

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Memories of her years with Loreto

1928 - 1948



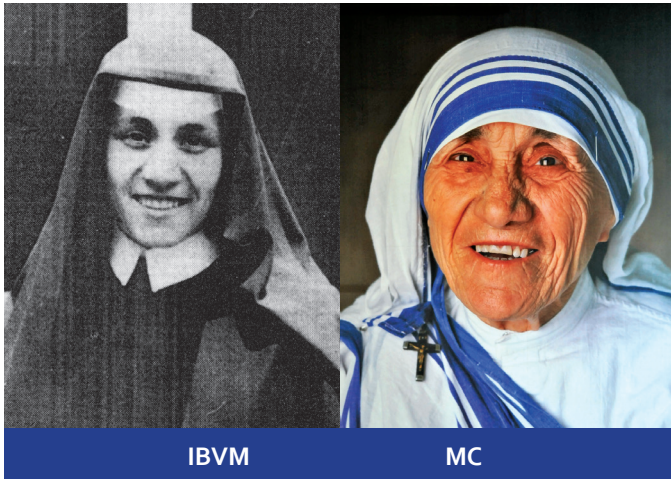
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Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Mother Teresa spent 20 years as a Loreto Sister. All through her life the ties and friendship between herself and the Institute remained firm, and she was personally known to many of our sisters, especially in India.

Much has been written about Mother Teresa over the years, and many books, films and documentaries have been produced. We have gathered together these few articles, reflections and photos on the occasion of her canonisation to honour her and to remember her, not only as a former member, but most of all as a friend of IBVM.

In doing so this simple publication acknowledges Mother Teresa's generous response to God, in answering her particular call to go out to the destitute and untouchables on the streets of Kolkata and our world. Her life challenges each of us to live with our eyes and hearts fixed on those who are small in our society, those whom

society rejects and forgets. She challenges us to hear the gospel message in a real and practical way and to go where the need is greatest.

We celebrate with the Missionaries of Charity throughout the world and with the whole Church at this time of her canonisation. We celebrate with IBVM members, co-workers and students in India and worldwide, and we give thanks that God's plan for Agnes Gonxha brought her to enter Loreto and to live as a Mary Ward sister for a significant part of her life.

Above all at this time we remember those who are poor and destitute, those on the margins. Mother Teresa is truly their saint! May the witness of her life continue to sensitise our world to their plight. And may each one of us find ways to challenge and change the unjust structures and systems that perpetuate poverty and destitution in all our societies.

She promised to pray for us, we entrust our cares and intentions to her intercession at this time.

Noelle Corscadden IBVM
Institute Leader

September 1st 2016

Biographical Sketch



Agatha, Lazrus and Agnes

Mother Teresa was born to Albanian parents, Nicholas Bojaxlieu and Rosa Drojaon in Skopje, Yugoslavia on 26th August 1910. She was baptised Agnes Gonxha and was the youngest of three children. She had a brother, Lazrus and a sister, Agatha. In her own words 'they were a beautiful united family'. When she was 9 years old her father died.

Mother Teresa said she first felt the call to Religious Life at about the age of 12. As a teenager she belonged to the Sodality where she learned about the Jesuit Missionaries from Yugoslavia who worked in India. Then at the age of 18 Agnes joined the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Loreto Sisters, in Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham on 12th October 1928. There her formation began. She left Ireland on the 1st December 1928 along with two other postulants, Sr. John Berchmans Joyce from Galway who kept an interesting diary of their journey by boat and Sr. Magdalena Kajnch, also from Yugoslavia. She was 36 years of age. They arrived in Kolkata on 6th January 1929.

She and her two travelling companions went to Darjeeling where the Novitiate was. The Mistress of Novices at that time was M. Baptista Murphy and Mother Teresa herself gave us the names of her companions in the Novitiate: Srs. Loreto Serrao, Rita Belletty,

Hilda Thomas, Catherine Gomes and Philomena Moore from India, Srs. Attracta Dooley, Francis Xavier Murray and Benigna Liddiard from Ireland and her two travelling companions Sr. Magdalena Kajinch and Sr. John Berchmans Joyce. She was received as a novice on 24th May 1929.



She made her First Profession in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Darjeeling on the 24th May 1931 and her Final Profession on 24th May 1937.

After her Profession she was missioned to Loreto Convent, Entally, Kolkata. She taught

Catechism and Geography in Loreto St. Mary's Bengali School, which was one of two schools on the campus of Loreto Convent, Entally. St. Mary's was run jointly by the Loreto Sisters and the Daughters of St. Anne, a diocesan congregation founded in answer to the situation and needs of the contemporary local Church. Mother Teresa taught there for most of her years in Loreto later becoming headmistress there.



On the 10th September 1946, on a train journey to Darjeeling for her annual retreat Mother Teresa heard God's call to go out into the slums of Kolkata to serve Him in the poorest of the poor. She said she was sure that this was the will of God for her although she did not know how this would be done.

Fr. Celeste Van Exem SJ was her Spiritual Director during her years of searching for the will of God. In 1946 she wrote to M. Gertrude Kennedy, the then Superior General, who respected her request and supported her in her search for God's call. M. Gertrude suggested she apply for exclaustation which she did and she obtained this permission sooner than expected. In August 1948 she went to Patna to the Medical Missionary Sisters' Hospital to undergo some basic medical training.

She returned to Kolkata in December 1948 and immediately started her work for the poor in Motijheel. At that time she stayed in the convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Netaji Subhas Road, Kolkata.

After about two months she found accommodation in 14 Creek Lane thanks to the generosity of Michael Gomes who gave her the second floor of his house. M. du Cenacle, who had been her Superior in Loreto Convent Entally, attended the official opening of this house.

Some of her former students from Loreto St. Mary's were keen to join her and by June 1950 she had 12 companions. Fr. Julian Henry SJ was their Spiritual Director from the beginning of the Novitiate and M. Teresa said he was a great gift of God to the society.

The Missionaries of Charity became a fully fledged diocesan congregation on 7th October 1950, and a Papal Congregation on 1st February 1965.

Mother Teresa saw the relationship between IBVM and the MCs as one of love and deep union in serving the Church. In her own words 'We complete each other'.



Mother Teresa on a visit to Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham
1993

Loreto Remembers Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Sr. Maeve Hughes IBVM

It was 1992; Mother Teresa was in hospital in the USA. Loreto communities in India were celebrating 150 years of the Institute's mission in India. From her hospital bed came a letter to Sister Monica Affonso, then Leader of the Indian Province:



Missionaries of Charity

June 10, 1992

My dearest Mothers and Sisters,

I am sorry I was not able to be present with you to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Loreto in India... because 22 out of the 150 years I have spent with you.

Although now I am a Missionary of Charity, deep down that Loreto joy is still there. Nothing can separate me from the love and gratitude I have for Loreto; what I have received will never be forgotten.

The only way I can thank you is to pray for each of you that you may be all for Jesus... through Mary.

Please pray for me that I may soon be able to return to our beloved India

God bless you.

M. Teresa

Dictated from the Green Hospital, La Jolla, California.

This was a message straight from the heart, a message to touch all hearts in India and beyond. Better than many learned analyses of Mother Teresa's relationship with the parent-congregation from which the Missionaries of Charity emerged, this simple, direct message from her sick bed, revealed the tender links that continued throughout her life. Loreto was her first love and she remained faithful to the roots of her religious dedication. From these roots would bud forth and blossom to extraordinary fullness the world-embracing vine of the Missionaries of Charity.



It has been mentioned; it has been glossed over or forgotten that Mother Teresa lived as a full member of the Loreto community, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for twenty years and for the two years she was preparing to establish the Missionaries of Charity, she still remained a member of the Institute. She was an active and much appreciated Loreto sister, loved and loving.

Mother Teresa's call to a different way of life to the one she had plighted her troth to when she took her First Vows in Darjeeling, came on a train journey to the hill town in September 1946. As



she "*lifted her eyes to the mountains*" the conviction that God had a different plan in mind for her – a powerful urge to once more

“leave all things and follow him” into the streets of Kolkata, into the hovel-homes of the poor, into the homelessness of the migrant families fleeing the horrors of separation of east and west Bengal in the wake of Partition. It was a frightening call surely even though it was a call of love, a call to total acceptance of God’s invitation to bring hope, care and love to the “loneliest and the lost”. The retreat she was setting out to make was surely one of discernment, of deep and painful discernment of God’s specific will for her in the immediate circumstances. Under the guidance of the Archbishop of Kolkata, Reverend Ferdinand Perier SJ and the Jesuit Fathers in St Teresa’s Parish, Fathers Julian Henry and Celeste Van Exem, and bound to strict secrecy by these and by the General Superior of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Dublin, Mother Teresa prayed and struggled to know and respond to God’s will, God’s plan of love for her and for those He was committing to her care.

There is only one answer to God’s call of love that can bring freedom of heart – a full and free sacrificial *“Yes, Lord, you know I love you”*.

Away from the familiar surroundings of Loreto St Mary’s and away from the heart-rending scenes of the refugees in the streets of Kolkata, Mother Teresa spent some time in Loreto Convent, Asansol and there she resolved to change her Loreto habit for the simple white cotton, blue bordered sari for her new way of life. But it was not yet to be. A period of communication with Rome, with Rathfarnham, continued until mid 1948. The secrecy under which she continued her work in St Mary’s seems as incomprehensible today as it must have seemed to her

during those months. When on 18th August that year she told the Sisters at Loreto Convent Entally that she was leaving to work in the slums of the city it was incomprehensible to most of them. Love for, and care of the poor, was long part of Loreto service to the orphans at Entally, to the poor children in our city schools, to the widows and orphans in Morapai, “fifty miles from bread” as one of the valiant missionaries there described the mission in the Sunderbans. It was a heart-burning question, a puzzle to the communities when this news reached them. They had known and loved Mother Teresa for the past 20 years, worked with her, enjoyed her happy spirit and her quick sense of humour, admired her linguistic competence, not only in her command of English, unique at times in the original twists she could give it, but also her fluency in Bengali and Hindi, and her down-to-earth common sense.

Prior to Mother Teresa’s arrival in India she was clearly influenced by the example of a number of Jesuits from Slovenia, Montenegro, Croatia, Albania and surrounding areas of the Ottoman Empire that later became Yugoslavia. They were valiant missionaries and pioneered the villages of the 24 Parganas. The names of Frs. Gabric, Demsar and Cukale are household names in the villages of Basanti, Gheonkali stretching down towards Diamond Harbour, along the Motla river stretching away into the Bay of Bengal and into Satakira, now in Bangladesh. Some of these pioneers in rural Bengal were a little disappointed that Mother Teresa’s mission was focused mostly on the urban slums of Kolkata and its immediate neighbourhood in the early days. They would have

welcomed her dedication, her intrepidity and her skill in far-flung remote areas of the Sunderbans. But Mother Teresa's vision was original and clear. She knew where God wanted her and left the jungles of South 24 Parganas to warriors like Fr Andre Gabric (Gosaba) and Frs Albert Ernst and Albert Wautier, while Fr Josef Cukale would lead her Sisters into Russia. She remained ever grateful to Fr Neuner who was her faithful stand-by in the desolation of her "dark night of the soul". She remained ever grateful to the many Jesuits who supported and guided her Sisters all over the world.

Mother Teresa, in her letter to the Loreto Provincial on the occasion of the celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the Indian Province of Loreto, writes from her hospital bed in America. Her words are redolent with affectionate memories of her 22 years as a member of the Institute – twenty years as an active Loreto Sister and 2 years of her exclaustation while she tested her vocation as a Missionary of Charity. Loreto retained a very deep place in her heart. And Mother Teresa had also won the deep appreciation and affection of those placed at the helm of affairs in the Institute as well as the warmth of the sisters in the various communities of the Province.

In the rather formal letters required in the circumstances of her leaving Loreto, in the letters from Mother Gertrude Kennedy (Superior General 1946) and Mother Pauline Dunne (Superior General 1948) there is genuine appreciation of Mother Teresa as a religious and affection for her as a sister in the congregation.

Towards the very end of her long term as Superior General Mother Gertrude wrote as follows in reply to Mother Teresa's letter:

*Loreto Abbey,
Rathfarnham, Dublin.
25th January, 1948*



My dearest Mother M. Teresa,

Your desire to immolate yourself completely in the service of God's poor, is most noble and praiseworthy, and though I regard your change as a very real loss to our Institute still you give me so many reasons to believe your call is from God that I cannot refuse your request.

One thing, it would be wiser to get a decree of exclaustation for the present and then, if all goes well get a dispensation from your vows.

I shall not mention the matter to anyone, not even Mother Provincial and you need not (sic) either. My consent is sufficient.

God guide and protect you always. You will be in my prayers. Please keep me in yours.

Yours very affectionately in J.C.,

*M. Gertrude
(Superior General)*

Just six months later when Mother Gertrude's term in office drew to a close, the electors voted in Mother Pauline Dunne as her successor.

The question of Mother Teresa's departure and her new situation was one of prime concern to the new General. And an early letter has to deal with several do's and don'ts of the practical day-to-day living conditions of the exclaustated Mother Teresa, conditions laid down by official Church practice of the time. Seven decades later we tend to shake our heads at these, but they were the norm then.

Mother Teresa's request or suggestion that she make her annual eight-day retreat in Loreto, Entally met with refusal and there were restrictions on communication with the Loreto communities. Mother Pauline's letter of November 22, 1948 reads:

Dearest M. M. Teresa,

Your letter of 19th November did not reach me until this morning. I am pleased that you got such great help from the Sisters in Patna. God bless and reward them.

I am glad you realize my position in Tengra. You know you are still a Loreto nun, a nun who by the Indult of Exclaustation, is no longer subject to superiors in Loreto but to the Ordinary of the Diocese, Most Rev Dr Perier who takes the place of your Superiors.

You tell me you are going to Calcutta on 23th December to make an eight days' retreat, but you must not make it in any Loreto Convent. I shall be glad if you will keep in touch with

M. Dorothy and with me, but to write or visit our nuns is out of the question for the present. But I feel sure that you are so engrossed in your new work, and with all the difficulties which such great work entails that you have not much time for visiting or writing at your disposal. We shall certainly keep you in our prayers that the good God may bless all your undertakings for His glory and the salvation of souls.

I am quite sure that Mother M. Dorothy will most willingly pay for your board and lodging, but I cannot give her leave to do so for your companions.

You may think I am very hard, but that is not at all the case. I am in fact full of sympathy for you and you are very much in my thoughts and prayers. But I have to think of my own nuns and do my best for them and safeguard them from distractions as far as I am able. You have been an excellent member of our Institute for many years – but you know how seculars will talk when you come to Calcutta where you are so well known. I do not wish my nuns to be in a position to discuss your affairs with any of their visitors.

Rev Mother Gertrude has not been too well lately but M. Rosario (Dicher) is seldom ill.

*Again assuring you of my good wishes and promising you a remembrance in my daily prayer, with much love, dear
M. M. Teresa,*

*I am
Yours affectionately in J.C.,
M. Pauline Dunne*



This could not have been an easy letter for Mother Pauline to write, nor a very welcome one for Mother Teresa to read. (The human touch is there in the inclusion of some items of community news). It was typical of the 'clericalization' of much religious practice of the times. Mother Pauline's head demanded she fulfil the practice in such circumstances, while her heart reached out to the lonely position in which Teresa now found herself.

In those days the annual retreat in both Loreto House and Loreto Entally took place from 14th to 22nd December and Mother Teresa's arrival in Kolkata on the 13th suggests that she had either of these venues in mind for her own retreat. After all there would be total silence, but there would also be a sari clad retreatant in their midst and there would be one or two sisters not making that particular retreat - a dicey situation and left the Superior with little option. Religious houses in the early and mid-twentieth century drew an opaque veil of privacy around their personal and community life. It was privacy often taken as secrecy. In the schools they were open and friendly, interacting with children, staff and parents as well as other callers, but life behind "convent walls" retained a sense of mystery. It took the clarion call of Vatican II to shatter the battlements of the modern Jericho of Catholic convents! So in the early years of Mother Teresa's life as a Missionary of Charity it was very much a case of "other times, other customs".

The bare outline of her life as a Loreto Sister receded behind the wonder of the spreading mission of this small, vibrant personality, who shunned publicity for herself, but pointed to the work that needed doing and the ways in which it could be helped to grow and expand.

Now times have changed and are changing. Mother Teresa has had two successors guiding her Congregation; her members and her works are still spreading to hitherto undreamed of corners of the globe; her Congregation has now the Brother Missionaries of Charity, founded by Fr Ivan Travers-Ball (Brother Andrew) and a group of priests has been fostered in the same spirit.

There are many chapters in the Mother Teresa story and one of those is the Loreto story. A question sometimes asked by genuine friends is: How exactly did Mother Teresa leave Loreto; how did the Sisters take it?

This has been answered already, but some details may throw a clearer light on what somehow persists as a kind of mystery.

The Loreto House Province Archives and recorded personal reminiscences testify to unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances coinciding during the period leading to Mother Teresa's departure from Loreto Convent Entally and St Mary's High School.

After her retreat in Loreto Convent, Darjeeling in September, 1946, Mother Teresa returned to St Mary's and resumed her duties as Principal and teacher there. She would naturally have continued to commit this new turn in her life to earnest prayer and to the direction of her confessor, Fr Celeste Van Exem SJ. Whether she confided this secret to any of her friends in the community is not known, but is hardly likely, as she was bound to silence by her confessor and later by Archbishop Ferdinand Perrier SJ, Archbishop of Kolkata. The process of discernment and the procedure of applying for the necessary permissions from Rome were definitely guided by these two Jesuits.

When she turned to Mother Gertrude Kennedy, the wise but ageing Superior General, she was advised to wait and pray and eventually to apply for exclaustation for a period before taking a final step. Mother Gertrude proved a kind, understanding person with a deep reverence for God's action in the life of Mother Teresa.

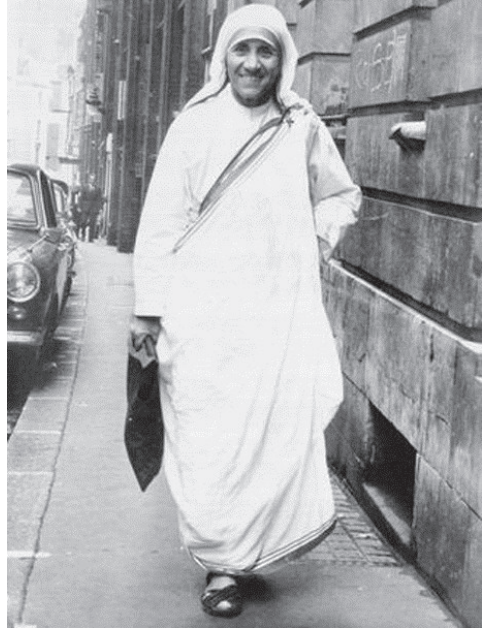
While these deliberations were in progress, the Loreto General Chapter to elect a new Superior General was taking place in Rathfarnham. Delegates from the various provinces were assembled, among them Mother Dorothy, the Provincial of India and Mother Consiglio Frayne, her First Consultor and Mother Lidwina Foley. Care of the Province was entrusted to Mother Columba Ormiston. When the delegates left India by boat they expected to return by September, but this was impossible because the passenger ships that had been commandeered for military purpose during World War Two had not yet been restored to civilian service in sufficient numbers. So, although they arrived in Dublin by boat there was nothing available for their return. Eventually it was November before they could fly home to India.

Meanwhile, to everyone's surprise and the new Superior General Pauline Dunne's and Mother Dorothy's consternation the permission for Mother Teresa's exclaustation had arrived unusually promptly from Rome. Mother Columba had not been taken into confidence about Mother Teresa's plans, so she and the Sisters at Loreto Entally were taken totally by surprise. Communications in those days were slow. Telephone lines were limited and not always reliable. Telegrams were the surest and most trustworthy means of getting connected quickly and of

keeping in touch. The 1948 mid-August decree from the Vatican caught a lot of people off guard!

Sister Rosario O'Reilly who had worked with and learned Bengali from Mother Teresa writes that she was a member of the Entally community and teaching in St Teresa's Parish School in 1948

when *"one evening at 4 pm tea, to my surprise she (Mother Teresa) broke the news that she was going out to work in the slums of Calcutta. She had the necessary permissions from her Superiors and the Archbishop of Calcutta. God had given her a "Second Call" and she must answer it to serve the "poorest of the poor" and live among them. She felt sure of her call, but where was it going to lead her? So with wonderful faith*



like the faith of Abraham and Mary, she said her goodbyes and left for the Medical Missionary Sisters' Hospital in Patna for a short course in medical training to prepare for her work among the poor, the sick and the dying on the streets of Calcutta".

Those who knew Mother Teresa as a Loreto Sister all found her a cheerful, happy companion, witty even jolly, with a quick sense of humour. She was energetic, resourceful, hard-working, dedicated, sensitive to her surroundings, to the needs and temperament of

those around her. These qualities were often to be tested in her life as a Missionary of Charity. Her genuine charity towards all she met was evident from the early days of her upbringing, of her home and family life. She would not tolerate negative criticism of others, no unfriendly gossip in her presence. This obviously was a characteristic of her home and family background. Her love of truth, her fidelity to truth would mark her throughout her life. Yes, God knew who He was choosing, whom He was calling!

Loreto without Mother Teresa? Mother Teresa without Loreto? The answer to that enigmatic equation is simple. Loreto never lost contact with Mother Teresa, nor did she lose contact with Loreto. Mutual appreciation and mutual cooperation continued at different levels at different times. She frequently visited the Loreto communities, particularly in Kolkata where many of the orphaned babies she had rescued and who had grown to school age in Shishu Bhavan found their way to school in Loreto Entally where they remained until they were ready for jobs as secretaries, teachers or nurses. When Kolkata experienced disasters of one kind or another – floods, fires, communal tension, refugees - she never hesitated to ask Loreto to share accommodation, to provide shelter, to share work at food or first-aid centres and that assistance had been readily and generously given whether it was working together at the Tangra slaughter house or the India-East Bengal border or flooded South Kolkata.

Mother Teresa came to the fore when Loreto Entally faced a prolonged workers' strike. She came in person; she used her "pull" with the West Bengal Chief Minister to ensure relief and a solution.

They also had regular social and spiritual gatherings – feast days, celebrations of jubilees and shared talks and meetings.

On another level, the Loreto Superiors have never stood in the way of our Sisters who felt a “second call” to serve God as Missionaries of Charity. Sisters Bernard Orzes, Anne Therese Pereira, Caroline McCarthy and Henrietta Hendriks found fulfilment of their religious life with a new name and a new way of loving and serving God. They are our friends and sometimes our guests.

Mother Teresa is God’s gift to Loreto as much as to the wider world.

“For this, we thank you, Lord.”

Acknowledgements:

Much of the data presented in these pages is taken from the Archives maintained by Loreto Provincialate Kolkata, the archives of Loreto Asansol, Loreto Ranchi and personal memories of various Sisters who either knew or admired Mother Teresa and the mission of her Sisters. Thanks are due to Archbishop Emeritus of Kolkata Henry D’Souza for his personal interest in this article; grateful thanks to: Sr Christopher de Souza, Loreto Asansol, Sister Teresa McGlinchey for invaluable editorial assistance, encouragement and “push” and Sister Noelle Corscadden, General Leader of our Institute for taking the risk of inviting an octogenarian to contribute to a tribute to Mother Teresa on the happy occasion of her Canonization.

Mother Teresa on a visit to Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham 1993



Entrance Hall
looking at statue of
Teresa Ball with Sr.
Margaret Ryan

Welcome by head
girl of Loreto Abbey



Visiting Sr. Louise
Coyle with Nurse
Gertie Boland



M. Teresa in Loreto Abbey with Sr. Francesca McHugh

Welcome by head girl of Loreto Abbey



Memories of Mother Teresa M.C.

(by Sr. Rosario O'Reilly IBVM, Loreto House Archives, Kolkata)



By the mid 1940's Mother Teresa was Principal of our Bengali medium School, Loreto St. Mary's, Entally, teaching Catechism and Geography. She was never robust, in fact, she suffered from a weak chest. So she would be

sent up to Darjeeling for the holidays. It was on one such trip in September, 1946, that God gave her a Special Call, of which she was to say, "If I didn't follow it, I would not be able to face God". Archbishop Ferdinand Perier SJ advised Mother Teresa not to speak of her special Call to anyone except to her Spiritual Director (Fr. Celeste Van Exem SJ), to the Superior General (M. Gertrude Kennedy IBVM) and to the Archbishop himself.

I first came to know Mother Teresa when I was transferred to St. Mary's, Entally, in January 1947. Mother Teresa gave me an introduction to the Bengali language and later in the month when she was transferred to Asansol, she arranged for a teacher to help me with the language. She returned to St. Mary's by mid-1947 to sort out a problem that had arisen, and so I had the opportunity to work with her. We became good friends. Mother Teresa moved out of Loreto Entally in 1948, going first to the Medical Missionary Sisters' hospital at Kurji, Patna, for a basic training in Health Work.

She returned to Kolkata in December 1948 and took lodgings with the Little Sisters of the Poor, at AJC Bose Road, while searching for a beginning of work in Motijheel. I still lived at Loreto, Entally but now had charge of St. Teresa's Parish School, Moulali, and was to work there until the year 1955. These were crucial years for Mother Teresa.

She held a letter of recommendation from Archbishop Perier, and with it she went on her tours in the city for the funds necessary to begin her Mission of Charity, and for the support of her incipient congregation. Meanwhile her maintenance was assured by the Loreto Provincial Superior and by Canon Law. Very soon the Kolkata Tramways issued her a permanent Pass on all tram lines. M. Consiglio Frayne gave much from the Domestic Science Room at Loreto House School in 1949-50 when that Department was closed. So did M. Ita Keogh from Entally.

By March 1949 Mother Teresa had moved into the house of Mr. Michael Gomes in Creek Lane. After a morning's work in Motijheel she would have her tiffin (lunch) at St. Teresa's and then go home. As her work slowly took on, she opened a dispensary in the compound after class hours and later, on the Thursday weekly holiday, a room was assigned to her for the screening of T.B. patients.

During this time Fr. Michael Bauwens SJ was the Parish Priest. Fr. Julian Henry SJ was the curate and in charge of the Bengali-speaking parishioners. What is now Fatima Parish had its beginnings under a tree among the khattals (animal farms) by Fr. Henry, with his Blue Army processions for working people late in the evening, reciting the rosary, following the Stations of the

Cross, praying for the nucleus of the Missionaries of Charity. He was their Spiritual Guide and a great practical help.

The rigidity of all layers of life in the Church pre-Vatican II prevented the Loreto Sisters from anything other than a formal relationship with the new Congregation and its Foundress. By 1952 Sr. Bernard Orzes joined the Missionaries of Charity, and this led to a fear in the Loreto Province that more might follow from among the Loreto Sisters and the Daughters of St. Anne – the indigenous Congregation trained by Loreto for the village missions and having Loreto St. Mary's, Entally, as its main house in the city. Much of this fear was allayed by our provincial superiors, two women of great faith – gentle Mother Francis Xavier Stapleton 1950–1962, and far-seeing Mother Agnes Walsh 1962–68 (Superior General 1968–86).

Loreto extended help to the Foundress in that her aspirants and young Sisters were welcomed at Loreto Sealdah to learn English and/or to complete their studies, while some attended Loreto House Degree College. As the number of Sisters grew, this arrangement was no longer feasible, by which time (1970s) Mother Teresa had revised her opinion with regard to higher studies as an aid to her Charism. Meanwhile Sr. Gertrude M.C. took her training as a doctor, while Mother Bernard – now Sr. Francis Xavier M.C. – took a training in Homeopathy and in the care of leprosy patients.

Post-Vatican II aggiornamento saw great changes in Church and Religious Life, and this helped to bring about a better understanding and acceptance of the young Congregation, furthered by the genial relations between Mother Agnes Walsh and Mother Teresa – a

friendship that lasted until the former's death in 1986. A sense of mutual help developed during the decades of the '80s and '90s, as Sr. Noni Mitchell (Superior General 1986-98) led the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary to a better understanding of its own Charism.

Although ailing in 1995, Mother Teresa gave our Indian Province a brief biography of her life, to which I was witness, even as she happily gave our Congregation an assurance of the prayers of the Contemplatives in her Society stationed at St. John's Church, Sealdah. For this we are indebted to her.

Over the years I experienced Mother Teresa as a very sincere and forthright person, yet, with a sense of humour that would help to relieve any awkwardness in a situation. She would not be party to any form of lack of charity, but always had a good word for others. A woman of deep faith and prayer, God gave her the health to carry out the special Vocation to which He had called her. I treasured her friendship, and consider her a person of great virtue and sanctity.

May she rest in peace.

Loreto Sisters visit Mother Teresa



**Barbara Rudum
IBVM in the Mother
House Kolkata**

**Maria Bastian IBVM
and Lynette Daniel
Palmer IBVM in
the Mother House
Kolkata**





**Lorraine Crawford
with M. Teresa in
Chicago**

**Mercy Conway IBVM
with M. Teresa in
Rome, July 1997. Sr.
Nirmala Maria MC,
former IBVM**



Loreto Sisters are proud of Mother Teresa



In the Philippines, people know one thing about IBVM-Loreto. “That’s the order Mother Teresa left, isn’t it?” I feel a bit defensive when I hear this – wanting to say that she used to send the orphans she collected from the streets to our orphanage at Entally, that she asked to be buried from our chapel in Calcutta, that she stayed with Loreto Sisters in Australia when she first came, that in some ways she felt she had not left the IBVM but taken Mary Ward’s charism in another direction.

Mother Teresa had an enormous impact on the world. Her congregation has spread rapidly into many areas of crisis and deep-seated, long-term poverty. Her compassion, together with that of her Sisters, has captured the hearts of many. She portrays one very important face of mercy – the face of one who picks the victims off the road and does what is possible to restore their dignity.

Coming from a committed Catholic family of Albanian origin, her religious formation in Dublin and Calcutta would have been as Ignatian as was possible in those days when so little work had

been done on the essence of Ignatius' legacy or on the story of our founder, Mary Ward. One can only imagine the cross-cultural demands she faced in this journey, and then the move to India. She enjoyed teaching for fifteen years in Loreto schools in India. In 1946 Mother Teresa felt a strong "call within a call" to move from this school-oriented life to one that actually served those who were poorest in this vast continent, to care for the destitute.



Loreto Sisters from Ireland had been brought to India in the 1840s to educate the children of the British Army. They accepted pupils from all faiths, and developed free schools and orphanages for poorer children alongside their more recognized schools. However, there were other families – millions of them – at a more destitute layer of society. Treated and labelled as 'untouchable', these people were born, lived and died on the streets. These were the ones to whom Mother Teresa felt called to give her life. She left with blessing from the Superior General, with practical support from sisters in charge in India, but probably without much understanding on the part of many. She took with her the prayer books the Sisters used, their current understanding of authority and life in community, and many customs, and these remained her guide even as ways of living religious life changed after Vatican II.

What can Loreto Sisters say about her? I think we thank God for her gift to the church and the world. Each era is shaped by needs and opportunities, and by prophetic responses. There are two separate but linked Calls in this area of love of

the poor: one is to tend the broken, to bind up wounds and to ensure dignity as they face death. The other is to advocate and educate people who might change the system of greed and power which divides and destroys lives. After Vatican II more emphasis has been given to advocacy work, to



questioning the structures that leave so many excluded from the right to participate in our society. In India and elsewhere Loreto Sisters work in new ways with justice advocacy and educating young people to critique society. However, Mother Teresa's love and care is so symbolic of the heart of the Gospel that it has a special word to all people of good will.

If more had been known about Mary Ward, Mother Teresa and the Loreto Sisters of that time might well have seen that she walked in the footsteps of our founder. Mary Ward left her home country to enter a religious congregation in a foreign land. She also experienced a call (from the monastic life of the Poor Clare convent) to something other, something more for the 'glory of God'. She had an attentive ear to the signs of her times. 400 years ago that meant helping people, through education and spiritual conversation, to realise the gift that the Catholic faith could be in their lives. Unlike Mother Teresa, Mary Ward did not receive any approval from the Church leaders during her life. Indeed her congregation was suppressed, and she died a laywoman, but she retained her great love and loyalty to the

church while holding firmly to her belief that God wanted a more active life for women religious. Rather than canonisation a mere twenty years after her death, Mary Ward had to wait over 250 years to be even recognised by Church leadership as the founder of the congregation she had started and shaped. But I think she would rejoice that Mother Teresa, a woman after her spirit in some ways, had touched the hearts and lives of so many.

Loreto Sisters from many provinces are going to Rome to celebrate her canonisation and I am sure many will feel that Mother Teresa carried forward the commitment at the base of the mission of all Mary Ward women: to go where the need was greatest. We rejoice wholeheartedly with all the Missionaries of Charity and pray that this work will continue to flourish.

Words: Christine Burke IBVM



“Catching the Emotions of a Moment with Mother Teresa”

A Reflection by Sr. Annie Bromham IBVM on her painting of Mother Teresa



TO BEGIN, LOOK AT the painting and NOTICE what you are first attracted to? Don't try to understand it just notice what you see. Exercise your eyes by letting them travel over the whole canvas. Don't miss anything!

Focus on each corner of the painting, notice the colours, shapes and tones perhaps you like the colours that you see or maybe not?

*What Season of the year do these colours belong to?
Autumn, Winter, Summer or Spring?
Does this colour ENERGISE YOU or not?*

What does the yellow in the painting describe for you?. Make sure that you explore every shade of YELLOW!

LOOK AT the many shades of BLUE.

What memory of seeing this colour can you recall?

What feelings are you in touch with now?

Is your memory about people or places?

LOOK AT Mother Teresa's face carefully, enter into the gentle intimacy of this moment. The painting is offering you A GLIMPSE OF THE EMOTION OF THIS MOMENT, as the baby is cradled in her hands capture her expression what she is feeling?

The child is asleep - see how they are together.

What are you feeling at this moment ?

How do you hold the babies, children and other people in your life?

This is a story about love as seen between the two people

Both of them in harmony with each other.

Can you share this peaceful pose?

Put yourself into the hands of Mother Teresa,

ask her to help you and pray for you.

"COME BE MY LIGHT" Jesus asked.

Mother Teresa spent her life being that light of God's love in the lives of all people who were in need.

"If ever I become a Saint I will surely be one of 'darkness'

I will continually be absent from Heaven

to light the light of those in darkness on earth.

She also said:

"If you cannot feed a hundred people then just feed one"

Mother Teresa

Documents from the Loreto Archives

Copy.

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J. M. J.

On the 25th day of May in the year 1931 in the
Church of the Immaculate Conception of Loreto Convent, Darjeeling
I, Sister Agnes Mary Joseph Teresa Bajadis took the vows of Poverty,
Chastity and Obedience for one year in the Institute of the Blessed Virgin
Mary, understanding all things according to the Constitutions of the same Institute.

Signed by me Sister Agnes Mary Joseph Teresa Bajadis
this 24th day of May 1931.

Vows received by Mother M. Gerard Stickey (Superior)

Copy of Vows taken by Mother Teresa on her First
Profession Day Darjeeling, 24th May 1931

Letter to
Sr. Agnes Walsh
IBVM, Superior
General
1968—1986

Dear

Rome, 15/6/83

My dear Mother Agnes and
every one in Loreto,
I was very happy to receive
your offer of Holy Mass for my
recovery. I am much better
Thank God.

I am sure you will all be
happy to know ^{how} God in His
great love for His Poor keeps
blessing us with many wonderful
vocations. We have now 5 Nov.
Calcutta, Manila, Tabora, Rome,
San Francisco and New York
for the Contemplative branch
236 houses in 52 Countries
All this is only this - so please
pray that we don't spoil God's
work. On the 7th Oct. we will be
33 years old. Sharing the

Year of Redemption with
Jesus. - Wonderful are the
ways of God - His Humility
is beyond my understand-
ing - His nothingness
to do what He has done

My gratitude to you
Mother Agnes, to each one
in Loreto is my prayer
for you - that you all be
one heart full of love ^{in His} ~~in His~~
^{heart of} Jesus through Mary and so
grow in holiness

God bless you
Lu Teresa me



MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY

J.D.M.

Calcutta, 8/12/84

Mary Ward is God's gift to the Church and the World for she brought ^{to the Church} and to Consecrated life a new dimension - Religious women involved in the field of education and in the formation of a new type of womanhood.

She could be His gift only because like Mary - she was "The hand maid of the Lord."

Our gratitude to Mary Ward and her daughters, Loreto Sisters is our prayer for them that they may continue to be a sign of Mother Church to day by reflecting the Motherhood of Mary in educating and forming other Marys to carry Jesus to all those they come in contact with.

My deep gratitude to Loreto for the 20 fruitful years I have spent with

Copy of Vows taken by Mother Teresa on her First Profession Day Darjeeling, 24th May 1931



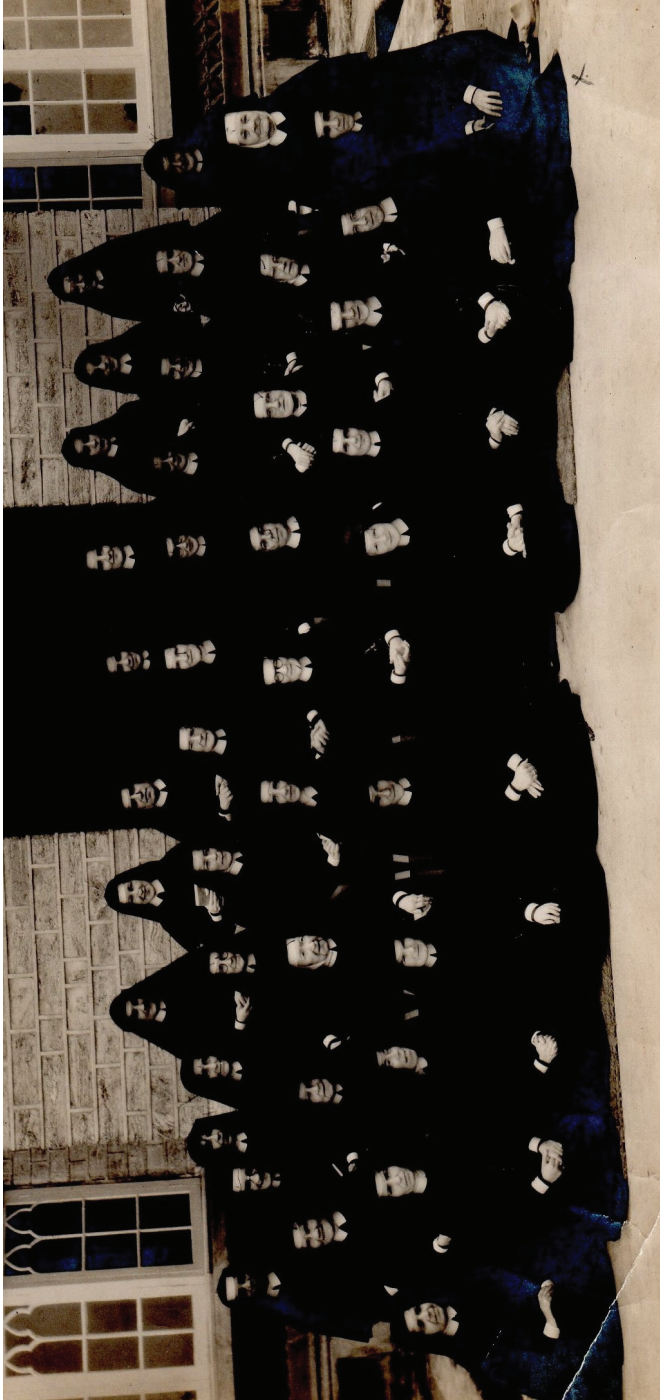
MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY

The Sisters, praying and working together - is my prayer for each Loreto sister - that each one may grow in holiness - through close following of Mary Ward especially her love for Mary and the children she taught.

May all who read this book find
The light to know the will of God
The love to accept the will of God
The joy and the way to do the
will of God - and so experience
the joy of loving God in action
as Mary Ward did. Let us pray.

God bless you
Anteresa Mc

Foreword written for 'Till God Will' Mary Ward through
her writings edited by Gillian Orchard CJ



Foreword written for 'Till God Will' Mary Ward through
her writings edited by Gillian Orchard CJ

Acknowledgements

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To Teresa McGlinchey IBVM for commitment to collecting articles, information and photographs and for her work in formatting the document and to her able helper, our Assistant Secretary, Cristina Stirpe many thanks. Your perseverance has brought this project to completion.

Rosario O'Reilly IBVM wrote her article some years ago. She went to her eternal rest on 28 August 1999 in Kolkata. We remember her with gratitude.

The biographical sketch is based on a private interview Mother Teresa gave to the Loreto Archivist in Kolkata a few years before her death.

