



MAKE OTHER PEOPLE HAPPY

EMPOWERING JOURNEY OF MOTHER TERESA

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THE BEGINNING

She seems to be an unusual focus for accomplished and worldly attorneys, client relations liaisons, and operations managers involved with default servicing legal services. At a mere five feet tall, coming from a modest and obscure childhood, Mother Teresa made a major impact for the empowerment of women.

Born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia (now the Republic of Macedonia), her birth name was Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu, and she was the youngest of three children, with an older brother and older sister. Her father died unexpectedly when she was eight, and her mother and Jesuit parish community continued to provide support to her, especially in connection with her Catholic faith.

When she was 18, she joined the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a religious community in Ireland, where she was given the name Mary Teresa, after the Catholic saint, Therese of Lisieux, who died at the age of 24 in 1897 from tuberculosis. A few months later, she traveled to Calcutta, India, now known as Kolkata, and joined the Loreto Entally community and worked as a teacher at St. Mary's School for girls. After she became a nun in 1937, she changed her name to Mother Teresa and continued as teacher, and then principal of the school in 1944.¹

“CALL WITHIN A CALL”

Beginning in 1946, as Mother Teresa took a train from Calcutta to Darjeeling for a retreat, she had visions and messages from God asking her to dedicate her life to caring for the poor. She then founded the Missionaries of Charity, which eventually was recognized by the Catholic Church in Calcutta in 1950, after considerable lobbying and patience, and which now numbers over 4,000 members. At this point, she continuously worked in the slums of Calcutta to care for the poor and sick, and her Missionaries expanded throughout the world.

She stood in contrast to a materialistic and ambitious world, armed only with love for the least among us. Mother Teresa and her colleagues' mission was and is "...to love and serve the poorest of the poor, both materially and spiritually, not only in the slums, but also all over the world, wherever they may be."² For example, the Missionaries currently work with 61 childrens' homes housing ill and disabled children; with 180 homes for abandoned and dying destitute people and for physically and mentally challenged adults; and ten homes for leprosy patients.

From 1950 forward, until her death on September 5, 1997, and beyond, Mother Teresa grew the Mission-

1. <https://www.nationalshrine.org/blog/celebrating-the-life-of-mother-teresa-a-witness-of-charity/>

2 <https://missionariesofcharity.org/our-objective.html>



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aries of Charity network, adding ancillary groups for priests, religious brothers and lay people. Her efforts were recognized with numerous awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and canonization, or sainthood in 2016, now making her known also as St. Teresa.³

LESSONS OF EMPOWERMENT

In no particular order, Mother Teresa taught the world many timeless lessons. She understood poverty existed not just in connection with being hungry or poor or homeless. Poverty includes feeling unwanted and unloved, or “(t)he hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.”

Her lessons, again in no particular order, and certainly not exhaustive, include:

- **Make People Happy:** “Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.” “We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.”
- **Every Effort Counts:** “We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that

missing drop.” “If you can’t feed a hundred people, just feed one.”

- **Attitude Matters:** “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”
- **Live in the Present:** Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”
- **Be Faithful in Small Things:** Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

WOMAN OF GREAT VISION

From humble beginnings, Mother Teresa faced obstacles on her journey to follow the call of God and to serve the poorest of the poor. She was a young woman in the 1940s, working in a traditional role for women as a teacher, and she moved forward to create a worldwide and enduring mission that has forever impacted humankind.

May we all be so fortunate as to emulate Mother Teresa in some small way... **W**

³ <https://www.britannica.com/explore/100women/profiles/mother-teresa>