

Lives Worth Imitating: Mother Teresa

August 18, 2019

Born Anjezë (Anezay) Gonxhe (Gonzay) Bojaxhiu (Bojadzoo) on August 26, 1910 in Skopje (Skope-yay), Kosovo Vilayet, Ottoman Empire. (Modern day North Macedonia.)

Raised in an extremely devout Catholic family. Received her first communion at 5 ½ years old and was confirmed in November 1916. Her heart for others was obvious at a very early age. She was heavily involved in the local parish, as encouraged by her parents.

Her father passed away when she was 8 years old, leaving the family financially destitute.

Teresa has recounted how at a relatively early age that her life was to be consecrated to God. At twelve she wanted to be a missionary, with no interest in becoming a nun.

However at 18, she decided after 6 years of thought, to become a nun. On September 26, 1928 she journeyed to Ireland to join the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also called the Loreto Sisters, choosing the name Sister Mary Teresa. She sailed for Calcutta, India in December arriving on January 6, 1929.

Loreto Nuns were commissioned mainly with education and so after training and first vows, Teresa began.

On May 24, 1937 Teresa made her Final Profession of Vows, thus becoming Mother Teresa. Her time at the convent was noted for her hard working, compassionate approach. She taught 20 years, being named headmistress in 1944. Once chased off a bull threatening her pupils and scared off thieves who broke into the convent. Getting food during political unrest...

Teresa's sense of calling deepened. "The Call within the call..." arrived in Sept 1946. As Jesus asked her to minister to the poorest of the poor, because "he needed their love." Two years passed before she was granted her calling and left the only life she thought she'd ever have.

After time receiving basic medical training, she went back to Calcutta and began ministering to the poorest of the poor. Being with them, taking care of them, loving them. After a few months, former students started joining her. Finally, on October 7, 1950 the Missionaries of Charity was established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta, with a staff of 13.

Humility

She always insisted that all documents revealing the inspiration behind the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity be destroyed, for fear that she would be given prominence that she believed was due to God alone.

Matthew 6:1-4 *"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³ But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."*

The heart comes into question here.

"I am not humble even now – but at least I desire to become – and humiliations are my sweetest sweets..."

Do we embrace moments of humility or ignore them?

What it would be like if we saw these moments as the dessert of life? It sounds completely backwards, but that sounds like Jesus...

Humility is the start of being able to be used by God.

I sometimes grow frustrated with how little I seem to be used by God, how I desperately want him to have more control over me and what I do, and who I help, but can't seem to pull the trigger. Until I look at Mother Teresa...

Compassion

Matthew 9:35-37 (NLT)

³⁵ Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few.

Compassion cannot exist without humility.

Philippians 2

Compassion means entering into another's life.

One cannot be compassionate if they refuse to enter into another's life.

-The striking qualities of Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa continued to open centers to handle nearly any issue you could think of. By the 1960's the Missionaries of Charity had gone international. Her fame spread during this time, culminating with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

Health issues of the 1980's...

Died on September 5, 1997. She was given a state funeral.

At the time of her passing the 13 member mission she started with had 4,000 sisters and an associated brotherhood of 300 members operating 610 missions in 123 countries.

Mother Teresa was beatified on Oct. 19, 2003 and canonized Sept. 4, 2016.

Criticism...

Surrender

"Drink the chalice to the last drop."

She knew that God loved her and that his will for her would always be an expression of that unfailing love.

There is an area in our lives that God has called us to use. It is the way we can best reach into people's lives, and so often, we lack the humility to do it.

To deny what God wants for us is to push away his love.

I pushed back hard on my current fulltime job. Even when it was clear that God had opened that door for me. His provision of that job at that time, was proof that God loved me.

What area of my life am I holding back from accepting God's love?

What more does God want to do through us that we reject because we refuse to go further with him?

How much more joy would I have in my life if I had been willing to surrender more often?

Her joy was the fruit of blessedness of submission. Giving Jesus whatever he asked of her was where she found her deepest and lasting joy.

"Cheerfulness is a sign of a generous and mortified person who forgetting all things, even herself, tries to please her God in all she does for souls. Cheerfulness is often a cloak which hides a life of sacrifice, continual union with God, fervor and generosity. A person who has this gift of cheerfulness very often reaches a great height of perfection. For God loves a cheerful giver and He takes close to his heart the religious he loves."