

MOTHER TERESA: A Modern Day Saint



Sunday, September 4, 2016 is an important day in the Catholic Church. It is the day that we celebrate the canonization of Mother Teresa, officially recognizing her as a Saint in the Roman Catholic Church.

Mother Teresa left her home in Macedonia at the age of 18, to become a nun, and never saw her family again. A second calling led Mother Teresa, to leave her convent to minister to the poor in the streets of India. In 1950 she started *The Missionaries of Charity* with 13 members. By 1997, it had grown to more than 4,000 sisters running orphanages and charity centers to care for refugees, the blind, disabled, sick, the poor and homeless, victims of floods, epidemics and famine. While her ultimate calling was to minister to the poor, she also was a gifted teacher; her life's work being her greatest lesson. The world recognized her work in 1979 when she won the *Nobel Peace Prize*, but she insisted that the \$92,000 prize, be given to help the poor of India.

What is far less known about Mother Teresa is that she had grave doubts about God and her relationship with Him. Because she witnessed so much suffering first hand, she struggled to believe in God's presence. What is important to know, is not that she doubted God's presence, but that in spite of this doubt, she lived a faithful life. Whatever *feelings* she had, had no bearing on what was right and what was wrong. She believed she was required to be obedient and that required her choosing to be charitable.

In this world, we often shun suffering, or turn away from it. Mother Teresa showed the world by example, how to embrace suffering. Every human being suffers and understands suffering. Every human being also understands kindness and compassion. Mother Teresa is important because she lived her life in such a way as to inspire kindness and obedience to God. Few people do this, and for this reason, it is important to hold up her example for all to follow, Catholic or not.

The church deservingly canonizes her this weekend. Her spoken words echo in the hearts of believers and non-believers. She had charming catchphrases like, "Let's do something beautiful for God!" as well as "You---have---done---this---to---Me," reminding what Jesus told His followers, "...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (The Gospel of Matthew) In the Catholic Church a saint is a role model and an intercessor in Heaven. Let us, in honor of her Sainthood, take into our hearts her words, "God doesn't ask us to do great things, He asks us to do small things with great love."