi, the wife of Vishnu, is the goddess of beauty and good fortune, and she has manifestations such as Shri, Chanchala, Lokamata, Jalandhija, and Kamala.

Thus we see that there are many gods and goddesses in Hinduism, with 3,339 mentioned in the Rig Veda (the oldest of the four parts into which the Vedas are divided). Max Friedrich Muller (1823-1900) who was a famous oriental scholar and linguist referred to the cosmogony of the ancient Vedic civilization as Henotheism, a system where many gods exist, but one is superior to the others. However, the principal position that this god occupies is not exclusively his, because eventually his worship will wane and another will take his place, and in course of time that god too will be replaced by another. This system where several gods in turn take the place of the chief deity is called Kathenotheism. Max Muller is credited with having coined these two expressions, namely Henotheism and Kathenotheism. The remarkable diversity and tolerant nature of Hinduism is seen in this, where without eliminating any god, all are given a chance to occupy the position of the supreme. In this context Nakamura states,

---

235 The story of Vishnu incarnating as a fish (Matsya) and saving the world resembles the tale of Noah’s ark in the Old Testament. Musashi Tachikawa and others, Hindu no kamigami, Serikasyobou publisher, 1980, p. 62

The number of incarnations of Vishnu is not fixed. The following 10 are his main incarnations.
1) Fish (Matsya), 2) Tortoise (Kurma), 3) Boar (Varaha), 4) Dwarf (Vamana), 5) Man-lion (Narasimha), 6) Rama with the ax (Parasurama), 7) Prince Rama, 8) Prince Krishna, 9) Buddha, 10) The future Hero (Kalki)

236 He was the professor at Oxford University. He edited and published the Sacred Books of the East series in 51 volumes, and was also responsible for the starting of ancient oriental cultural studies. Although born in Germany he was a naturalized Britisher and acquired British nationality.

237 Hajime Nakamura, Indo shisoushi, Tokyo, Iwanamizensyo publishers, 1968, p. 9
“It is a big feature of Hinduism to employ diversity efficiently, and not to be prejudiced by various small differences” (Author’s translation).²³⁸

People also direct their devotion to the diverse incarnations of the goddesses. In this context Professor Veliath writes, “However, for many Indian people, these various goddesses are but different manifestations of one great mysterious female divinity, whom we refer to as the Mother Goddess.”²³⁹ Many in India believe that all these goddesses are symbols of the Mother Goddess, and on this point Professor Veliath explains,

“How may we define this Mother Goddess? A simple definition would be, ‘any female divinity whom the worshiper accepts and reveres as his own mother.’ This Mother Goddess appears in various different forms in the Indian culture.”²⁴⁰

In an earlier chapter I described Mother Teresa’s deep devotion to the Virgin Mary. Her love for her own mother in Skopje whom she could not meet after she left her hometown, was sublimated into a love for the mother of Jesus Christ. Mother Teresa once taught me the following prayer, “Mary be a mother to me now.” She told me to say this prayer whenever I found praying painful or difficult, and she herself used this little prayer daily. Although for many Christians the Virgin Mary is the mother of God, she is neither a goddess nor even the Mother Goddess. Catholics including myself believe that she is close to God, and that she is a mediator between the people and God. Just as in the Gospel story of the wedding feast of Cana where Jesus could not refuse the request of his mother (John 2:1-11), Catholics believe that God does not deny his mother whenever she makes a request, and the average Catholic like Mother Teresa, has a deep respect for the Virgin Mary. The words of Professor Veliath, namely “the worshiper accept and reveres as his own mother,” is a very human reaction, and not something confined within any religious frame.

Showing respect to and serving one’s parents, is a common thing in India. Just as in the case of Japan, the Indian child even today uses the honorific when speaking to parents. For example, when parents speak to a child they say ‘Tum’ which means ‘you’ in Hindi, but the child refers to its parents as ‘Aap,’ which translates as ‘Sir’ or

²³⁸ Hajime Nakamura, Hindu kyoushi, p. 17
‘Madam.’ This shows that the idea of respecting parents is still firmly rooted in India. Nakamura in his book Indojin no Shihouhou remarks,

“In Japan, when referring to parents we generally say ‘father and mother,’ but in India ever since the ancient Upanishadic times they have said ‘mother and father,’ the mother’s name coming earlier. Even in Hindi they say ‘mother and father’ when speaking of parents, and never father and mother” (Author’s translation).²⁴¹

Nakamura analyzes this as the influence of the matrilineal family system of the Dravidian people, who were the inhabitants of India before the arrival of the Aryans. This shows that the people of India have stronger feelings of respect and belonging to their mothers, than to their fathers. Although the present social structure is based on a patrilineal system, yet the mental outlook and way of thinking of the common man are matrilineal. This leads me to believe that the Indians have a tendency to accept as a protector a female deity rather than a male, a goddess rather than a god.

Professor Veliath declares that faith in the Mother goddess arose in India because it is an agricultural country. On this issue he declares,

“The reason why the Mother Goddess is so popular in India, is because of the great reverence that people have for the land, and for the nation of India as a whole. Since Indians by and large are an agricultural community, from ancient times the land was considered very important by the people of its 700,000 villages.”²⁴²

Like Professor Veliath, the author of the book Hindu no Kamigami, which translates as the Gods of the Hindus, states that the popularity of goddess worship in India stems from the indigenous faith of the village farmers. He goes on to explain this saying,

“It can be said that there is a connection between the god of the village called Gramadevata, and Hinduism. Hinduism spread all over India, absorbing the local cultures. It spread by assimilating the gods (or mostly goddesses) of the

²⁴¹ Nakamura Hajime, Indojin no shihouhou, pp. 264-265
²⁴² Cyril Veliath SJ, The Mother Goddess in Indian Sculpture, p. 162.
villages. Many myths concerning the birth of goddesses arose in the process. Myths were created stating that goddesses who were worshiped from ancient times in villages, were the same as Shiva's consorts. Thus, in the process of unifying these local faiths with Hinduism, goddess worship was included in the worship of gods like Shiva or Vishnu. With the arrival of the 9th or 10th century, places of goddess worship increased in number, and they became independent sources of power, distinct from the male gods” (Author’s translation).

Professor Veliath also explains as follows the reason why the people of India look upon their nation as a Mother Goddess.

“India is considered as a mother, and all Indians are considered as her children. Bharata-mata (or ‘Mother India’) is usually shown as a tall beautiful woman dressed in a sari with long flowing hair, wearing a crown upon her head and holding a trishul (three-pronged spear) in her hand.”

Hinduism is the fusion of the ancient Upanishadic religion of Brahmanism with the native faiths, and Professor Veliath is of the view that the worship of the Mother Goddess arose out of the reverence that people had for the land. Historically, the origin of goddess worship, and the later development of the worship of the Mother Goddess lay in animistic beliefs, and these as they developed in India, influenced the thinking of the people, leading to the reverence shown to the mother. People of India therefore worshipped the goddesses with the love and respect they had for their own mothers.

Mother Teresa is not a goddess, but I would like to repeat here the definition of a Mother Goddess by Professor Veliath. He declared that the Mother Goddess was any goddess that ‘the worshiper accepts and reveres as his own mother.’ Viewed from this standpoint it is undoubtedly true that for the Indian people Mother Teresa did become an object of profound esteem, with many showing her the same reverence they would show their own mothers.

Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi

S. C. Raychoudhary in his History of Modern India: A detailed study of

---

243 Musashi Tachikawa and others, Hindu no Kamigami, p.116
244 Cyril Veliath SJ, The Mother Goddess in Indian Sculpture, Tokyo, p.164.
“Political, Social, Cultural and Economic Aspects,” introduces Mahatma Gandhi and says, “Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as the Father of the Nation, was one of the greatest nationalist leaders of modern India.”

Mother Teresa had a deep respect for this Father of the Nation, and his words were quoted by her in the letter she sent to the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai, and which was introduced in Chapter 3. She also named the institution she established for leprosy patients in Titagarh in 1959 as *Gandhiji Prem Niwas*, which translates as ‘the house of love of the venerable Gandhi.’ Moreover, since Gandhi referred to all who cooperated with him as co-workers, she too used the term for people who cooperated in the activities of the Missionaries of Charity. (Pope Paul VI recognized the co-workers of Mother Teresa as an organization linked to her religious congregation, on March 26, 1969).

Hindus and the Muslims both worked for the independence of the country, and Gandhi believed that independence should be obtained through a non-violent struggle by resorting to *Satyagraha* (the invasion of truth). Here you attack the enemy not by the use of any weapon, but by truth. His aim was not only to gain independence from Britain, but also to unite the Indian people into a single State.

The religious openness of Gandhi that so influenced Mother Teresa is seen in the following statement of his, that he wrote in answer to the question of a friend who wanted to know which religion was nearest to the truth. He answered that in spite of the fact that it was understandable for a person to be attached to his own religion, yet one should have an equal respect for all religions.

“I should as a Hindu, accept it as natural for a Christian to believe that Christianity is nearer to truth and for a Muslim to believe that about Islam, and also that it is necessary for them to say so if they are to follow their respective religions sincerely. I ought to bear them no ill will for such a belief, nor should I regard their belief as mistaken. … Probably this view of mine about equality towards all religions is a new idea. If other people also have thought about the matter along similar lines, I am not aware of the fact. For me at any rate, the idea is original and it has given me the purest joy.” (Quoted from a Letter of Gandhi’s by J. F. Backianadan, p.117).

---

In his many statements he insisted that the various religious groups should respect one another and become tolerant towards each other. Gandhi described *Ahimsa* or ‘non-violence’ as he understood it, in the following manner,

“Our *shastras* seem to teach that a man who really practices *ahimsa* in its fullness has the world at his feet, he so affects his surroundings that even the snakes and other venomous reptiles do him no harm. This is said to have been the experience of St. Francis of Assisi.”

The Influence of Christianity is seen in the fact that he frequently quoted Jesus Christ in his letters, books, and speeches. The teachings of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ were constantly on his mind, and they were a steady source of guidance and inspiration to him, and it is reported that a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ adorned the wall over his desk which was located the center of his office room. While answering questions about Christians and Christianity he said,

“To be a good Hindu also meant that I would be a good Christian. There was no need for me to join your creed to be a believer in the beauty of the teachings of Jesus or try to follow His example” (Author’s translation).

With the humility of Hinduism filling his soul, I think his position was that it did not matter what religion we practice, as long as the soul longs for truth. As I mentioned earlier in chapter 3, Mother Teresa never forcibly pressed either a Hindu or a person of any other religion to convert to Christianity. Just as Gandhi had faith in Hinduism but at the same time respected other religions and believed that all should live peacefully together, Mother Teresa who hailed from the multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation of Macedonia, believed in living well together in spite of differences. It was the same spirit of tolerance and reconciliation that motivated them both.

Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa both referred to the poor as “the children of God,” and I am inclined to believe that the coincidence is not accidental. Navin

---

246 Gandhi’s reply to Lajpat Rai’s critical article on his concept of Non-violence in the *Modern Review* of July, 1916.
247 Jose Luis Gonzales-Balad, *Mother Teresa: One heart full of love*, Tokyo, Translated by Chiyoka Torii, Akashisyoten publisher, 2000, p. 141.
248 Gandhi called them so. According to him, those who were oppressed were the ones most loved by God.
Chawla, while analyzing their common features declared, “Both Gandhi and Mother Teresa share a curious combination of religious conservatism and radical empiricism,” and he further stated, “Both shared the spirit of renunciation and compassion.” He pointed out the fact that Mahatma Gandhi wore a dhoti while Mother Teresa wore a cotton sari, and both did so with the intention of wearing the dress of the poor, with the intention of identifying themselves with the poverty-stricken and the oppressed.

The officials of a well-known Indian educational Institute named the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, while presenting an award to Mother Teresa, described her in the following words.

“A quiet but courageous crusader who, in a God-inspired moment, launched a mission of mercy and compassion, reaching out to alleviate the sufferings of millions the world over—the nameless, voiceless, homeless, depressed and dispossessed, whom Mahatma Gandhi christened the “daridra narayans.” She is one of those rare souls who has transcended all barriers of race, religion, creed and nation. She aspires for no kingdom, no honor, not even salvation or moksha. She is a true Vaishnavajana- minstrel of God- wholly dedicated to the removal of peeda paraayi (the pain of others), in the manner of Mahatma Gandhi.”

They praised this Catholic nun and placed her on par with the Mahatma, by referring to her as a true Vaishnavajana or minstrel of God.

I see Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa as possessing in common the determination to avoid clashes that take place from differences of race or religion, and also poverty and wealth. They were people who had learned to accept differences and live well with them, and their greatest common feature was the spirit of tolerance and reconciliation, as revealed by their words and actions throughout their lives.

Most of the research on India and other Asian countries in the field of social welfare seems to be based on the development assistance theory, and it would perhaps not be an overstatement if I were to say that research on Asia from the viewpoint of

---

He also called them Daridra narayan (poor but like God), and Harijan (children of God).

249 Navin Chawla, Mother Teresa, p.190.
250 Navin Chawla, Mother Teresa, p.188.
251 What the male members of a family wear at home in certain parts of India.
252 Navin Chawla, Mother Teresa, p.191.
welfare is considered as focusing mostly on development assistance. All the papers in my area of expertise, which is social welfare, were an analysis of Mother Teresa’s aid activities in India and the assistance methodology of Japan. However, during these ten years I have had the uneasy feeling that there was some incongruity about this, and I wondered where this incongruity lay.

I got my answer through an opinion poll I conducted among the foreign volunteers at Mother Teresa’s facilities. I conducted the poll for six years from 1991 to 1997, and interviews were conducted with about 140 volunteers, face to face. Most of them when they had finished their volunteer work and gone back to their countries, either said that they had become richer in spirituality, or that they had gained in confidence. That is to say, through their volunteer work their self-assurance and piety had increased. Mother Teresa said that the greatest poverty was not hunger or illness but the feeling of being unwanted. Through interviews I conducted for six years, I arrived at the conclusion that those people from advanced countries who come to work at Mother’s institutes as volunteers, including myself, are afflicted with the poverty that she spoke about, which cannot be healed with a piece of bread. Through serving the underprivileged and the suffering, such people actually got the feeling that their existence was of value, and that they were wanted. We volunteers were not exceptionally generous people but we were hungry for acceptance, and we were able to heal this hunger through working at the institutes of the Missionaries of Charity. I initially tried to assist in a material way by carrying out the transportation and distribution of relief goods every year, but I gradually arrived at the conclusion that such a method of helping the poor smacked somewhat of arrogance. For a person like me who hailed from a first world country, to serve the poor only economically, was in my view rather snooty and impolite. I felt I needed to appreciate the fact that I received more than what I gave, for we of the first world cannot hope to build a confidential relationship with a neighboring nation and its citizens, without a perception of this truth.  


Please See Appendix 9 for the text.
Dr. Yoshiaki Ishizawa, a former president of Sophia University in Tokyo, has stated the following in his work *Daigaku ni okeru Ajia Kyouiku no Kanosei*, or *The Possibility of Asian Studies in the University*, a publication of the University’s Institute of Asian Cultures.

“The relationship between Japan and the Asian countries has been built mainly on an economical plane. However, one may point out here a lack of respect for the people of those countries” (Author’s translation).

He further states, “we need to have an attitude of empathy and esteem for those peoples and their societies” (Author’s translation).

If we look upon the nations of Asia including India merely as poor and as recipients of aid, then our viewpoint is indeed to be pitied. Through knowledge of the wisdom and culture of the Asian countries and through acquiring an understanding of their history, we will come to both respect their people and society, and evoke within us a feeling of rapport with them. On coming to know Mother Teresa’s personal history, I was blessed with a realization of the spirit of acceptance and reconciliation that pervaded the hearts of the Indian people, and when she said, *Ami Bharater Bharat Amar* (I am Indian and India is my country), I believe she did so with a genuine feeling of pride. Through her resolve to accept and live with differences, and through her sentiments of magnanimity and conciliation, one may say she sincerely came to look upon India as her homeland.

As I explained earlier, the ‘good seed’ mentioned by Jesus Christ that later germinated to produce such magnificence in India and the world, was fashioned in Skopje. The local environment and historical background of her parents and family were responsible for creating the core of Mother Teresa.

Later, this seed was specially watered and cared for by the Jesuits. Even though everyone accepts Mother’s genius and charisma, yet I believe that even the best of seeds would not have sprouted and bloomed, unless someone faithfully watered it and protected it from drought and other destructive elements. Among the many who fulfilled this role, the principal figures were the Jesuits.

Now, I conclude by saying that this good seed was fortunate to take root in the

---

soil of India. However good a seed may be, if the soil in which it falls were stubborn like a rock, it would be hard for it to take root, flower, and bear fruit. I personally tend to believe that the flexibility of the soil of India, namely its people with their spirit of nobility and concord, played a key role in the success of Mother Teresa. From her distant home in Skopje the Spirit of God tenderly drew her to the service of the teeming millions of the metropolis of Kolkata, home to the Saintly Hindu mystic Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his eminent disciple Swami Vivekananda.

What I intended bringing out in this thesis is the fact that although Mother was amply blessed with talent and moved by the grace of God, she nonetheless embarked upon her work in an appropriate environment, encircled by many who loyally supported her. All the essential conditions were present for her to acquire the veneration of the world. Her selfless devotion to God and her strivings for the welfare of her fellowmen did indeed lead her to glory, but it was a glory achieved with the wholehearted collaboration and backing of others. As St. Paul declares in his first letter to the Corinthians, “Now the one who plants and the one who waters are equal, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” (1 Cor. 3:8). My intention was to draw attention to and record this labor.
Reflections on the Dark Night of Blessed Mother Teresa

On September 10, 1946, Blessed Mother Teresa received a divine call to start the new religious congregation of the Missionaries of Charity, and she saw this as a Second Vocation from God. However, we now know that soon after answering this call, she was invited by God to enter the state of the “Dark Night” of the soul. In this thesis I refer to this Dark Night as her Final Vocation, and I seek to clarify here the roles played by her Jesuit spiritual directors, some of whom were in touch with her from the very time the ordeal began. I personally believe that had it not been for these directors, she might in the course of her lengthy journey of 48 years along the road to Perfection, have easily lost her way and fallen into a state of disorientation. Hence, I desire also to elucidate in the coming pages the manner whereby she received this Dark Night as a Final Vocation, a unique mission granted to her by God.

The Dark Night

Before proceeding I wish to clarify certain details. Her Dark Night is a topic that has of late drawn considerable attention. In August 23, 2007, an article by David Van Biema entitled Mother Teresa’s Crisis of Faith appeared on the website of Time, and later the same article reappeared with the title Her Agony in the September 3rd issue of the magazine, featuring her face on the cover. Beside her face were the words, “The Secret Life of Mother Teresa–Newly published letters reveal a Beloved Icon’s 50-year crisis of faith.” This article was written with reference to the book Mother Teresa. Come be My Light, published in 2007 by Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk MC, postulator for the cause of her beatification and canonization and director of the Mother Teresa Center. The beatification process began in June 1999, that is two years after her death, and ended with a religious ceremony in Rome on October 19, 2003, and it was only after this that Fr. Kolodiejchuk gathered her writings and other related documents (especially letters she had written to her spiritual directors), and published them with the title Mother Teresa. Come be my Light, after adding proper clarifications for each.

In the book are to be found 276 of her letters written over a period of 67 years, that is, from 1928 when she left her hometown of Skopje, until 1995, which is two years before her death. Of these, 98 are letters to priests consulting them regarding
the Dark Night. We have no idea as to what she said during these consultations, since they were made under the seal of confession. However, Fr. Edward Le Joly SJ in his book *Mother Teresa of Calcutta. A Biography*, insists that she did suffer from the trials of the Dark Night (noche oscura). Her Dark Night was in truth not a secret, but none realized that it persisted for a period close to 50 years. Hence people the world over were struck both by this “Crisis of Faith” as revealed in *Time*, and the fact that it continued for 50 years. I personally believe it continued for 48 years, and not 50 as stated in *Time*.

Her first letter mentioning the Dark Night was written in March 18, 1953, to Archbishop Perrier, who was the Archbishop of Calcutta from 1924 to 1960. The sentence concerned is the following:

*It has been like this more or less from the time I started “the work.”*

In August 16, 1948, she left the Loretto convent where she had lived for 20 years and started the “work” mentioned above, that is, the work revealed to her by God on September 10, 1946, and in January 13, 1947, she for the first time communicated her revelation to Archbishop Perrier, a revelation wherein God had plainly ordered her to establish the religious congregation of the Missionaries of Charity. In that letter she referred to this new vocation as the “call,” and to the apostolate of the Missionaries of Charity as the “work.”

Mother Teresa also wrote as follows to Fr. Joseph Neuner SJ, who became her spiritual director after she participated in a retreat he conducted in April 1961.

---

256 Fr. Edward Le Joly SJ who was one of Mother Teresa’s biographers wrote as follows in his book published in 1983 about Mother Teresa’s dark night of the soul.

“Mother has personally experienced that the Lord purifies us interiorly, in a subtle manner, depriving us of all spiritual consolations. Every loving soul must expect at times to be tried and deprived of all sensible consolation, of every feeling of God's sacred presence, as it is made to pass through the tunnel of the dark night. In that noche oscura, as St. John of the Cross calls it, that Dark Night known by all mystics and many others, the marriage between God and the soul is being prepared.”


257 In the words of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross, this is a state of emptiness one experiences while traveling along the road to union with God. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1996, p. 296.

258 He was born on September 22, 1875 and died on November 10, 1968. His term as Archbishop extended from 1924.6.23–1960.8.12


Now Father—since 49 or 50 this terrible sense of loss—this untold darkness—this continual longing for God—which gives me that pain deep down in my heart.²⁶¹

This letter reveals that her Dark Night ordeal commenced in 1949 when she initiated her work in the slums and continued until 1997, forming a total of 48 years. When proceedings for her beatification began in 1999, Fr. Neuner was appointed her ‘censor theologicus,’ and his official task lay in inspecting her writings, such as her letters, instructions, and so on. In his brief autobiography entitled Memories of my Life, he states that by the time she sent her activity report to Archbishop Perrier on February 28, 1949 her Dark Night had already begun,²⁶² as may be seen in the following passage.

February 28—Today, my God, what tortures of loneliness! I wonder how long my heart will suffer this. Tears rolled and rolled. Everyone sees my weakness. My God give me courage now to fight self and tempter. Let me not draw back from the Sacrifice I have made of my free choice and conviction. Immaculate Heart of my Mother; have pity on Thy poor child. For love of Thee I want to live and die a Missionary of Charity.²⁶³

February 28, 1949, was the day she shifted her residence from the convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor who ran a nursing home named St. Joseph’s Home, to the house of Alfred and Michael Gomes, and this was just two months after she had begun her apostolic work in the slums. From the very beginning she toiled as a Missionary of Charity, heedless of the fact that none had as yet joined her, and judging by her letters, reports, and other testimonies, her Dark Night ordeal began in 1949 and did not cease until her death in 1997.

Psychology of the Dark Night

What I seek to show here is that the Dark Night differs from other psychological ailments such as depression, unease, inner conflicts and so on, and that in the case of Mother Teresa too it persisted with no links whatever to normal human issues, such as success or failure. In Mother Teresa. Come Be My Light, there are 98

²⁶³ Kudo Hiromi and Veliath Cyril, Senkyoshi Maza Teresa no Shogai—Sukopie kara Karukatta he, Tokyo, Sophia University Press, 2007, p.159
letters wherein she seeks guidance regarding the Dark Night, and in these letters I noticed that certain words and expressions are repeatedly used. I have presented them as follows.

**Darkness, Emptiness, Loneliness, Longing, Spiritual Dryness, Pain and Suffering, Disposal, Aloneness, Coldness, Hopeless, Agony of Desolation, Unwanted, No Faith, No Zeal, Multitude of Pain, Tunnel, Abandonment, Absence of God, Tortures of Hell**

The most frequently used expression was Darkness, and this was followed by emptiness, loneliness, longing, and spiritual dryness. On scrutinizing them, we see that it was about Darkness and its associated pain that Mother persistently dealt with in her letters. The article in *Time* stated that Dr. Richard Gottlieb of the Psychoanalytic Society and Institute analyzed her writings, and concluded that her letters were full of inner conflict about her accomplishments. As I stated earlier, in February 28, 1949 she sent a report of her activities to Archbishop Perrier. This, according to Fr. Neuner was the time her Dark Night began, a period when she worked alone. Having received permission for Exclaustration she no longer lived in the Loretto convent, but she had yet to show something by way of accomplishment to her superiors. I personally believe the content of the report reveals the anxiety she had with regard to the future, and yet, on comparing it with the absolute trust in God’s plan that shines forth in her earlier letters, it seems as though she had undergone an abrupt personality change.

On October 7, 1950, the Missionaries of Charity were established as a diocesan congregation, and in 1953, the year she wrote to Archbishop Perrier mentioning for the first time her Dark Night, the sisters took their first vows. This was also the year when she herself in accordance with the congregational rules pronounced her final vows, after which, she shifted along with 26 other sisters to the Mother Teresa House, which is now the congregational headquarters. In 1952 she opened her first institution named Nirmal Hriday or the home for dying destitutes, but despite all this, the fact is that by 1953, neither she nor her sisters had really much to show by way of accomplishments.

In other words, her Dark Night of 1949 is not to be explained away as merely a psychological state of unease or inner conflict. Rather, it was a condition that struck her suddenly, like a bolt from the blue. Sister Nirmala, who has served as Superior General of the congregation since 1997, made the following comment in 2007 in a

---

264 Rome recognized it as an international religious congregation on February 1, 1965.
television interview on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Mother Teresa’s death, while speaking to Colleen Carroll Campbell of the EWTN Global Catholic Network in Los Angeles, in a program entitled *Faith and Culture*.

“She used to teach us that the very next day you join you may suddenly feel everything is lies, nonsense, and empty. That moment just tell Jesus, ‘cut me to pieces, but every piece is yours.’ But we did not know what she was going through until her letter was made public.”

That is to say, her Dark Night was an unforeseen experience that arose suddenly in 1949. It came in precisely the same manner as the earlier message from God calling her to her Second Vocation, while she traveled by train to Darjeeling in September 10, 1946. This call to enter the Dark Night was another abrupt summons, and having answered it she continued to remain in that state until her death, a period that extended for 48 years.

**The Dark Night Under the Sway of the Divine Will**

In a vocation, if we say that God is in total control, then, obviously the call that Mother received to enter Dark Night was also something that transcended her will, a force unrelated to her personal desires. For example, on September 22, 1979, exactly 80 days prior to her reception of the Nobel Prize, she wrote as follows in a letter to Fr. Michael Van Peet SCJ.265

*As for me—the silence and the emptiness is so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear—the tongue moves but does not speak.*266

In his *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, St. John of the Cross267, quoting the first letter to the Corinthians and Isaiah 64, declares as follows,

“However, as it is written, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Cor. 2:9, Isaiah

---

265 (1924 –). Since her meeting with him in Rome in 1975 he was one of the priests she consulted with reference to her Dark Night experiences.
267 1542-1591
64:4). But, manifestly, the perfect union in this life through grace and love demands that he live in darkness to all the objects of sight, hearing, imagination, and everything comprehensible to the heart, that is, to the soul.”

On reading the above passage one cannot help but feel that God was preparing Mother Teresa for the reception of the Nobel Peace Prize, by depriving her of the power of her senses. Also, one observes that her Dark Night proceeded unchanged even when miracles related to her occurred, for during her lifetime she was indeed witness to numerous miracles. A notable miracle occurred in Beirut in 1982, when she engineered a ceasefire and surprised the entire world. Here, as though in answer to her prayer a violent battle came to an abrupt stop, and during the time available she managed to rescue 38 children suffering from cerebral palsy, who had been left behind in an institution. Later in a letter to her sisters, she described the incident as follows,

We have just left Beirut. — It has been continual action of God loving us and His people — by continual love action in tenderness and love. — I brought a big Easter candle with the image of Our Lady with child on it. — On Thursday the bombing was terrible — I lit the candle that evening 4 p.m. — At 5 p.m. all stopped all of a sudden. — Since then there is perfect quiet. — We went over and brought 38 crippled and mental children.268

This ceasefire and rescue were shown in a documentary broadcast in 1986, and entitled Mother Teresa.269 Despite such miracles she continued to remain in the Dark Night, a state where God was invisible to her. The article in Time describes this baffling mental situation as being “…a bit like a person who believes she can’t walk, winning the Olympic hundred meters.” Yet, since it was a state unrelated to human acts and moods and under the total control of God, it is not surprising that it persisted despite her reception of the Nobel Prize, and the occurrence of the miracle at Beirut.

There was an occasion when she was released from the Dark Night, a fact that shows that it was a state controlled by the Divine. In October 9, 1958, a memorial Mass was offered in the cathedral at Calcutta for the soul of his holiness the late Pope Pius XII.270 After the service, Mother Teresa in a letter to Archbishop Perrier dated

269 Ann & Jeanette Petrie, 1986
270 He was Pope from 1939 to 1958
November 7, remarked,

You will be happy to hear the day you offered your Holy Mass for our Holy Father’s soul in Cathedral — I prayed to him for a proof that God is pleased with the Society. There & then disappeared that long darkness, that pain of loss — of loneliness — of that strange suffering of ten years.  

It was Pope Pius XII who had granted official recognition to her congregation in 1950. She believed that this liberation from the Dark Night was not just his answer to her prayer, but rather, proof that God had blessed her congregation. Even so, nine days later on November 16 she sent the following letter to the Archbishop, stating that she had re-entered the dark tunnel,

Our Lord thought it better for me to be in the tunnel.  

God had once again drawn her into the Dark Night, a state wherein he was concealed from her. From then on until the time of her death she was denied the strength to break out of it, for it was in truth a mystical state, directed solely by God.

The Spiritual Directors

Mother Teresa kept her Dark Night experience hidden from all the nuns, and neither did she reveal the details to any of the priests when the male branch of the Missionaries of Charity was formed in 1984. However, there were four Jesuit priests in whom she did confide, and on sorting out her personal letters from the total presented in Mother Teresa. Come be my Light, I noticed that 155 out of 276 letters were written to those Jesuits, which works out to 56% of the whole.

Letters dealing with the Dark Night are 98 out of 276, and of these, 76 were written to those Jesuits, seeking their counsel regarding her trauma. In other words, 74% of her letters dealing with the Dark Night were written to them, and of the four Jesuits I speak of here, three were recipients of a total of 70 of those letters. Another point to be noted is that in the course of the twenty years since her Dark Night began, these same Jesuits continued as her spiritual directors. It was they who provided her with vital guidance and support and advised her as to the road she needed to take during the initial stages of the crisis, after it suddenly overcame her.

When I classified the Dark Night letters with reference to the four Jesuits, I noticed that when her first spiritual director died a second took his place, and when this second Jesuit’s workload increased due to his sudden appointment as Archbishop and later Cardinal, a third assisted him. Indeed, the entire process smacks of a relay directed by God, with the baton being passed from one Jesuit to another at appropriate times, so as never to abandon her to the terrors of the Dark Night.

On September 10, 1946, Mother Teresa received a revelation from God concerning her Second Vocation, and in realizing this revelation she received the active support of those four Jesuits, namely Fr. Julian Henry, Fr. Celeste Van Exem, Archbishop Perrier, and Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy. The role of these men proved vital not merely in her leaving the Loretto congregation and working on her own in the slums, but more so in her founding of the Missionaries of Charity, for without their assistance I believe it would never have come about. We now know that three of them, namely Fr. Van Exem, Archbishop Perrier, and Cardinal Picachy, sustained her spiritually throughout her Dark Night. The ordeal began in 1949, which is a year before her congregation received sanction. I believe the Dark Night experience was pre-planned by the Almighty when he led her to this Second Vocation, and in preparation for this supplementary trial he granted her the following revelation:

“I brought you here to be under the immediate care of your spiritual father who will train you in the ways of my love and so prepare you to do my will. Trust him completely and without any fear. Obey him in every detail, you shall not be deceived if you obey for he belong to me completely. —I shall let you know my will through him.”

Fr. Van Exem on receiving news of this revelation communicated it to Archbishop Perrier, in a letter dated August 8, 1947. That is to say, God handpicked the person who was to communicate his revelation to her, and arranged for him to be on hand when needed. In other words, the summons to enter the Dark Night was

---

273 1901-1979
274 1908-1993
275 He was born on August 7, 1916, and died on November 29, 1922. His term as Archbishop was from 1969.5.29–1986.4.5, and his term as Cardinal was from 1976.5.24–1992.11.29.
The support that Mother received from these Jesuits is a subject I have dealt with in the second chapter of two of my books, namely, Mother Teresa. A Saint from Skopje, and The Life and Work of Blessed Mother Teresa
preordained by God, and lest ‘she be deceived’ and become unaware of the decision to take, he arranged for an appropriate spiritual director to stay by her side.

**Ten Years of Active Purification**

Here I wish to show how Mother Teresa responded to the call of the Dark Night with the support of her three spiritual directors, namely Fr. Van Exem, Archbishop Perrier, and Cardinal Picachy, and I do so with reference to the Dark Night experience of St. John of the Cross, through an analysis of the concept of Active Purification.

In his well-known work *The Dark Night*, St. John of the Cross describes the ordeal as a spiritual exercise, leading to the perfection of union with God. In an earlier work entitled *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* he states,

“… my help in all that, with God’s favor, I shall say, will be Sacred Scripture, at least in the most important matters, or those which are difficult to understand. Taking Scripture as our guide we do not err, since the Holy Ghost speaks to us through it.”

To get a better grasp of the words, “the most important matters, or those which are difficult to understand,” I meticulously checked both *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night*, and listed the names of all individuals and passages that have been cited from the Bible. On so doing I found that *The Dark Night* had a total of 168 Biblical citations, 47 of which were from the Book of Psalms. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* being a larger work had 388 Biblical citations, but here too the Book of Psalms with 49 citations was the one most quoted.

Many think the trauma of the Dark Night resembles the trials of Job. The fact however is that only 13 quotations from the Book of Job are to be found in *The Dark Night*, while in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Job has been quoted just 6 times. David with 40 citations is the person who appears most often in *The Dark Night*, and following him is Job with 16 citations, which is less than half. In *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* however David makes 46 appearances, and Job only five. These facts tell us that in describing his concept of the Dark Night the image St. John had uppermost in mind was not so much Job as David. In *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, St. Paul with 68 citations is

---


278 Ibid, p.70.
the individual most often quoted, while David with 46 citations comes second.

However, if we were to take these works together and verify the passages and individuals quoted from the Bible collectively, we would see that King David is the figure most often introduced by St. John of the Cross, and the scripture he quotes from and uses the most is the Book of Psalms.

Among saints who are known to have had an experience of the Dark Night, those who became founders of religious congregations tend to be conspicuous, because they like St. Paul and King David were people of authority. The Dark Night seems to be a spiritual exercise meant for those who directly receive mystical revelations from God, and a special form of training in ‘governance of the soul’ for those who are called to be leaders and guides of many. If I may compare it to the training of a samurai in the martial arts, I would say that it is a special training granted by God to those chosen samurai, whom he has decided to promote to the rank of general.

St. John of the Cross states that there are two levels to this training we call the Dark Night. The first is the stage of Active Purification, where the soul is cleansed and purified of its imperfections. Active Purification is compared to the struggle between Michael and the dragon in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. Here, “with each of its heads, the beast wars against one of these degrees, and by so doing it wages battle with the soul in each of these mansions.” Active Purification we may say is a silent and independent training of the individual in asceticism, while simultaneously waging a fierce battle with the beast where its seven heads are cut away.

However, there are certain samurai who conclude their training at this level, for in the words of St. John, “But He does not do so in order to lead them to the life of the spirit, which is contemplation. For God does not bring to contemplation all those who purposely exercise themselves in the way of the spirit, nor even half. Why? He best knows.” In the case of these samurai, what is sought is merely their individual spiritual progress, for they were not expected to actually engage in battle as generals.

After this stage has ended, the second training, namely passive purification, begins. This purification is meant only for those samurai who have been specially chosen, and they receive here the divine healing of God. In other words, God grants the samurai grace to overcome faults against which he finds himself utterly helpless and

---

279 Ibid p. 299
280 Ibid p. 135
281 Ibid, p. 316
282 Ibid, p. 303
decks him with his own suit of armor, for as the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians states, “Equipped with faith and love for our breast-plate, and the hope of salvation for our helmet” (1 Thess. 5:8). St. John of the Cross specially uses here the word “disguised,” indicating that the samurai will be transformed into an image of God his preceptor, and in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* he calls this the “transformation of the soul.” At this stage, what is expected of the samurai is nothing more than to make an offering of himself to God, his preceptor. In other words, Active Purification is union with God and the final stage on the road to perfection, what St. Teresa of Lisieux compares to a lift or an elevator. A samurai who arrives at this stage is a general united to God, with a duty to fight and save people from sin. This battle is what we call the Passion of the Lord.

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange OP, who is referred to as the “Sacred Monster of Thomism,” points out the facet of remorse in the suffering that attends this union with God. With reference to this he writes, “This trial was meant chiefly to repair the sins of the world.” It may be noted that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange served as guide to his holiness Pope John Paul II when he wrote his doctoral thesis, entitled, *The Meaning of Faith in the Writings of St John of the Cross*. St. John of the Cross too declares in his *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, “These souls, consequently, perform only fitting and reasonable works, and none that are not so,” for uniting themselves with the Passion of the Lord they shed their blood along with him. So, to put it briefly, the mission of those who have attained perfection would be as follows: Like David they are to be chosen as leaders, and they are to be trained in the governance of souls through an experience of the Dark Night.

The Dark Night of Mother Teresa began in 1949, but she realized its significance only at the Retreat preached by Cardinal Picachy in 1959, that is, after a gap of ten years. If we were to consider these ten years as her period of Active Purification, it would mean that the two spiritual directors I shall speak of hereafter, namely Fr. Celeste Van Exem and Archbishop Perrier, together escorted her during this
phase, and finally handed over the baton to Cardinal Picachy.

Fr. Celeste Van Exem—Mother Teresa’s lifelong Spiritual Director

In *Mother Teresa. Come Be My Light*, there are only three letters of Mother Teresa to Fr. Van Exem, and I personally find this baffling. Hence, I first like to describe the relationship that existed between Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem, and then try to see why only three of her letters to her lifelong spiritual director remain with us today.

From December 1990 to the end of January 1991, and again from November 1992 to January 1993, I made daily visits to the room of Fr. Van Exem, who by then was confined to his bed. This works out to roughly five months, and in the course of these visits I was blessed to discuss with him a variety of issues. I recall occasions when he would pass on to me letters to be handed over to Mother Teresa, and Mother too would time and again drop by with her sisters to consult him on various matters. That is to say, Fr. Van Exem for a lifetime served as her spiritual director, and when I was in his room, I recall seeing on a shelf a pile of letters and documents that had reportedly been sent by her.

As mentioned in an earlier section Fr. Celeste Van Exem was born on October 4, 1908, in Flanders in Belgium, and on September 3, 1927, he joined the Society of Jesus at the age of eighteen. Later, declining a proposal by his superiors to occupy a teaching position at the Catholic University of Louvain he expressed a wish to go to India as a missionary, since he felt convinced that a special mission awaited him there.

In October 1938 he landed in India at the age of thirty, and lectured on Islamic subjects at St. Xavier’s College in Calcutta. In 1946 Mother Teresa returned to Calcutta after an eight days retreat in Darjeeling, and since he at the time was spiritual director to the Loretto sisters, she silently handed him a resumé describing in detail the revelations she received from God regarding her Second Vocation.

Calcutta at that time was the scene of violent riots between Hindus and Muslims in what is now known as ‘the great Calcutta killings,’ and it was a month and a half after this event that Mother Teresa approached Fr. Van Exem, with her plan of leaving the convent and working in the slums. “Didn’t you think it was a reckless thing to do?” I asked. To this he replied, “I felt at once that it was the will of God and trusted her. Since she was in general a self-effacing nun, I sensed at once that it was not her will at work, but God’s." Fr. Van Exem believed that realizing this Second Vocation of hers, was the special mission that God had in store for him in India.

In January 1947, Fr. Van Exem spoke to Archbishop Perrier the Catholic
primate of Calcutta regarding the revelation granted to Mother Teresa, and there, the young priest of 38 sought to coax his senior aged 72 with the words, “this is undeniably the will of God, and even an Archbishop cannot change that.” He also counseled Mother Teresa to write to the Archbishop, and so on January 13, 1947, she sent her first letter to Archbishop Perrier. That is to say, Fr. Van Exem was the first Jesuit she consulted on receiving the revelation, and later as co-founder of the Missionaries of Charity he was involved in drafting their constitution. This is not to be wondered at, because her trust in him was firm to the very end.

**Burning of the Documents of 45 Years**

On hearing that all the letters of Mother Teresa to Fr. Van Exem had been burned, I was stunned. The reports she had written from the time she started her activity on December 25, 1948 until June 13, 1949, had all been given to him. This was done on the understanding that their contents would subsequently be communicated to Archbishop Perrier, and that later they would be bound together as a book to be preserved by both Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem. Later however Mother Teresa expressed a wish to have the letters returned, and in a letter to the Archbishop dated January 30, 1957, she expressed her reasons for doing so:

> I want the work to remain only His. When the beginning will be known people will think more of me, and less of Jesus.²⁹¹

She doubtless intended burning those letters, but Fr. Van Exem refused to part with them. Navin Chawla describes this as a “disagreement between Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem over the return of the letters,” and explains it as having arisen because, “He wished to keep them to record the genesis of her congregation.”²⁹² However, (as I stated earlier) I personally believe Fr. Van Exem had another aim in mind. Prior to his death, I recall his showing me the file containing the activity reports and letters of Mother Teresa and saying with a smile, “I am preserving these documents because they will definitely come in useful in the future when investigations are carried out in order

---

²⁹⁰ Mr. Navin Chawla introduces the whole record. Although books and newspaper articles exist that partly deal with the matter, yet Mr. Navin Chawla's book has presented the most details. I regret that when I obtained the whole record from Fr. Van Exem, I took notes only of the portions I required. Confer Navin Chawla, *Mother Teresa*, New Delhi, Gulmohur Press, 1992.


to make Mother Teresa a saint. She will surely become a saint you know. Burning them is out of the question.” Ultimately though Archbishop Perrier refused to return the documents and letters. He ordered instead that they be bound into books, with a copy each to be given to her and to Fr. Van Exem. In all probability those documents and letters contained quite a few references to her Dark Night experience.

On March 19, 1990, my mother and I were baptized at the Mother House in Calcutta, and on April 26, 2008, Fr. Noel MC who at the time had instructed us in the Catholic doctrine, visited Japan in order to preach a retreat. Seizing this opportunity, I asked him about the unpublished letters in the room of Fr. Van Exem, and he replied that Fr. Van Exem had finally yielded to her requests and sent her the documents all packed in trunks, and that she on receiving them had promptly consigned them to flames. It was four years before her death that I saw her letters in Fr. Van Exem’s room in St. Xavier’s College, but sad to say, six years prior to her beatification and the commencement of the process of her canonization, they were reduced to ashes.

On March 12, 1993, a letter by Fr. Van Exem to Archbishop Henry Sebastian D’souza of Calcutta contained the following remarks,

“So I sent the trunks of letters to Mother but in a long letter I explained to her that some of the letters did not belong to her but to her Congregation. The copy-book of Mother remained with me till I sent it to Your Grace. Today I send back the documents I received from you.”

Notwithstanding the ‘long letter’ mentioned above, Mother Teresa eventually set fire to the contents of the trunk. However, knowing well that she might do so, Fr. Van Exem selected and arranged in advance letters and documents addressed to the Archbishop and unrelated to himself, and sent copies of reports and other vital documents to the Archbishop’s residence. He moreover informed the Archbishop that his predecessors, rather than yielding to her request to return her letters had sought to preserve them, and urged him to do the same. In fact, Mother Teresa had written often to both Archbishop Perrier and Archbishop Picachy (who later became a Cardinal) requesting the return of her letters, but since letters to the Archbishop’s residence were generally conserved in the diocesan archives, permission to return them was not easily granted. Indeed, it seems as though Archbishop Perrier, Cardinal Picachy, and Fr. Van

\[293\] His term of office was from 1986.4.5 to 2002.4.2
Exem, knowing that her Dark Night experiences would prove valuable after her death as reference material with regard to her eventual beatification and canonization, actively sought to conserve them by persistently withholding their return.

Fr. Neuner who became her spiritual director after 1961, lived not in Calcutta but in Pune. It may have been on account of the distance that separated them, but in his case she just let the issue be and did not negotiate with him for the return of her letters.

Fr. Noel feels that had her letters to Fr. Van Exem survived, they might have exceeded in number those found in *Mother Teresa. Come be my Light*, which contains letters to a multitude of persons. Judging by the size of the file I saw, the letters conserved by Fr. Van Exem probably numbered around 6000. Her published letters number 276 in all, and of these, letters dealing with the issue of the Dark Night account for 98. If on the basis of this data we were to make a simple calculation, roughly 2100 of the letters conserved by F. Van Exem may have dealt with the Dark Night. Had those letters survived the enigma of her Dark Night would perhaps have found an easy solution, and yet, I feel their absence is no cause for regret.

It was indeed possible for Fr. Van Exem to send all the documents linked to Mother Teresa that he possessed to the Archbishop’s residence, and thereby have them carefully preserved. Despite refusing to return them for 45 years, at the fag end of his life he finally capitulated and returned them all. What may have been the reason for that? I believe the reason may be surmised from the answer he gave me when I asked him why he did not write a book on Mother Teresa. He said, “If I wrote a book it might become the sole authoritative work on her, and that is the reason why I do not write one.” In destroying those letters and documents, Fr. Van Exem merely sought to conceal the fact that of her spiritual directors, he alone had the longest rapport and exerted the greatest influence on her. Convinced that the letters and documents conserved in the diocesan archives would serve as adequate evidence for the inquiry that would accompany the process of her eventual beatification and canonization, he decided to return to Mother Teresa only the letters and documents that were directly linked to himself, and allowed her to destroy them. Mother Teresa’s object in destroying them was to make God the focus of attention rather than herself, and we see that Fr. Van Exem’s object in returning them to her, was the same. Indeed, the two greatly resembled each other in their modesty.

On September 20, six months after having returned the letters, Fr. Van Exem expired, but four days before his death he sent Mother Teresa the following letter, which was his last letter to her. This letter has been presented earlier, but I think it worthwhile
Dear Mother,

Tomorrow morning I shall say Holy Mass for the following intercessions:

1) That you may have no operation.
2) That you may be in China by the 7th October 1993.
3) That the Lord may take me and not you if that be His will. His will, not mine.

I am with you and the Sisters, all of them. There is a Calvary for every Christian. For you the way to Calvary is long. But Mary has met you on the road. You did not go up the hill; this is for later.

I adore the Blessed Sacrament, which, I am sure you have in your room. Pray for me and for all my companions, especially the companions of Jesus with whom I am.

Yours sincerely in Our Lord

C. Van Exem, SJ

Fr. Van Exem’s prayer to the Lord to “take me and not you,” was promptly answered. Mother Teresa, who at the time was rather seriously ill began to show signs of recovery, while Fr. Van Exem, owing to his having made a voluntary offering of his life for her grew progressively worse, and ultimately died. In retrospect we see that what he offered her was not merely the pile of letters and documents of 45 years, but his very life as well.

---

### PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF MOTHER TERESA AND HER DARK NIGHT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF MOTHER TERESA</th>
<th>LETTERS TO ARCHBISHOP PERRIER</th>
<th>LETTERS TO CARDINAL LAWRENCE TREVOR-RICKCARTY</th>
<th>LETTERS TO FR. VAN EXEM, SJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946/3/10 She received a revelation from God while traveling by train.</td>
<td>1946 1 12</td>
<td>1946 3 3</td>
<td>1946 10 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 1 7</td>
<td>1947 3 7</td>
<td>1947 10 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 2 12</td>
<td>1947 6 5</td>
<td>1947 10 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 10 0</td>
<td>1948 10 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 11 3</td>
<td>1948 12 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 12 3</td>
<td>1948 1 20</td>
<td>1948 9 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 4 14</td>
<td>1948 5 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 6 19</td>
<td>1948 8 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 8 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The entire correspondence between Fr. Van Exem and Mother Teresa was burned. It is believed that those letters amounted to almost a trunkful, meaning that a large number of letters were burned. In particular, letters relating to the Dark Night and spiritual direction surpassed in number the letters she wrote to everyone else.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-50 The Beginning of Her Dark Night.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning of her Dark Night. Unable to understand this active purification of ten years that struck her so suddenly, she suffered greatly in her efforts to be released from it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-72 The formation of her religious congregation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952: The establishment of Nirmal Hriday (House of Dying)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 The first vows of the Sisters and her own Final Vows. This was the time she moved to the Mother House along with 35 other Sisters. It was during this period that the Indian Press Media began to take note of her activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958: The Pope's Visit Spanish version:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958: 11.7-15.9 was only during the period of 9 days that she was free of the torments of the Dark Night.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Letters to Archbishop Perrier</td>
<td>Letters to Cardinal Lawrence</td>
<td>Letters to Fr. Joseph Nerger, S.J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4, 12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>4, 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>5, 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>9, 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>9, 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>9, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>9, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>9, 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>10, 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>10, 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>10, 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>10, 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>10, 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>10, 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>10, 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>10, 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>10, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>10, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>10, 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>10, 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>10, 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>10, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>10, 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>10, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>10, 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>10, 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>10, 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>10, 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>10, 25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>10, 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>10, 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>10, 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>10, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>10, 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Principal Events in the Life of Mother Teresa*

- **Dark Night:** She also attained a realization of the Dark Night and underwent a Passive Purification of 10 years, before she realized that her own Dark Night was similar to that experienced by St. John of the Cross.

- **1982:** She received the Padma Shri award from the Indian government.
### Principal Events in the Life of Mother Teresa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Letters to Archbishop</th>
<th>Letters to Cardinal Lawrence</th>
<th>Letters to Fr. Joseph Meurer, SJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark Night, 1950-1960</td>
<td>1960: 1, 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
<td>1960: 1, 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
<td>1960: 1, 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having entered the Way of Perfection; she viewed her 28 years of trials as a form of preparation. Feeling that her own Dark Night was united to that experienced by Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, she began to accept her trials as a divine mission.</td>
<td>1950: 1, 8, 10, 11</td>
<td>1950: 1, 8, 10, 11</td>
<td>1950: 1, 8, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1971 She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize</td>
<td>1970: 1, 11</td>
<td>1970: 1, 11</td>
<td>1970: 1, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 She received the Bharat Ratna or &quot;Jewel of India&quot; award, the highest award of the Indian government</td>
<td>1985: 1, 11</td>
<td>1985: 1, 11</td>
<td>1985: 1, 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Her published letters amounted to 276 in number, and of these 156 letters or 56% of the total were letters addressed to Jesuits. Letters concerning her Dark Night experience amounted to 90, and of these 72, or 74%, of the total were addressed to Jesuits.

The number of letters is 276, which is 26% of the total number, and of these, 156 letters or 56% were written to Jesuits. 72 of these letters or 26% concern the Dark Night of Mother Teresa. This constitutes 26% of all the letters she wrote concerning the Dark Night.
Appendix 1
God’s Plan and Mine

Since my mind was haunted by the possibility that God’s plan for me might be different from what I myself wanted, I found that I could not leave myself entirely in his hands. After my baptism in the Mother House on March 19, 1990, every time I went back to Kolkata Mother Teresa would asked me, “When will you be coming?” At that time it seemed as though my vocation to become a nun and a member of the Missionaries of Charity was certain. Then, pointing at the blue lines of her sari she would say, “I’m praying for you to get this blue pad.” After our confirmation on January 18, 1991, when she again asked me “When will you join us?” I replied, “Mother, I would not be able to wake up at 4:30 in the morning everyday as you and your Sisters do.”

Community life in the convent and the service of the poor in an institution were no problem for me. It was the greatest joy for me to pray and labor with the Sisters. During the time I stayed in Kolkata, I had no trouble waking up at 5:00 AM every morning and attending Mass with Mother and her Sisters, but I was afraid that if I had to do it for the rest of my life, it might eventually become a problem.

Then, Mother grasped my hand and said, “It is Jesus who will give you the grace! Nothing is impossible for God.” I realized then that even if I had faults, God would certainly help me. Moreover, he may even make use of my faults. From that time on I started praying seriously for my religious vocation. Mother Teresa had once said, “God speaks in the silence of your heart.” So I visited the Carmel convent and the Missionaries of Charity Contemplatives every day after work, and asked God for directions. Each time I took along some material help for the Contemplatives, since they were separated from the world and could not get regular assistance like the Active congregations. However, every night when I returned from the convent of the Contemplatives Mother would expectantly ask, “Has Jesus spoken to you?” On one occasion I replied, “He needs wheelchairs for the Carmelites, and it appears as though he wants me to bring them from Japan. Perhaps he also wants me to repair St. John’s Church and the cemetery of the Contemplatives.” On hearing this she encouraged my work for the Contemplatives, and helped me with the import negotiations, the necessary official procedures, and so on. However, she also said to me with regret, “I pray so
much for your religious vocation. Why is it so?” On hearing this I felt very sad and answered, “Please ask him, not me.”

Perhaps with regard to my religious vocation, the ideas of Mother Teresa were not the same as those of God.
Appendix 2

The Carmelite Sisters and myself

The Carmel convent in Kolkata lies about 20 minutes by foot from the Mother House, and it is located at the back of St. Xavier’s College and the Jesuit residence. According to Sr. Anne Marie OCD, the superior of the Carmelite Sisters when Fr. Van Exem created the constitutions for Mother Teresa’s congregation, Mother had intended to adopt the spirituality and daily schedule of the Carmelites. I was told that she visited their convent before her passing away, and requested them to support her Sisters’ with their spiritual guidance after her death.

The relationship between the Carmel convent and myself started in 1991, when as I mentioned earlier I was pondering becoming a Religious, in accordance with the wishes of both Mother Teresa and Fr. Van Exem. I therefore often visited the Carmel convent, in order to receive religious instructions from Sr. Anne Marie.

In 1992 I overheard a Sister saying, “if there were two wheelchairs for that old Sister, she will be saved.” I thereupon made arrangements to send from Japan two used wheelchairs donated by the nursing home of the Franciscan missionaries, but sad to say the wheelchairs got entangled in the complex customs procedures at the Calcutta airport, and were hence not delivered. Although I negotiated for over a month the wheelchairs were not released, and this made me sad. At that time Mother Teresa came to my rescue. She promptly got them by calling up and speaking to the customs officer, and by sending him a personal statement. She thus obtained special permission to receive the chairs, and having received them she asked me to take them to the Carmel convent. She also added other useful articles for the Sisters such as edible oils and biscuits that she loaded into the car, and finally she even decided to come along with us on the visit. The Carmel Sisters were happy with Mother’s visit, and 13 Sisters who generally never come out in public, came out to meet her and all of us. At that time Mother told us that she had a special respect for the spirituality of the Carmel order.

After that incident I prayed daily for my vocation in the Missionaries of Charity Contemplatives, on the recommendation of Mother Teresa. The present Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity, namely Sr. Nirmala MC, happened to be the superior of the Contemplatives when I used to visit them. One day I again chanced to overhear the conversation of some Sisters, where one of them said, “the
church is very poor and restoration is impossible. The cemetery is also desolate.” On hearing this I decided to pay the expenses of repairing St. John’s Church and the cemetery that adjoined the residence of the Contemplatives, and with this in mind I visited the parish priest. Since he was about to be changed and his successor had not yet been named, he took me to the Archbishop’s house. Archbishop Henry accepted my proposal and computed the expenses involved in repairing the Church and beautifying the cemetery, and soon the Church and cemetery were transformed into a lovely garden, with three years support. We also hired a poor family who used to live in the basement of the church to work as gardeners, and taking advantage of the geographical location of the church, since it was in front of the station, we installed a signboard advertisement for soft drinks on the wall outside, a proposal of the parish priest. He thereby succeeded in using the money obtained from this advertisement for the maintenance and administrative expenses of the church. Three years later, both the Church and cemetery became economically independent.

The cemetery of Mother Teresa’s Sisters and that of the Jesuits are located in this cemetery of St. John’s Church. Mother Teresa herself wished to be buried there, although after her death, considering the safety of her body she was buried inside the Mother House. Sr. Agnes MC was the first sister to be buried there, as also Fr. Van Exem and other Jesuits. Since the grave of a Jesuit priest had broken down, I obtained permission from the Society of Jesus through the Archbishop of Kolkata, and got it repaired. All these incidents made me feel that perhaps my vocation was to serve God by serving the religious of the world in some material way.
Appendix 3
My first meeting with Mother Teresa

My mother and I visited the Mother House for the first time in October 1988. At that time Mother Teresa said to us, “It is good for your mother and you come to India together, but what has happened to your father?” I was aware that Mother usually does not ask such questions of parents and children who come to see her, and so I thought perhaps she suspected what our trouble was. My father had left home and our family was broken, and that was the reason why I decided to travel to India. I did not reveal my troubles to anyone and made efforts to look like a happy tourist, but I am certain she suspected that something was not okay about me. Experienced caseworkers and counselors have a sensitivity for discovering the core of a client’s problem, but it is very difficult to accurately perceive the hidden cause, that which even clients are not aware of. I was therefore greatly astonished at her question, and since it touched a raw nerve in me I began to cry. Mother Teresa then held me and said, “Whenever you have suffering in your life, come back to the Mother House. It is your own house now.”

In those days, I was a fourth year student of Japan Women’s University in the Faculty of Humanities and Department of Social Welfare, but I personally had no plans of becoming a social worker myself. However, at these words of Mother Teresa I promptly decided my future. I thought that since the Mother House had now become my home, I should convert myself into a person suitable for this home. I decided to enter the graduate school and continue my studies in social welfare, in order to become a social worker like Mother Teresa. (At that time, I thought of Mother as an ideal social worker). After that my mother and I returned to the Mother House every year, and participated in volunteer activities along with the Sisters.

Mother Teresa used to meet many people, and at that time more than 1000 adult patients lived in her institutions in Kolkata. In the case of patients whom she interviewed, she clearly memorized their names and the details of their case, especially those in a serious condition. However, she had a tendency to promptly forget the names of people in whom she did not perceive any particular problem, and so she sometimes even forgot the names of the Sisters who lived with her. This however was not the case
with regard to those in trouble. For example, on one occasion she asked me, “How is
Konica who moved from Prem Dan to Kalighat? I spoke to her and asked her intention
before moving.” Since she was worried about her patients, I answered her that the
patient in question was in a critical state at the moment. From this, I once again felt that
she had a sense for detecting a patient’s problems. Not only the names of patients, she
memorized even the names of the patient’s children, even of those who had passed
away.
Appendix 4
Mother Teresa’s letter to Archbishop Perrier

St. Mary’s Convent
13th Jan. 47

Your Grace,

From last September strange thoughts and desires have been filling my heart. They got stronger and clearer during the 8 days retreat I made in Darjeeling. On coming here I told Fr. Van Exem everything. I showed him the few notes I had written during the retreat. He told me he thought it was God’s inspiration, but to pray and remain silent over it. I kept on telling him whatever passed in my soul in thoughts and desires. Then yesterday he wrote this, “I cannot prevent you from talking or writing to His Grace. You will write to His Grace as a daughter to her father, in perfect trust and sincerity, without any fear or anxiety, telling him how it all went, adding that you talked to me and that now I think I cannot in conscience prevent you from exposing everything to him.”

Before I begin I want to tell you that at one word from Your Grace, I am ready never to consider again any of those strange thoughts, which have been coming continually.

During the year very often I have been longing to be all for Jesus and to make other souls, especially Indian, come and love Him fervently, to identify myself with Indian girls completely and so love Him as He has never been loved before. I thought [this] was one of my many mad desires. I read the life of St. M. Cabrini. She did so much for the Americans because she became one of them. Why can’t I do in India what she did for America? She did not wait for souls to come to her. She went to them with her zealous workers. Why can’t I do the same for Him here? There are so many souls—pure, holy—who are longing to give themselves only to God. European congregations are too rich for them; they get more than they give. “Wouldst Thou not help? How can I? I have been and am very happy as a Loretto Nun. To leave that what I love and expose myself to new labors and sufferings which will be great, to be the laughing stock of so many, especially religious, to cling and choose deliberately the
hard things of an Indian life, to loneliness and ignominy, to uncertainty — and all because Jesus wants it, because something is calling me to leave all and gather the few to live His life, to do His work in India. These thoughts were a cause of much suffering, but the voice kept on saying, “Wilt Thou refuse?”

One day at Holy Communion I heard the same voice very distinctly: “I want Indian nuns, victims of my love, who would be Mary and Martha, who would be so very united to me as to radiate my love on souls. I want free nuns covered with my poverty of the Cross. I want obedient nuns covered with my obedience of the Cross. I want full of love nuns covered with the charity of the Cross. Wilt thou refuse to do this for me?”

On another day: “You have become my Spouse for my Love. You have come to India for Me. The thirst you had for souls brought you so far. Are you afraid to take one more step for your Spouse, for me, for souls? Is your generosity grown cold? Am I a second to you? You did not die for souls. That is why you don’t care what happens to them. Your heart was never drowned in sorrow as was My Mother’s. We both gave our all for souls and you? You are afraid that you will lose your vocation, you will become secular, you will be wanting in perseverance. Nay, your vocation is to love and suffer and save souls and by taking this step you will fulfill my Heart’s desire for you. That is your vocation. You will dress in simple Indian clothes or rather like My Mother dressed, simple and poor. Your present habit is holy because it is my symbol, your sari will become holy because it will be my symbol.”

I tried to persuade Our Lord that I would try to become a very fervent holy Loretto Nun, a real Victim here in this vocation, but the answer came very clear again. “I want Indian Missionary Sisters of Charity, who would be My fire of love amongst the very poor, the sick, the dying, the little street children. The poor I want you to bring to me and the Sisters that would offer their lives as victims of my love would bring these souls to Me. You are, I know, the most incapable person, weak and sinful, but just because you are that, I want to use you for my Glory! Wilt Thou refuse!”

These words, or rather, this voice frightened me. The thought of eating, sleeping, living like the Indians filled me with fear. I prayed long, I prayed so much, I asked Our Mother Mary to ask Jesus to remove all this from me. The more I prayed, the clearer grew the voice in my heart and so I prayed that He would do with me whatever He wanted. He asked me again and again.

Then once more the voice was very clear: “You have been always saying, ‘Do with me whatever you wish.’ Now I want to act. Let me do it, My little Spouse, My own
little one. Do not fear. I shall be with you always. You will suffer and you suffer now, but if you are my own little Spouse, the Spouse of the Crucified Jesus, you will have to bear these torments on your heart. Let me act. Refuse me not. Trust me lovingly, trust me blindly.”

“Little one, give me souls. Give me the souls of the poor little street children. How it hurts, if you only knew, to see these poor children soiled with sin. I long for the purity of their love. If you would only answer my call and bring me these souls! Draw them away from the hands of the evil one. If you only knew how many little ones fall into sin every day! There are convents with [a] number of nuns caring for the rich and well-to-do people, but for my very poor there is absolutely none. For them I long, them I love. Wilt Thou refuse?”

“Ask His Grace to give me this in thanksgiving for the twenty-five years of Grace I have given him”

This is what went on between Him and me during the days of much prayer. Now the whole thing stands clear before my eyes as follows:

“The Call”

To be an Indian: to live with them, like them, so as to get at the people’s heart. The congregation would start outside Calcutta, Cossipore, open, lonely place, or St. John’s Sealdah where the Sisters could have a real contemplative life in their novitiate, where they would complete one full year of true interior life and one in action. The Sisters are to cling to perfect poverty—Poverty of the Cross—nothing but God. So as not to have riches enter their heart, they would have nothing of the outside but they will keep up themselves with the labor of their hands—Franciscan poverty, Benedict’s labor.

In the congregation girls of any nationality should be taken but they must become Indian-minded, dress in simple clothes: a long, white, long-sleeved habit, light blue sari and a white veil, sandals, no stockings, a crucifix, girdle and rosary.

The Sisters should get a very full knowledge of the interior life from holy priests who would help them to become so united to God as to radiate Him when they join the mission field. They should become true Victims, no words, but in every sense of the word, Indian victims for India. Love should be the word, the fire that will make them live the life to its full. If the nuns are very poor they will be free to love only God, to serve Him only, to be only His. The two years in perfect solitude should make them think of the interior while they will be in the midst of the exterior.

So as to renew and keep up the spirit, the Sisters should spend one day in
every week in the house, the Mother house of the city when they are in the mission.

“The Work”

The Sisters’ work would be to go to the people, no boarding schools, but plenty of schools, free, up to class two only. In each parish, two Sisters would go, one for the sick and the dying, one for the school. If the numbers require, the pairs can increase. The Sisters would teach the little ones, help them have pure recreations and so keep them from the street and sin. The school should be only in the very poor places of the parish to get the children from the streets, to keep them for the poor parents who have to work. The one who will take care of the sick, she will assist the dying, do all the work for the sick, just as much if not more [than] what a person gets in a hospital, wash them and prepare the place for His coming. At the appointed time the Sisters will all meet at the same place from the different parishes and go home, where they would have the complete separation from the world. This in the cities where the number of the poor is great! In the villages, the same thing, only there they could leave the said village once their work of instruction and service ends.

To move about with great ease and fast, each nun should learn how to ride a bicycle, some how to drive a bus. This is a little too up-to-date, but souls are dying for want of care, for want of love. These Sisters, these true victims, should do the work that is wanting in Christ’s Apostolate in India. They should also have a hospital for little children with bad diseases. The nuns of this congregation will be Missionaries of Charity or Missionary Sisters of Charity.

God is calling me, unworthy and sinful that I am. I am longing to give all for souls. They will all think me mad, after so many years, to begin a thing, which will bring me for the most part only suffering, but He calls me also to join the few to start the work, to fight the devil and deprive him of the thousands of little souls he is destroying every day.

This is rather long, but I have told you everything as I would have told my mother. I long to be really only His, to burn myself completely for Him and souls. I want Him to be loved tenderly by many. So if you think, if you wish, I am ready to do His Will. Count not my feelings. Count not the cost I would have to pay. I am ready for I have already given my all to Him. And if you think all this a deception, that too I would accept and sacrifice myself completely. I am sending this through Fr. Van Exem. I have given him full permission to use anything I have told him which is in connection with me and Him in this work. My change to Asansol seems to me a part of His plan.
There I will have more time to pray and prepare myself for His coming. In this matter I leave myself completely in your hands.

Pray for me that I would become a religious according to His heart.

Your devoted child in Jesus Christ,

Mary Teresa
Appendix 5
Letter of Mother Teresa
To
President George Bush
And
President Saddam Hussein

Dear President George Bush, President Saddam Hussein,

I come to you with tears in my eyes and God’s love in my heart to plead to you for the poor and those who will become poor if the war that we all dread and fear happens. I beg you with my whole heart to work for, to labor for God’s Peace and be reconciled with one another.

You both have your cases to make and your people to care for but first please listen to the one who came into the world to teach us peace. You have the power and strength to destroy God’s presence and image. His men, His women, and His children! Please listen to the will of God. God has created us to be loved by His love and not to be destroyed by our hatred.

In the short term there may be winners and losers in this war that we all dread, but that never can, nor ever will justify, the suffering, pain, and loss of life that your weapons will cause.

I come to you in the name of God, the God that we all love and share, to beg for the innocent ones, our poor of the world and those who will suffer most because they have no means of escape. I plead on bended knee for them. They will suffer and when they do we will be the ones who are guilty for not having done all in our power to protect and love them. I plead to you for those who will be left orphaned, widowed and left alone because their parents, husbands, brothers and children have been killed. I beg you please save them. I plead for those who will be left with disabilities and disfigurements.

They are God’s children. I plead for those who will be left with no home, no
food, and no love. Please think of them as being your children. Finally I plead for those who will have the most precious thing that God can give us, Life, taken away from them. I beg you to save our brothers and Sisters, yours and ours, because they are given to us by God to love and to cherish. It is not for us to destroy what God has given to us. Please let your mind and your will become the mind and will of God. You have the power to bring war into the world or to build peace.

PLEASE CHOOSE THE WAY OF PEACE.

I, my Sisters, and our poor, are praying for you so much. The whole world is praying that you will open your hearts in love to God. You may win the war but what will be the cost on people who are broken, disabled and lost.

I appeal to you—to your love, your love of God and your fellowman. In the name of God and in the name those you will make poor do not destroy life and peace. Let the love and peace triumph and let your names be remembered for the good you have done, the joy you have spread and love you have shared.

Please pray for me and my Sisters, as we try to love and serve the poor because they belong to God and are loved in His eyes, as we and our poor are praying for you. We pray that you will love and nourish what God has so lovingly entrusted into your care.

May God bless you now and always,

Mother Teresa MC

This letter of Mother Teresa who wished to help the poor who cannot avoid the war, appeals to both Muslims and Christians, transcending religion. But the war had started. At the end of the war, a letter came to Mother from the Health Minister of Iraq. I heard that the Health Minister of Iraq requested her to send Sisters to take care of the orphans who had lost their parents in the war, and also the injured.

During the time of the 43rd US President Bush who is the son of the 41st President, once again war started with President Hussein of Iraq on March 20, 2003. If Mother Teresa were still alive, she would probably have sent this letter again before the opening of the war to both the Presidents.

Mother went to Beirut and rescued the handicapped children left behind by the institutions in West Beirut in 1982 at the time of the Lebanon civil war, which continued for 15 years from 1975 to 1990. Jan and Ann Petrie photoset this rescue activity of hers in their film Mother Teresa in 1885. Her strategy to help the poor who cannot escape the war, was to shout aloud not only in words but in deeds.
Appendix 6
Two who offered their lives for Mother Teresa

There are two who are said to have offered their lives for Mother Teresa. One was Fr. Van Exem SJ and the other was Sister Agnes MC.

On September 4, 1989, Mother Teresa experienced strong chest pains, and was hospitalized in the Woodland Nursing Home of Calcutta. She underwent an operation for the implantation of a pacemaker. However her condition was bad, and the critical state continued until September 22. Sr. Premila MC who was the superior of Prem Dan in those days was also suddenly sent to the hospital, because of her own illness. Although her cancer had spread to her whole body and she was in a critical state, yet when Mother was hospitalized she walked over to visit her in the hospital.

Sr. Premila wrote a letter to the Sisters of Prem Dan from the Thakurpukur Hospital on September 17, and in the letter she said that she had decided to leave the hospital and not return to the Prem Dan, but go to Kalighat (meaning Nirmal Hriday, the Home for Dying Destitutes), since Mother Teresa used to say that she wanted to go to Kalighat and die the same way as other poor people. Sr. Premila also wished to do what Mother Teresa desired. She stated in her letter that she could not explain why she wanted to do so, but that she hoped her Sisters in Prem Dan would understand and respect her desires.

Sr. Premila left the hospital on September 18 and was carried to Kalighat, and a week later she passed away at 5:14 AM on September 25. Soon after her death, Mother Teresa’s condition miraculously improved. She left the hospital on October 14, and went to Albania to start a branch house.

The nuns think of Sr. Agnes MC who passed away at 5:45 AM on the April 11, 1997, as a person who offered her life for Mother Teresa. In 1996 Mother Teresa’s condition again became bad, and once again she was hospitalized in the Woodland Nursing Home. She returned to the Mother House on December 19, but the pain in her back would not disappear and so she was in a wheelchair all the time. Sr. Agnes had a large intestinal cancer. Yet, my mother visited Mother Teresa at her hospital along with Sr. Agnes on December 18, a day before she left the hospital. I used to see Sr. Agnes
when she was Provincial Superior of West Bengal and when she worked in Shishu Bhawan. Although at that time too she suffered from cancer, yet outwardly she appeared to be fine. When her relatives visited in January I took a photograph of them and gave it to her, and on seeing the snap she smiled happily.

She could not become a candidate for Superior General, which was a six-year term of office, because her health was such that she would pass away just four months later. Mother Teresa’s condition was more critical than hers in those days, but soon after Sr. Agnes passed away her condition improved. She then went to Rome accompanied by Sr. Nirmala, who later replaced her as Superior General. The Sisters believe that Sr. Agnes, by offering her life for Mother Teresa, granted her the time to accompany the new Superior General to Rome and help her take over as her successor.
Appendix 7
The Baptism of my Mother and Myself

Mother Teresa referred to my mother and myself who requested baptism as “Gifts of God” and offered to serve as our godmother, but she was greatly surprised when I asked her what the word ‘godmother’ meant. She thereupon immediately looked around for a Sister who could teach the two of us about both Christianity and the Bible. She accepted us into her convent, allowed us to participate in the daily schedule, and gave us the best study environment possible. She was greatly concerned about our study, and so almost every day she would ask me questions such as, “How far did you finish?” and “When can you receive baptism?” Also, she would always ask whether there was any inconvenience in our life in the convent.

Eating curry and rising at 4:30 AM every day was no problem for us, and so we had a comfortable and happy life with the Sisters. However, breakfast was a problem, because after Mass a Sister would always come carrying the breakfast into the room for us. Although volunteers were treated only to chai (tea), yet for us breakfast was specially prepared. We were worried about others misunderstanding such actions, because we thought volunteers were receiving special treatment. Hence when Mother Teresa asked whether we had any problem and whether everything was fine, I replied that we did not need breakfast, and explained to her our reasons for refusing it. Mother however insisted that we should eat breakfast. When I again resisted saying that we would eat outside, she replied, “You will hurt your stomach if you eat outside, since you have not got used to it. You should eat here.” I however still refused saying, “We two will buy bananas outside. Bananas will not give us stomach trouble.” She thereupon said firmly, “They will cheat you outside, since you are not used to buying bananas. So, eat in the Mother House. After Mass you shall eat with the priest in the room. I do not want you two falling sick or getting cheated. Understood?” So the next day, after Mass, my mother and I had breakfast with the Jesuit fathers who came to the Mother House for daily Mass from St. Xavier’s College, and during breakfast the Jesuits would review our knowledge of the Christian doctrine by asking us questions such as, “What did you learn from today’s sermon?”
Our study of the Christian doctrine was completed in two weeks, and though she was busy Mother Teresa questioned us in order to test our knowledge. Consequently our teachers of Christianity increased, and now two Sisters and one Brother came to teach us three times a day, for two months. After two months of study with our three teachers and the Jesuits who instructed us in the mornings, Mother asked, “When are you two going to receive baptism?” I answered, “Please decide it yourself. We have no idea.” She then decided that we should be baptized on the feast of St. Joseph, that is, March 19. She gave my mother the name Teresa, and I was called Josepha. The parish priest came to the Mother House for the ceremony and Mother herself stood beside us, and when the water was poured on our heads she held our heads firmly and later wiped our faces with a towel. Even now I can recall her smile of joy as she wiped my face.

She and her Sisters enthusiastically prepared us for our baptism. I cannot thank them enough for the efforts they made, and I can confidently state that she was not at all interested in increasing the number of converts. Although we had taken along a letter of recommendation from Fr. Veliath, yet we were people who knew almost nothing about Christianity, and besides we had come to the busiest convent of the Missionaries of Charity in order to request baptism directly from her. Also, my mother at that time did not understand English well enough. Mother Teresa would have been fully justified in refusing us and recommending that we study and receive baptism in Japan, yet she not only accepted us but called us God’s gift, and personally watched over our growth and reception of the sacrament in a spirit of joy.
Appendix 8
Ancient Scriptures of Hinduism

The ancient Aryans when building up their civilizations in India produced many scriptures, and the earliest of these scriptures are referred to as *Samhitas*, a Sanskrit word which mean ‘collections.’ These *Samhitas* are divided into four sets, the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aryanakas*, and *Upanishads*. These *Samhitas* have been written in difficult Sanskrit, many portions have been lost, some portions have not been well researched, and some have not yet been properly translated. The oldest are the *Vedas*, and the civilization in which these *Vedas* were born is referred to as the Vedic civilization. The word *Veda* means knowledge, the knowledge that is used for the proper performance of the sacrifice.

The scriptures of India are many, belonging to various different religions, but mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. They contain myths, poems, legends, parables, and systematic theses. Some are more religious while others are more secular, but the scriptures of Hinduism are classified into two large sections, namely *Sruti* and *Smriti*. The word *Sruti* means, ‘what has been heard.’ The scriptures in this group are considered as being very sacred to the people of India, and they cannot be changed or altered in any manner. The word *Smriti* means ‘what has been recalled.’ This group of scriptures though very sacred, are however not as sacred as *Sruti*. *Smriti* is sometimes translated as ‘tradition.’

The ancient Aryan society consisted of farmers, fishermen, traders, sailors, hunters, priests, and warriors. In order to govern their society in a suitable way they created the caste system. Originally the caste system was loose and was more ‘class,’ but progressively it became firmer and was eventually converted into ‘caste.’ The four castes were the Brahmins, who were priests and scholars possessing religious and intellectual authority, the Kshatriyas, who were warriors and rulers possessing political and military authority, the Vaishyas, who were merchants and farmers with economic clout, and the Sudras who were the slaves and servants, with no influence or rights whatsoever. Today those original four castes have been split up into innumerable other smaller groups.

These Vedas are *Sruti*. They are regarded as pure and faultless and their authors are unknown, and Hindus believe that they are eternal. Pious Hindus refer to
them as the ‘Breath of God,’ and scholars rank them among the oldest written works in the world. The Vedas are also divided into four groups, namely the Rig Veda, which consists of praises, the Sama Veda, which consists of hymns, the Yajur Veda, which consists of prayers for the offering of sacrifices, and the Atharva Veda, which consists of magic spells. In the entire Aryan civilization there was a strong rivalry between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, with each group trying to outdo the other.

When we gaze upon the history of India, we notice that the period from about 550 BC onward was a time of great change in the religious life of the country. This century saw the rise of breakaway sects of ascetics who denied the authority of the Vedas, and of Brahmins and other ascetics who followed leaders claiming to have discovered the secret of obtaining release from transmigration. The most important of these were Buddha the founder of Buddhism, and Mahavira, the great teacher of Jainism. There were many other heterodox teachers who organized bands of ascetics, and each group adhered to a specific code of conduct. These gained sizeable backing from ruling families and merchants. The latter were growing in wealth and influence, and many of them searched for alternative forms of religious activity that would give them a more significant role than did orthodox Brahmanism, or would be less expensive to support. Both religions had a big influence on Indian society.

Discrimination based on caste is forbidden by the constitution of India, but caste as a social class with religious authority in background, remains firmly entrenched in Indian society.
Appendix 9
Volunteers see Poverty as Richness.

Between 1988 and 1998 I traveled back and forth to Kolkata to work among the Sisters as a volunteer, and every year I stayed there for about one to three months during the Christmas vacation. I worked at Shishu Bhawan (the orphanage), Nirmal Hriday (the home for the dying), Prem Dan (the house for the mentally ill) and Titagarh (the colony of Lepers). During my stay I met many volunteers who like me had come over to work, and it was unbelievable to see so many young people pay their own airfare, accommodation, and food, to serve among the poorest. Even though I myself was one of these volunteers I often used to wonder why the others were drawn to it, and in order to understand their motivation I undertook research over a period of seven years (1991~1997), and interviewed around 140 members. The following was the questionnaire that I used.

1. How long do you intend to stay and work?
2. What are your living expenses per day including accommodation?
3. Age
4. Occupation
5. Nationality
6. Religion
7. Did you contract any disease or illness during your stay? If so what illnesses did you experience?
8. Place of work.
9. Your impressions concerning this volunteer work.

Their answers in general were as follows.
1. Period of stay: 1 month
2. Living expenses per day: $8
3. Age: 24 years average (the oldest was 80 and the youngest 17)
4. Occupation: None (they resigned their jobs to volunteer)
5. Nationality: Mostly French
6. Religion: Catholic (80%)
7. Did you contract any disease or illness during your stay?
   1 month stay: Yes 50%. No 50%.
   1~2 month’s stay: Yes 80%. No 20%.
   Over 2 month’s stay: Yes 100%. No 0%

What kind of symptoms did you experience?
No1: High Fever. (Cold, Malaria)
No2: Vomiting (Food poisoning)
No3: Diarrhea (Cholera. Typhoid fever, Dysentery)
No4: Hepatitis

8. Place of work: Nirmal Hriday
9. Your impression of this volunteer work: An increase in self-confidence, a positive change of personality and way of thinking.

   What was remarkable in these interviews was the revelation as to how self-sacrificing and hardworking these volunteers were. Most of them had given up their jobs and stayed for about 1~2 months or longer. They economized on their living expenses as much as possible, stayed at cheap hotels, and ate food from street stalls. They worked hard from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM in places like Nirmal Hriday, 6 days a week. The rate of volunteers who became ill was high because of the accommodation, food, and long hours spent among the sick in the institutions. Other volunteers and Sisters took care of those who fell ill. When the symptoms were very serious, the sick volunteers were sent to the Indian hospitals or back to their own countries through the assistance of Mother Teresa and their respective embassies.

   One day I asked Mother, “What do you think of these volunteers working so hard and falling sick? Why do they come here?” To this Mother replied, “They somehow have spiritual poverty. First, they come here to give, but after some time they realize that they are given something or getting something they searched for. The reason they stay in cheap hotels is not only to save money, but also to share our poverty and the poverty of our poor. There are poor in their own countries, but Kolkata has the poorest. They put themselves in the place of the poorest of the poor, and through it they fill what is lacking in their hearts. Then they become rich and go home. This is the reason why I welcome any volunteers to wish to share our work.”

   Certainly, all the volunteers I interviewed said that they became different
people. Some said that they got back their self-esteem, and others said they received spiritual strength and energy through the work. I would like to recount an interview as an example.

1. Period of stay: 1 month
2. Living expenses per day: $9 ($1 for the Salvation army dormitory, $8 for food)
3. Age: 25 years
4. Occupation: Social worker at a child-care center
5. Nationality: USA
6. Religion: Christian
7. Do you contract any disease or illness during your stay? Yes, Diarrhea
8. Place of work: Prem Dan (house for the mentally ill)
9. Personal impressions: I was depressed. There is poverty in the US. For example, one of my clients is a pregnant teenager. Her mother is HIV positive. Her father is in jail for selling drugs. Not only do my clients have problems but all my own family members as well. I did not know how to deal with this sort of a situation with multiple problems. I lost my confidence. Then, I took my vacation to come here. The Sisters and patients appreciate the simple work that I do – feeding, cleaning, nursing and so on. I feel refreshed and got back my energy. Now I think I am OK.

Mother Teresa often said the biggest poverty was to feel unwanted. Through her activity, she wanted to let people know that they were wanted and loved. There is a need for love, not only in the poor but also in the rich. What those volunteers from the rich countries received was the feeling of being wanted, the feeling of being worthy to live and work in this world. Everyone likes to feel wanted, and that is the reason why those volunteers keep coming.

Robin Norwood, author of the book Women Who Love Too Much, describes this eagerness to be wanted as a co-dependence, and she explains this by saying that people who choose human assistance jobs such as social workers, therapists, nurses, doctors, and also teachers, have a tendency towards this co-dependence. I however believe it natural and healthy for a person to feel wanted, for it is a fact that we depend on others and others depend upon us, such as for example family members and friends. Mother Teresa sought to heal not only the hunger for bread but also this other hunger that torments human beings, whether rich or poor.
Dr. Hiromi Josepha Kudo Ph.D
5-11-3-602 Mita Minato
TOKYO - Japan

Dear Dr. Josepha,

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 8th December 2015 along with the books – ‘Mother Teresa: A Saint from Skopje’ and ‘The Life and work of Blessed Mother Teresa’, and the article ‘Reflections on the Dark Night of Blessed Mother Teresa’. I have started reading them, and hope to complete the reading soon. They are very good – Congratulations!

Your closeness to Blessed Mother Teresa is evident in your works. In fact, no one who came close to Mother could ever remain unaffected by her warmth, love, holiness, simplicity and compassion. My limited experience has been similar.

I am in complete agreement with you regarding the two holy Archbishops – my venerable predecessors – Archbishop Ferdinand Perier SJ and Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy SJ – and their role in guiding the life and work of Blessed Mother Teresa, leading to the founding of the Missionaries of Charity.

As you are aware, the process leading to ‘Beatification’ has many steps. The initiative has to come from local Bishop – in this case, me. I shall study the conditions and steps involved in this process and if that be God’s will, with proper consultation in the Archdiocese with all concerned, and with guidance from the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints. I shall see what can be done. Please keep this intention in your daily prayer.

2016, the Jubilee Year of Mercy, will also be the Year of Blessed Mother Teresa’s Canonization. The news of the approval by the Holy Father of the miracle needed for Mother’s Canonization, was received on 18th December 2015 by the entire Church, and by us in Kolkata in particular, with great joy. Let us pray that as a Saint, Mother Teresa may pray for the promotion of the cause of the two saintly Archbishops.

The Missionaries of Charity – Sisters, Priests and Brothers – continue the legacy of compassionate love in the streets of Kolkata and all over the world. May Mary, the Mother of Mercy protect them always.

With every good wish, renewed thanks and blessing. I remain,

Yours sincerely Christ,

+ Thomas D’Souza
Archbishop of Calcutta
Dear Mrs. Kado,

Thank you for your letter, dated February 1, with the books and article on Mother Teresa. I have already read some parts of the book *Mother Teresa: A Saint from Skopje*, and found much of interest and inspiration in it.

As for your suggestion to start a Cause of canonization for Archbishops Perrier and Plessiary: I fear you have written to the wrong persons, for as a rule such Causes do not start, but finish in Rome. In fact, our Office is exclusively concerned with the second or Roman phase of Causes, not with the first or Diocesan phase. Likewise, it is not our Superior General who orders for a Cause to be started, but the local faith community, guided by its Bishop, who will let himself be lead by clear and evident signs of veneration among the greater part of the faithful, a veneration that should increase and spread in time. I haven’t heard yet of any cult growing around the two Archbishops or the other Jesuit Fathers who were instrumental in the work of Mother Teresa, but I am sure that Archbishop D’Souza, whom you approached as well, is the person most informed in this matter. I fully agree with the answer he has given to you, especially with regard to the conditions and steps to be followed. You may want to consult the Instruction *Sanctorum Mater*, available at the Vatican website, to get a clear idea as to what a Cause of canonization requires.

Hoping that this has been of any help to you and wishing you all the best and God’s blessing on your efforts to make more known the great Apostle of Calcutta, Mother Teresa, and her ministry to the poorest, I remain,

yours sincerely in Christ,

Fr Marc Lindelijer, SJ
Assistant to the Postulator General

---

1 Permit me, please, two minor corrections. P. 115: Antwerp is the French name for Antwerp, a town in Belgium, not Italy. P. 126: Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni Biondi (1872-1960), Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, could possibly have been nominated by the 17th-century Pope Gregory XV. In 1922, he was appointed Secretary of that Congregation by Pope Benedict XV.
Fr. C. Van Exem, S.J.

The homily delivered by Archbishop Henry D’Souza for the funeral mass of Fr. Celest Van Exem, S.J. at St. Xavier’s College Chapel on 22nd September, 1993.

The news of the death of Fr. Celest Van Exem has come as a shock. I am 70 years old. I remember 23rd July the Feast of St. Ignatius, when I went to visit him. He expressed joy and good spirits, and gladly permitted Fr. Sionato and me to see him. I bring to his family my heartfelt condolences.

Mr. Van Exem was 30 years old when he reached India in 1938. Obtained in Kozhikode, he was martyred for the sacred field of intellectual instruction, which had made the faithful well known all over India from the days of Fr. Jobson and Danwine and the publication “Through Christ to the Vedas” and the “Light of the East” series. In 1939, he was declared a saint by the Jesuit Province of the Bombay Province.

He was a man of letters and his work on St. Xavier’s College and the Society of Jesus in India is well known.

In 1957 there was a pension ship in his life and ministry. He was appointed the Papal Vicar Apostolic in Nigeria, and in 1962 he was appointed the President of the Indian Society of Jesus.

After his death, I was sent to visit his family in India to deliver the remaining letters of Fr. Van Exem and to authenticate the authenticity of his letters.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who makes me see everything and to whom I pray on behalf of all the children of God, may you have mercy on Fr. Van Exem and on all those who have been his instruments in life and ministry.
REST IN THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Government Bestows Peace For Dalit Child

BANGALORE — The grant of government benevolence to Dalit children with their counterparts in other religions to a problem since India's independence. Several NGOs, among them some 'crumblent' have been making representations to the Central and State governments, though a handful of State governments have reacted.

This time a Member of Parliament belonging to Congress (I) party, Mr V. Narayanswamy, initiated discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the Private Members Bill — the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill 1994. He argued that a number of Commissions set up by different governments had already recommended that the benefits offered to New Backward and OBC minorities be extended also to Scheduled Caste Christians.

The Bill requires that a Government notification be issued to extend the benefits of Proportionate and Special Quota in education to Scheduled Caste Christian students. The Bill also provides for the reservation of seats in institutions of higher education and for the appointment of Scheduled Caste Christian students to posts in government departments.

The Bill requires that a Government notification be issued to extend the benefits of Proportionate and Special Quota in education to Scheduled Caste Christian students. The Bill also provides for the reservation of seats in institutions of higher education and for the appointment of Scheduled Caste Christian students to posts in government departments.

Fr. Van Exem's Last Letter to Mother

Dear Mother:

Tomorrow morning I shall say Holy Mass for the following intentions:

1. That you may have an open heart
2. That you may be in China by the 2nd October 1993
3. That the Lord may make me and not you if that is His will. His will, not mine.

I am with you and the Sisters, all of them. There is a Calvary for every Christian. For you the way to Calvary is long. But Mary has met you on the road. You did not go up the hill; this is far later.

The persecuted have merited your compassion. You are, hence, in your own role.

Yours sincerely in O.L.

C. Van Exem, S.J.

This Week

- Readers' Forum P — VI

Next Week

- "What We Do" P — VI

Next Month

- "What We Do" P — VI
REFERENCES AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources Directly Referred to by the Author


83. Yanagi, K., Mother Teresa Kirisutono kawakiwo iyasutameni, Tokyo, Don Boscosya, 1990.

Other Related Sources

**Bibliography for the Chapter Entitled Reflections on the Dark Night of Mother Teresa**


