

Devasahayam has given us a first-hand account of the 'drop of love' that fell on the city beautiful.

TN Chaturvedi

Former Chief Commissioner, Chandigarh, MP (Rajya Sabha) and Governor of Karnataka & Kerala

I have moved with Mother Teresa and Devasahayam. It is natural they came together and brought this 'Drop of Love' to Chandigarh. The book is a scintillating account as to how the drop became a soul that the city sorely needed.

Ms. Medha Patkar, Activist par excellence and Civil Society Leader

Devasahayam says things as they are. That is him. No embellishment, no distortion.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi,

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson and former Governor of West Bengal

His personal narratives about Mother Teresa - (and JP earlier) - are an offering - informative, refreshing and absorbing.

Ms. Aruna Roy, Activist Extraordinaire and Civil Society Leader

The volume should inspire all who look beyond their profession to sow love among those who crave for it.

Hari Jaisingh, Author, Writer and former Editor-in-Chief, The Tribune, Chandigarh

Devasahayam's book captures the happenings in all its beauty...His narrative is literary and choice of words is straight, simple and appropriate coming direct from the heart.

Prabhakar Kamat, Former General Manager, Bharat Petroleum Ltd.

Candid, simple and profound, Devasahayam's Book brings the Mother flesh & blood at Chandigarh. A must read.

Rt. Rev. Ignatius Mascarenhas, Bishop of Chandigarh

The Book invokes the many emotional and courageous experiences of a dedicated and fearless civil servant who left no stone unturned to serve the poor and the suffering.

Ms. Goldy Malhotra, Educationist and former Principal, Modern School, Delhi



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'a drop of love'

memoir of **saint teresa**



m.g devasahayam

'a drop of love'

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Devasahayam has given us a first-hand account of the 'drop of love' that fell on the city beautiful. As Chandigarh's Chief Commissioner at that time I witnessed and participated in Mother Teresa's great act of compassion and solace for the lesser children of God. My children were in awe of her presence. She lit a torch, and forged a path for others to follow.

TN Chaturvedi,

Former Chief Commissioner, Chandigarh, MP (Rajya Sabha)
and Governor of Karnataka & Kerala

I have moved with Mother Teresa and Devasahayam. It is natural they came together and brought this 'Drop of Love' to Chandigarh. It is a great gift to the City-Beautiful perceived as rich and materialistic where poverty is juxtaposed with prosperity. Devasahayam's book is a scintillating account as to how the drop became a soul that the city sorely needed.

Ms. Medha Patkar,

Activist par excellence and Civil Society Leader

Devasahayam says things as they are. That is him. No embellishment, no distortion. He has given us his memoirs, pivoted on the mission of Saint Teresa, a soldier's and an officer's testimony of his complex and often deeply disturbing times. In doing so, he has given us invaluable insights into many remarkable personalities and many events, some sublime, some sordid, some sad but all of them real.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi,

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson and former Governor of West Bengal

I know Devasahayam from the Academy days of IAS. He has had the capacity and the perspicacity to recognize great opportunities and moments, which pass other civil servants by. They seem to narrow down their obligations to official mandates alone. His personal narratives about Mother Teresa and JP earlier are an offering-informative, refreshing and absorbing.

Ms. Aruna Roy,

Activist Extraordinaire and Civil Society Leader

Devasahayam's book gives a riveting narrative of how Mother's 'drop of love' travelled from Kolkata to Chandigarh, giving it the missing 'soul' of love and compassion...I was a witness to his heroic efforts to turn that 'drop' to a 'stream' at Shanti-Dan...The volume should inspire all who look beyond their profession to sow love among those who crave for it.

Hari Jaisingh,

Author, Writer and former Editor-in-Chief, The Tribune, Chandigarh

During my official stint in Chandigarh I had the opportunity to work with Devasahayam to assist Mother Teresa in setting-up Shanti-Dan. Looking back there is a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. Devasahayam's book captures the happenings in all its beauty...His narrative is literary and choice of words is straight, simple and appropriate coming direct from the heart.

Prabhakar Kamat,

Former General Manager, Bharat Petroleum Ltd.

World over Mother Teresa the 'saint-of-the-gutter', now a 'saint-in-heaven' invites us to wipe the drops off tears shed every second-each different but together forming an ocean of despair and desolation-that cries out for mercy and compassion. She calls us to take the plunge. Candid, simple and profound, Devasahayam's Book brings the Mother flesh & blood at Chandigarh. A must read.

Rt. Rev. Ignatius Mascarenhas,

Bishop of Chandigarh

The legendary Le Corbusier gave Chandigarh its expanse and beauty but the city got its 'soul' from Mother Teresa's 'drop of love'. I, with my husband Arun participated in Devasahayam's relentless efforts to make this happen. The Book invokes the many emotional and courageous experiences of a dedicated and fearless civil servant who left no stone unturned to serve the poor and the suffering.

Ms. Goldy Malhotra,

Educationist and former Principal, Modern School, Delhi

Mother Teresa, a Universal Saint



Mother Teresa with Jan Boels & Theo Neutelings

Walking through the narrow lanes of Kolkata one could never miss the little statues of Mother Teresa along with the Hindu deities wayside temples. They have been there even during her lifetime, but more so, after her death. The culture of venerating Mother Teresa had began much before the Church thought of initiating the cause for her canonization. Not

only the people of Kolkata but the whole world started recognising Mother Teresa as a saint from the time her works came to be known through the media, particularly Malcom Muggeridge's 1969 movie and book 'Something Beautiful for God'.

Mother Teresa has touched the lives of people all over the world, purely with her simplicity of life and proximity to the poor. I remember how Mother Teresa met one of my great friends, late Jan Boels, in the Netherlands, shortly after she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace on 10 December 1979. Jan was the CEO of the very popular LIGA Biscuits Company. They had been shipping free of charge nutritious cookies for several children's projects in Africa. While on a trip to the Netherlands once, Mother Teresa happened to pass by LIGA Company in the South. She immediately recognized the name LIGA and told her chauffeur to drive in. The Dutch chauffeur told her that in their country it was not politesse to do so without an appointment. But Mother insisted. As she stepped in, Jan instantly realised that it was indeed a saint who was in his office and bent himself to get her blessings. She thanked Jan and his company profusely on behalf of the poor and she showed in the map, the projects of Sisters of Charity in Africa and around the world. Later, Mother Teresa was pleasantly surprised to receive a container full of LIGA biscuits for her *Nirmal Hriday*

(the Home of the Pure Heart) Project in Kolkata. She never hesitated to do what she set out to do for the poorest of the poor. This is what made her also to quit the congregation of the Loreto Sisters and start the Missionaries of Charity.

'A Drop of Love' is a unique book for a single reason—it speaks the truth. People who wish to believe in the truth will readily read and listen to M. G. Devasahayam. The personalities who have sent in their appreciations are witnesses to that fact. Writing from one's heart and not being carried away by one's emotions is not easy. Devasahayam achieves that balance which is the soul of memoirs. Memoirs are not merely personal accounts of a person but they are a practical way to believe that human experience, if open and truthful will encounter similar experiences in life.

Thank you

Agilan, for giving me extreme publishing freedom,

Badri Seshadri, Publisher of '*Kizhakku Pathipagam*' for publishing the book in Tamil,

Mark Rathinaraj, ever ready to be associated with all my creative ventures, Chitra, for designing and Vinodh, for running errands for me.

Special thanks, to following prominent personalities for reading the manuscript promptly and sending in appreciations for 'A drop of love': TN Chaturvedi, former Chief Commissioner, Chandigarh, MP (Rajya Sabha) and Governor of Karnataka & Kerala; Ms. Medha Patkar, activist par excellence and civil society leader; Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson and former Governor of West Bengal; Ms. Aruna Roy, activist extraordinaire and civil society leader; Hari Jaisingh, author, writer and former Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune, Chandigarh; Prabhakar Kamat, former General Manager, Bharat Petroleum Ltd; Rt. Rev. Ignatius Mascarenhas, Bishop of Chandigarh; and Ms. Goldy Malhotra, Educationist and former Principal, Modern School, Delhi.

Raj Mariasusai SDB

Executive Publisher

Dedication

The book is dedicated to the 'lesser children of God' whom the Mother loved and who have nothing to give except their smile of gratitude which is the true reward of love.

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Prologue: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis*

At the time of her beatification in 2003, Mother House of Missionaries of Charity at Kolkata, circulated this poignant Quote from Mother Teresa: "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." It was not an ordinary drop, but a drop of love, the very elixir of life!

I and my family experienced the 'drop of love' at the City of Chandigarh- and this came from Mother, now Saint Teresa. Hailed as the "City Beautiful", this capital of Punjab and Haryana has wide vistas, wider avenues, enchanting landscape, lovely gardens, sprawling lawns and spacious bungalows, all signs of wealth and prosperity. These are the very antithesis of the places and people with whom Mother Teresa lived and worked.

But Saint Teresa's love did fall at this most unlikely of all places because under Chandigarh's veneer of physical beauty was concealed poverty, destitution, abandoned infants and mentally retarded. Such pathetic wretchedness in the midst of opulent wealth was most inhuman. Those afflicted by these tragedies lacked everything that makes a decent and dignified life. Only love, an abundance of it, could redeem this and make their life worth living.

The process commenced in May 1976, when Mother sent a band of five Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity headed by Sister Joya to start a home for the abandoned and dying destitutes and also work among the poorest of the poor in the City and its neighbourhood.

**MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY
SHANTI-DAN
SECTOR : 23-A
CHANDIGARH**

DATE : 01-06-2001

Dear Devashayam & family

GREETINGS of peace and joy from Missionaries of Charity, Sector 23-A, Chandigarh. Hope you and your family members are keeping good health and doing well in life.

Received your letter and enclosed the letter of mother and paper cuttings sent us on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of the foundation of Missionaries of Charity, SHANTI-DAN, Sector 23-A, Chandigarh. We are grateful to you for taking trouble to send us in these informations.

It's with deep gratitude to God, I write this letter to inform you and your family, that you were very much remembered in our simple Thanks giving Jubilee mass on the 31st May, 2001 to 10 A.M. It was a simple celebration of Thanks giving to God according to the wish and spirit of our dear Mother who is in Heaven. You were sincerely remembered by us and the poor during the whole celebration. We specially prayed for you during the mass that Jesus through the intercession of Mother Teresa bless you abundantly. We promise that we would continue to offer you and your family to the Almighty and ask Him to shower His grace-filled blessing upon you and your family.

May I request you and your family to accept this simple letter as a token of our Love and gratitude to you for the help and support you have given to Mother, and the poor to spread God's love and compassion in the city of Chandigarh and the adjacent villages and jhuggis of Chandigarh.

Once again expressing you are sincere Thanks for all that you have been to us and requesting your valuable prayer and constant support in the apostolate of charity.

Your Ever-Loving in Christ

St. M. Kochuthusaree M.C.
SR. Kochu Theresa M.C
&
ALL IN SHANTI-DAN

**MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY
SECTOR 23-A,
OPP. BAL BHAVAN
CHANDIGARH-160 023**

25 years later on 1st June 2001 I, now living in Chennai, was pleasantly surprised to receive this message from Sr. Kochu Theresa, M.C, Sister-Superior of Missionaries of Charity at Chandigarh:

The 'drop' that fell in 1976 was the blessing hand of the Almighty that has transformed the lives of the 'wretched of the earth'. Over the last four decades this drop has become a 'stream of love' touching all those in Chandigarh who wanted to love by giving because "it is in giving that we receive". This book is the story of that 'drop of love' and my personal experience in receiving it thereby giving a soul to the 'City beautiful'.

In August, 2013 I was invited by the All India Catholic Union: National Laity Assembly to address its Kolkata Convention on the subject of 'Democracy and decision making in the Catholic Church'. Nothing much came of it. But it gave me an opportunity to visit Mother House first time after her passing away. I took an auto to the Home and quietly spent an hour in the saintly and serene atmosphere of Mother's grave. All my old thoughts and memories of the Mother came back like a torrent. It was then that I decided to put these down in print for posterity before I fade away into the sunset. My deep gratitude is due to the Salesians for making this possible.

There cannot be a better occasion than the present when the Mother is being raised into the constellation of Saints. John Keble's famous words resonate in one's mind: "God hath sworn to raise on high he/she who sinks himself/herself in true Humility."



Experiencing the 'drop of love' | 1



Mother (at cover) and Devasahayam signing-in the 'Drop of Love'

SPM

Calcutta, 12/12/77

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Devashayam.
From Sr. M. Joya I heard
of the suffering that has
come into your family -
remember - suffering
is but the kiss of Jesus
a sign that you have
come so close to ~~you~~ (Him)
that He can kiss you.
I know what you feel
but remember Jesus is
the Truth & He will stand
by in Truth.

I am praying much
for you. Put your trust
in Our Lady.

God bless you
M. Teresa

On a cold winter evening of December 1977, Sister Joya of the Missionaries of Charity came to my residence in Sector-16, Chandigarh and personally delivered a hand written note from Mother Teresa that had arrived from Kolkata:

How did I come to merit this singular honour? How did I chance to deserve a personal Note of consolation sent all the way from Kolkata from the remarkable lady, Bharat Rathna, Nobel Laureate and world celebrity hailed as a 'living saint'? Therein lays a tale.

Let us begin from the beginning. Born in a large, but impoverished household in the distant 'Lands-End-of-India' (Vattakkarai, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari District), I grew up in poverty and privation which were the hallmarks of pre and post-early independence years. My adolescence was heart-rending and my youth was a nightmare in a depraved and depressed society of those hard and heartless days. Though from humble beginnings my father, Maria Gnanaprahasam was a strict disciplinarian. Despite having several children to tend to, my mother Thynese had a special place for me in her heart. Both being devout Catholics, I had a good Catholic upbringing. Thanks to the sweat, suffering and sacrifice of my father, I received decent education which is even now denied to millions. And that put me on the 'ladder of life' with a Masters degree from the prestigious Loyola College, Madras!

After a brief stint in the Economics faculty of my *alma mater* I was commissioned in the Indian Army in 1964 as Second Lieutenant. Excluding the condensed training period, I spent about four-and-a-half years in hardcore Infantry, the 17th Battalion of The Madras Regiment. Within this short period I went through military operations that may not come in the way of most Army officers in their lifetime career. These include Aid to civil authority (Assam, during refugee influx from East Pakistan and Tamil Nadu during the ferocious anti-Hindi agitation), Indo-Pak War 1965 in the Thar desert of Pakistan and Counter-

Insurgency operations in the jungles of Nagaland where I escaped death twice by a whisker! In the process I received General Service Medals and Samar Seva (War Service) Star. For leading a successful counter-insurgency operation against a fully-armed Naga underground Army twice our strength, and capturing a dozen insurgents and a big cache of Pakistani weapons, I was recommended by the Battalion for the highest 'Ashok Chakra' award which was trashed by a parochial Divisional Commander, who had a grudge against our 'Madras' Regiment.

I left the Army in 1968 in the rank of Major and entered the coveted Indian Administrative Service (IAS), a dream of every aspiring youth. I was assigned to the cadre of Haryana, a State carved out of original Punjab and allotted 1964 seniority because of military service. I was denied Tamil Nadu (then Madras State) cadre because of resistance by the then Chief Minister for God alone knows why! Perforce, I had to serve far away from my home and hearth, unable to take care of my ageing parents. What hurt me most was my inability to attend to my dying father before he breathed his last in October 1973. This was the man who worked hard and gave himself to his children without asking for anything in return.

In the span of about 20 years I spent in IAS before opting for voluntary retirement, I had gone through experiences that are unique. I had the privilege of raising a District from scratches, that too the one from where the then Chief Minister Bansi Lal hailed from. Being a dry and backward desert district we had to work hard towards people-centered development. As the first District Collector of Bhiwani in Haryana, I was instrumental in conceiving, preparing and implementing an Integrated District Development Plan with water as the catalyst in association with Haryana Agricultural University. This became the precursor for the Integrated Rural Development Plan rolled out by Government of India few years later.

I had the distinction of administering Chandigarh, the 'City Beautiful' considered among the best planned cities in the world from mid-1974 to late 1977. I had the rare opportunity of being a District Magistrate before, during and after Emergency and therefore the chance of seeing this 'autocratic saga' and its mistress, masters and minions from close quarters. Due to the various initiatives I took and implemented in Chandigarh, I was hailed by the public as administrator-par-excellence! My contribution to sports in general and tennis in particular was the founding of the Chandigarh Lawn Tennis Association and establishing one of the finest Tennis Complexes in the country right in the Leisure Valley.

In the early days of Emergency [1975], Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), the die-hard democrat who had opposed Indira Gandhi's dictatorship tooth and nail, was arrested in Delhi and brought to Chandigarh for safe custody. As District Magistrate cum Inspector General, Prison of the Union Territory, I was his custodian. During this period I developed a humane and warm relationship with JP which sustained after the Emergency and lasted till JP, the architect of 'India's Second Freedom', passed away in October 1979. I had the privilege of being a small instrument in making India's second freedom possible and the rare honour of being called by JP as his 'Friend' and a 'son he never had'.

This is what my former boss TN Chaturvedi, Chief Commissioner of Chandigarh who went on to become Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Member of Parliament and Governor of Karnataka has to say about me:

".....In 1975 Devasahayam-a young and dynamic officer-was Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, Chandigarh. I had known him when he was a probationer at the National Academy at Mussoorie. He came to the Indian Administrative Service from the Indian Army, having developed qualities of leadership. During my stint from 1976-78 as

Chief Commissioner of Chandigarh, I found Devasahayam to be a diligent, dedicated, composed, and efficient officer, who upheld the rule of law, and was fair in his dealings with all, however high or low they might be. It fell on the shoulders of this young man to be the jailor of JP...

....Besides his duties as a civil servant Devasahayam did something more...He met JP on an almost daily basis and interacted with him intensely. He treated JP as a man who had inspired millions of Indians to take up the cudgels for their rights. He looked upon him as the living connection with and embodiment of the ideas and ideals that Mahatma Gandhi instilled in those who fought for our freedom. He treated JP with the respect due him...

....From a low point JP gradually recovered his old self, and in spite of his ill health, determined to right the wrong that has been done to India i.e. defeating Emergency. Devasahayam brings JP to life in all the glory of his integrity, moral fervour, and gift of the fight against all odds. Devasahayam was not just a jailor, but also an interlocutor, and then a tireless facilitator of a rapprochement between JP and Indira Gandhi..."

In the process I had broken the barriers of civil service and saved JP's life twice. First, in August, 1975 when JP decided to go on fast unto death if Emergency was not lifted immediately and had written to the Prime Minister. After near-two hours of wordy-duel I dissuaded JP from taking this extreme step. Distinguished barrister and parliamentarian M.R. Masani records this in his Book: 'JP: Mission Partly Accomplished' (Macmillan):

"It seems that Mr. Devasahayam, who was a competent and patriotic young officer, went and pleaded with JP not to risk his life and give up the idea of his fast. After lot of persuasion, he was able to make JP change his mind. This certainly shows that JP treated him like a friend and that Devasahayam had by his behaviour towards his distinguished prisoner earned his confidence. This incident also shows that not all

officials of Government had lost their values and their decent instincts during the Emergency."

Next was more poignant-countering an attempt on the life of JP in confinement. Mysteriously, starting early November, 1975 his health deteriorated sharply. I had serious suspicion about this conspiracy. My assessment was that 'Delhi Durbar' considered JP as the only person of stature who could challenge the dynasty and remove it from power. More specifically he was the biggest stumbling block in Sanjay Gandhi's ambition to become India's youngest Prime Minister ever! And therefore JP should be put out. Realising the enormity of the situation I initiated a 'pincer movement' to pressurise MHA and PMO, got JP released and sent him posthaste to Bombay's Jaslok Hospital just in time to save his life. JP lived for four more years, defeated Indira Gandhi and her Emergency and returned India back to democracy. I had a distinct role to play in this history.

JP himself acknowledged my role in his eloquent letter (03-11-1977) in Hindi to Union Home Minister (Ch. Charan Singh) and Haryana Chief Minister (Ch. Devi Lal): (*"Jab mein Chandigarh mein nazarband tha Sri Devasahayam ne apne kanoone kartavyon aur maryadon ka palan karthe hue mere saath athyanth hi soujanya ka barthav kiya tha. Unke anek krupayen us samay mere upar hue thi jis keleye unka sadha aabari rahoonga. Is vyakthikath prasangh ko agar chod bhi dhen tho mere upar deputy commissioner ke nathe unke sarkari aachar-vichar ka gambir asar muj par hua tha. Vah el kattar deshbakht, drud-prathiksh aur samarpith adhikari hain...."*) [When I was a prisoner in Chandigarh Sri Devasahayam, while strictly adhering to his official duties and responsibilities dealt with me in an extremely humane manner. For his many acts of kindness towards me I shall ever be grateful. Even leaving aside this personal affection, I was deeply impressed by his exemplary qualities of administration and governance. He is a deeply patriotic, strong-willed and dedicated officer.]

Coming from India's 'Second Mahatma' this was indeed very heart-warming. For this humane action of saving the life of JP, I incurred the wrath of the Delhi Durbar led by the political upstart and prime-minister-aspirant Sanjay Gandhi. In the event, he and his minions were gunning for me.

Be that as it may, during the three-and-a-half years I was DC, Chandigarh I had taken certain harsh steps to deal with corruption, land grab, illegal construction, encroachment, adulteration, hoarding and black marketing. In the process I had rubbed some congenitally corrupt and anti-social elements on the wrong side and they have been itching to take revenge against me. My bringing Mother Teresa to Chandigarh and setting up her 'Home' in the City had angered the communal fringes who had a fair presence in the Union Territory. These disparate elements made common ground and came together to form a Corrupt and Communal Coterie (CCC). Congressmen supported the coterie from the background. They formed an alliance with sections in the media, just out of the Emergency repression and itching for sensation! These worthies were keenly awaiting an opportunity to go for the kill.

The opportunity came their way when Janata Party captured power at the Centre in early 1977 and in Haryana in mid 1977 largely due to JP's relentless battle against the Congress party that had imposed Emergency in 1975. CCC managed to manipulate the new set of politicians and senior bureaucrats and succeeded in turning them against me. They conspired to manufacture some adverse observations about me in the report of the Enquiry Commission probing into the death of an old Rajput lady in village Rewasa (Bhiwani District, Haryana) in early 1974 due to alleged police excess instigated by Chief Minister Bansi Lal, and his politician - son Surender Singh who are Jats. At the time of this incident I was the DC of Bhiwani and there was agitation on the issue led by Ch. Devi Lal, whose main target was his

political foe Bansilal. For this the accidental death of an old lady was deliberately distorted into a communal issue!

As soon as Devi Lal became Chief Minister in 1977, Rewasa Enquiry Commission was constituted primarily to fix Bansilal and Surender Singh. I was summoned by the Commission from the side of the complainants as one of their witnesses! Advocate General of Haryana had the audacity to come to my residence to 'coerce' me to depose against Bansilal, so that he could be implicated in the heinous offence of 'murder'! I refused to commit perjury. CCC then ganged up and went all out to harm me. For this purpose they mobilised the entire might of the governments of Haryana and Punjab against me. Haryana forces were led by Deputy Chief Minister Mangal Singh of the Jana Sangh/RSS and Punjab by a rich and powerful political family of a former Chief Minister whose business interests I had hurt. They prevailed upon the retired judge holding the enquiry and spent huge resources [said to be over Rs. 5 lakhs (half million) at that time] to smuggle some untenable 'adverse remark' about me ('I was supine') in the Commission's Report and then get me hounded!

Armed with this 'great revelation' Mangal Singh went for my jugular at the Haryana Cabinet meeting on November 1, 1977 (Haryana Day) presided over by Chief Minister Devi Lal, when the Commission's Report came up for consideration. He demanded filing of criminal charges against me and my immediate arrest. Mrs Sushma Swaraj and Col. Ram Singh, both Cabinet Ministers, protested that this demand was illegal since there was no case against me. When Mangal Singh persisted they pointed out that it was because of JP they have come to power and told him about JP's high regard for me. On this Mangal Singh said that he did not care for JP and wanted me to be punished by any means. When the matter was referred to legal scrutiny Mangal Singh wanted me to be placed under suspension forthwith. This was objected to by the Chief Secretary, SD Bhambhani saying that since I was under deputation to

Government of India (GoI), Haryana Government had no powers to do this. So a resolution was passed urging the Government of India to place me under suspension forthwith and the same was sent to Delhi post-haste. Due to God's grace and JP's intervention this did not happen.

Though there was no truth in the 'Rewasa episode' over-hyped media elements bought over by CCC went into a frenzy with all kind of canards against me with 'The Tribune' writing a special editorial titled 'Butchers of Rewasa' which included me also. The same newspaper kept at it frequently taunting the state government as to why I was not being suspended and when it was going to happen.

Around the same time CCC linked up with certain officials in Estate Office, Chandigarh whom I had suspended and charge-sheeted for corrupt practices. They manufactured a complaint against me and went to the Ambala based CBI Superintendent of Police, whom I had snubbed earlier for botching some important investigation. This SP with sadistic streaks immediately got a preliminary enquiry (PE) registered against me. He and CCC elements tried their best to fabricate evidence to have me arrested and prosecuted. This did not work. So they concocted a Report to impose major penalty on me and recommended to Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) accordingly. On my representation, MHA referred the matter to Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for advice. After careful examination UPSC wrote back to MHA saying that CBI officials acted with malicious intention and there was no case for disciplinary action against me.

Around this time a stuck-in-the-mud bureaucrat, a part of CCC who happened to be my senior in Chandigarh Administration wrote some adverse remarks in my Annual Confidential Report. This was conveyed to me and I represented against it to the MHA. On scrutiny MHA found these remarks were written with a 'deliberate intention to harm me' and quashed the same.

Since I was a rank outsider without roots in the land of Punjab and belonging to the microscopic Christian minority, CCC worthies thought they could play with me in gay abandon. And they did. Though they could not succeed in getting me arrested or suspended they did achieve their primary objective of terminating my tenure as DC, Chandigarh. They also got the order posting me as Home Secretary, Chandigarh Administration cancelled. They succeeded in torpedoing my appointment as Chairman, Rubber Board at Kottayam in Kerala very near my home town of Nagercoil.

All these and other pre-planned and well executed manipulations severely damaged my career in the IAS. Sensing this and pained at being reduced to a 'constant petitioner for justice' thereby compromising my honour and self-respect, I bid adieu to IAS more than 15 years before my normal time of superannuation. So be it!

Battling the combined onslaught of two powerful state governments, influential media, CBI, CCC as well as the moneyed mafia almost single-handed, I was in deep anguish and agony. Not because of the personal torture I was undergoing; not because of my hard earned reputation being mingled in dust. But because in the midst of deep distress I found myself forlorn and forsaken. Not one of my colleagues sought to console me. In fact some of them were celebrating. Some were upset that I was not suspended as they had expected. Only a handful had felt sorry for what was happening. Still, no one had the courage to come openly and give me support. Out of the many friends who used to hang around when I was in the chair, just a handful remained. Even they were cautious. Since I hail from the faraway lands-end-of-India I had no kith and kin nearby to stand by me. In my family, except my wife there were only two little daughters and an infant son.

Those who vanished first were the very people whom I had gone out of the way to help. As irony would have it among the few who stood by me

were those for whom I had done nothing. The small Christian community consisting of priests, nuns and some others showed some sympathy, but could hardly do anything else. By and large I was near totally isolated and virtually stood alone in my hour of deep despair. Perhaps that was as it should be. Has not the wise one said "When you laugh, the whole world laughs with you. When you cry, you cry alone?"

Since the beginning of November 1977 I have been groping in darkness, searching for a meaning and a purpose of life itself. I have been searching my soul and raking my brain to find out as to what wrongs had I done and what sins I had committed to deserve such as ignominious treatment. As far as my knowledge went I had always tried to uphold certain standards, principles, values in public life. I have tried to help the poor, weak and the downtrodden to the best of my ability.

Considering my job and professional compulsions I have been fairly regular in the fulfilment of my religious obligations also. Why then, such a cruel injustice? Why should my honour be tainted, integrity impaled and career ruined? Why should I go through such anguish and agony? I have been questioning myself again and again. In my impotent rage I have also been questioning the wisdom of the creator, even His very existence!

It was in the midst of such desolation and foreboding that the Note from Mother Teresa containing the 'drop of love' arrived from Kolkata and hand delivered to me. Now suddenly I have been given the answer virtually from the blues. Suffering is not for nothing. It has a purpose. May be even a divine one! It is the touch of God wanting to kiss me. For me these words came as elixir of life itself. Agony has a meaning, anguish has a purpose and suffering has a sense. Coming from the very person who symbolised the pains and privations of the suffering humanity, this message had added relevance and importance.





Land where the 'Drop' fell-At Shanti-Dan site with Bishop Gilbert Rego

Mother Teresa comes to Chandigarh | 2

The problem of destitute, unwedded mothers, orphans, mentally retarded and abandoned children stared at me when I took over as District Commissioner, Chandigarh in the mid-1974. Those afflicted by these tragedies lacked everything that makes a decent and dignified life. Physical support besides loving care only could take care of these unfortunate ones. Despite best intentions, State 'welfare' apparatus as structured in India was just incapable of understanding and handling this intensely human and humane issue.

It all started with my visits to the slums of Chandigarh euphemistically called Labour Colonies. I was appalled to see the filth and squalor of the occupants of these slums. The wretched misery in which they lived contrasted sharply with the clean living and comfort of the people of the 'City Beautiful'. Most of the children were famished, underfed and unkempt. There was no education for them worth the name. Diseases were very common. The Government efforts and schemes were only touching their body, not their soul. Distressed as I was by their deplorable state of affairs, I have been receiving regular reports of abandoned children born to unwed mothers causing consternation to the authorities of the Government Hospital and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGI). Some of the children were retarded too, physically as well as mentally. There were reports also of dying destitute in the corridor of the PGI.

To cap it all, the city was faced with a virtual onslaught of lepers who were roaming the streets and business centres. As it is these are bad enough. But to have them in Chandigarh considered as one of the most modern and clean cities in the world was really heart-rending. There were Government departments and aided agencies who were trying to grapple with these problems and find out solutions. I was myself in charge of the St. John Ambulance Association. But deep within me I felt that something was missing. Money was available, man-power was there, machinery existed, but yet something was missing—the healing touch.

Chandigarh as a city has no parallel in India. The city was almost everything anyone can think of. It is the 'city beautiful'. It is the city of the future, a town planner's paradise. It is a city of picturesque graces—a tourist attraction. It is a city described by no less a person than Jawaharlal Nehru as "Symbolic of the freedom of India unfettered by the tradition of the past..... an expression of the nation's faith in the

14th January 1975.

Dear & V. Rev. Mother Teresa,

Peace and Blessings for 1975!

Sub: Setting up a homes for the dying at Chandigarh or its vicinity:

It has been a long time since we had the pleasure of meeting you. But your wonderful work and your good Sisters come before me whenever I meet them or they come to meet me. In my last visitation to Ambala in November I discussed with them the possibilities of what we could do for the Diocese and I said I would discuss it with my Council as well and then place it before you.

We would appreciate it very much, if you have no objection to the Sisters staying in the Villages provided we can give them safe and suitable accommodation to instruct the women in Catechism and hygiene so that we can consolidate the work of the Fathers and Catechists. The Mission work, i.e. to strengthen the women and children in their faith, in the villages is sadly neglected due to the lack of Sisters staying in the Villages. This has reference to areas around Ambala, i.e. Karnal, Jagadhri, Ajrur or wherever it is feasible in consultation with them.

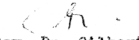
I also discussed the possibility of opening a home for the dying in Chandigarh or at Karad about 7 miles away from Chandigarh where the Protestants are inclined to sell us a property. I have not approached the higher authorities except the D.C. who would be glad to obtain a plot for the same and a building could be easily put up, if you think this is acceptable to you all. The need for the Christian image in this vast Diocese is very great and a Home for the Dying would be a great boon, I think, since we have two big hospitals here and many people are left with no room and perhaps no one to care for because they are too poor or too far gone.

I would appreciate your kind reflection on this and then place it before your Council and the Sisters at Ambala, please let me know so that we can move in the matter.

Thanking you and your good Sisters for their committed services and generosity, with warm personal regards and in union of prayers,

Gratefully in O.L.,

V. Rev. Mother Teresa,
Mother General,
Missionaries of Charity,
54A Lower Circular Road,
CALCUTTA - 16.


Rt. Rev. Dr. Gilbert B. Rego,
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh.

cc to Rev. Sr. Dominic-- Ambala.

26th March 1975.

Rev. Mother Theresa,
Superior General,
Missionaries of Charity,
54 A Lower circular Road,
CALCUTTA - 16.

Dear Mother Theresa,

Peace and Blessings of our Risen Lord be with
you and all the Sisters and all your noble work for Him.

Indeed I was sorry to have missed you when you
came to Chandigarh at my request, not knowing your programme and I
was badly in need of rest and also to meet my brothers and mother
after a few years.

You met our good D.C. Mr. M.C. Devasahayam who
has been a real pillar in all our work in the Union Territory and
the Church. I understand that you are ready to send your Sisters to
start a home for the rehabilitation and development of the poor
on the lines that you would think fit, since you have seen the
situation personally. Mr. Devasahayam wishes to know when the Sisters
are able to come down and begin the work as he needs a little time,
say about a fortnight to put a one Kanak building at the disposal
of the Sisters. If there are any preliminaries you wish to clarify,
please let me know. We are eager to begin the work.

With warm personal regards & God bless you,

Gratefully in O.L.,

Rt. Rev. Dr. Gilbert B. Rego,
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh.

19th December 1975.

Dear Rev. Mother Teresa,

Pax Christi!

I have been in correspondence with Sr. Lourdes with
regard to the opening of the house here in Chandigarh. I had a long meeting
with her in Delhi and discussed my whole philosophy of approach.

As our Diocese is virtually a virgin area, i.e. barely
any mission stations and mission work we would base our approach on developing
villages and people so that from the beginning they are aware of self-support
and also support the Church they want to establish in their own area. Hence
in such villages I had requested Sister that we would appreciate their help
in Catechising and cleanliness, and that we feel that in such villages
medicines may not be given free at the villages but that they could come
to the Centre where the medicine and treatment could be given.

The main reason for this is that an average Punjabi
comes from the poorer strata and once they feel medicine is given free, then
they expect everything to be given free as we have found to our sad experience
in these areas.

The work we had discussed with Sister would be re-
habilitation and social work, a place for the derelicts who are left out of
hospitals and as we see the needs in the area to find ways and means to
fulfill these needs.

We have a van which I had kept for you all. Please
let me know if you are going to accept it or I will have to return it to
Caritas-India. I had mentioned this to Sr. Lourdes.

Looking forward to hearing from you and wishing
you the Peace and Joy of the Christ Child on you and the Community and may
His blessings be with you all in the New Year, with kind regards and in
union of prayers,

Devotedly in O.L.,

Rev. Mother Teresa,
54 A Lower Circular Road,
CALCUTTA - 16.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Gilbert B. Rego,
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh.

cc to Sr. Lourdes.

MISSIONARIES



OF CHARITY

54A, Lower Circular Road, Calcutta.1

24.12.1975

"As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren. You did it to Me"

Dear Bishop G.B. Rego,

Many thanks for your kind letter of 19.12.1975.

I have read your letter very carefully. I understand your point re: your people. Therefore, as this does not fit in with our way of life and work, I will not be able to establish the house in your diocese. I am sure there are a number of Congregations who would do the work according to your plan - and do it very beautifully.

I am surprised that Sr. M. Lourdes did not explain to you - our vow of whole-hearted free service. We expect everything from God and He gives us everything free - therefore, He is spoiling us most.

I am very grateful to you for having written as you did - you must do what you feel is the right thing for you to do - but I cannot accept it. Therefore, I cancel my promise to open the house in Chandigarh.

Happy and Holy Christmas and God's Blessing on 1976.

Please pray for me.

*Yours in Jesus
M Teresa me.*

future." The city has been growing by leaps and bounds. In such a short span of time, the city has achieved national eminence and international fame as one of the best planned and organised cities in the world. The city also had the distinction of having excellent medical and education facilities. With its vast vistas and wide avenues it is virtually a dream come true. It was indeed a privilege to live in a city with such openness and facilities one could ask for. The city of Chandigarh could rightly be proud of its manifold achievements.

Missionaries of Charity,
54A, Lower Circular Road,
Calcutta-18,
24/12/76

SKB

Dear Bishop Rego,

Many thanks for your very kind letter. It was so very wonderful to be able to speak of Jesus so simply.

I find Jesus is so much in love - that He makes Himself one of us - just so that we can receive Him - love Him - have Him - touch Him - feel Him. I do not believe in duplicating - so we will work only among our

own people - the unwanted, the unloved - the destitute. He Jesus is.

I think we should be able to have the Sisters ready by May - we can then open the house -

I am sorry I will not be able to be here - as I have to be in U.S.

I am sure you will take care of the Sisters & help them to grow in holiness.

The Gov. was willing to give a place - may be you can follow up this offer. I pray for you as I promised. Ask Jesus to use me without consulting me. Yours - Jesus
M Teresa me

6th March 1976.

Dear Mother Teresa,

Your very beautiful letter of the 24th of February 1976 came to hand a few days ago and indeed it was a very precious time when we were able to share some common thoughts on our dear Lord. Truly there are no words to express His unfailing Love for us and how we can share Him with so many people from day to day and moment to moment.

I do appreciate your sincere and clear norms for the work of your Sisters and there shall be no duplication as you have expressed and the Sisters working with those who are unwanted, unloved, the destitute, lepers etc in this little modern City of Chandigarh will be a very beautiful image especially in today's India where trends of Family Planning and development may reach drastic measures.

From our side we shall do all we can to help the Sisters and I shall follow up the government's offer to provide a house for the Sisters and find whatever means we can to establish them. I do understand that the demands on you will necessitate your absence, but we shall have a simple and meaningful opening of the little home that we intend to start in Chandigarh by May. We shall keep you informed.

In the meantime I suppose you have informed Sr. Lourdes, the Provincial about the intended programme so that I may communicate with her on details of the programme, house and opening. I thank you for your thoughtful consideration for the Diocese and the offer you made to help us bring Christ's love to this part of India.

I also thank you for your prayers for me and the Diocese, they are deeply appreciated and give me great strength and from that day I have never failed to pray for you too.

With warm personal regards and may Jesus keep you in His care and bring many to Him through the work you are doing,

Gratefully in O.L.,

Rev. Mother Teresa, M.C.
Missionaries of Charity,
51A Lower Circular Road,
CALCUTTA * 16.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Gilbert B. Rego,
Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh.

But in the midst of all the glory and pride, the city has been desperately searching for something missing. Something without which no city or society can be complete. It was the search for a 'soul' which would give meaning and content to the very existence of the city. Numerous people and organisation had set out in their efforts to identify and organise activities which they thought would put the 'soul' in to the city. Some sought to achieve it through the theatre. Some others through art. Yet others through music. Each had its place and they filled the void in their own way.

My search was different and it concerned the 'lesser children of God' who should have some dignity in their despair with the better-off sections of society playing a part in providing it. In this search of mine I opened up my heart to Rt. Rev. Gilbert Rego, the affable Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh Diocese sometime in late 1974. As I clearly pronounced the need, Bishop Rego was quick in identifying the remedy – Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. The answer having been found, we lost no time in contacting the Mother House at Kolkata (then Calcutta). Initial feelers sent by the Bishop by way of exploratory letters brought the response that Mother, accustomed to the poverty-stricken and dirty slums of Kolkata and elsewhere in the world was not keen on Chandigarh, perceived as affluent and beautiful.

Nevertheless we decided to persist. Faced with a two pronged request – from me and the Bishop - Mother Teresa arrived in Chandigarh towards the end of 1975. She had justifiably felt that it was a rich and glamorous place with hardly any poor worth the name. We took her around the slums of the city and explained to her that Chandigarh and its surrounding areas do have large number of poor people living below the poverty line. Furthermore this place also has problems of destitute, retarded, abandoned and orphaned children as well as lepers. It was also impressed upon the Mother that poverty and squalor in this city is

MISSIONARIES



OF CHARITY

To:

The Estate Officer,
Chandigarh Administration,
Union Territory.

Sub.: ALLOTMENT OF LAND

Dear Sir,

As you know we are working all over the world and in India in 66 places and in this region as well, and for the last 6 months we are working in Chandigarh.

In India we have homes for the sick and dying destitutes, Shishu Phawan, i.e., homes for mentally and physically handicapped children and malnutrition and unwanted children, rehabilitation for lepers, mobile clinics, night shelters and feeding centres for the homeless, vocational and natural family planning centres, rescue homes for women and unwed mothers and all this work, purely for the love of God and our people.

We would like to offer similar services for our people here in Chandigarh as a home for sick and dying destitutes, for unwanted and malnutrition children, mentally and physically retarded children, rescue home for women and a night shelter, and this centre will also serve for this whole region.

This matter has already been discussed by Mother Teresa with C.E. and understood. A.D. to Council Town Planner create a Plot Memorandum approx 15000 sq. Yards and put up Case with in a week. W. AED

Chandigarh,
3rd October, 1976

MISSIONARIES



OF CHARITY

-2-

To be able to give these services we need 3 acres of land central enough to help the people of the city to be involved in sharing the work of love and compassion.

As all our works depend solely on Divine Providence, which comes to us through the generous gifts of our people, we would be grateful if you could make it possible to give us this land on lease on nominal payment as the services which will be given in the centre will be totally free and without distinction of caste, creed or status.

I do hope you & we together will be able to do something beautiful for God in Chandigarh.

*God bless you
M. Teresa ne*

c.c.: Chief Commissioner, Chandigarh Administration, Chandigarh.

encl.: - a copy of Registration of Association
- a copy of Memorandum of Rules
- Building plan and estimate are under preparation, will be submitted separately.

all the more pronounced and painful because of the apparent affluence resulting in sharp disparity. We pleaded that the poorest of the poor in this part of the country also needed the soothing and tender touch of love and compassion.

Once the mother was convinced, things moved fast. In February 1976 she changed her mind and wrote to the Bishop expressing her willingness to work in Chandigarh.

In May 1976 she sent a band of workers under Sister Joya to work along the poor and wretched in the slums of the city. The St. John Ambulance Association, of which I was the President, hired a house in Sector 34 to temporarily accommodate the Sisters and the Home. Writing on a series titled 'Labour of Love' in 'The Tribune' (12 August 1976) UK Bhanot says this:

"When untiring Sisters came to Chandigarh a couple of months ago, they wanted to know at which end they should start their work. They wanted to pick up the most neglected colony and undertook a survey of the slum areas where poverty stood in glaring to the beautiful neighbourhood... They clean the jhuggies and the area. The seriously ill patients are taken to the hospital and provided with aid through the pooling of the efforts of locally responsive organisations. The makeshift 'Bal Bhavan' set up by the Sisters in one colony alone attracts 165 children"

Bhanot went on to write: "Steadily the Sisters have won full confidence of the labourers who regard them as no less than angels. They feel that now their children get education and are being looked after in a way they themselves cannot do. It is in fact due to the efforts of Mr. M.G. Devasahayam, District Commissioner and the Rev. Gilbert Rego, Bishop of Simla and Chandigarh Diocese that Mother Teresa, who visited Chandigarh to explore the possibility of opening an aid centre

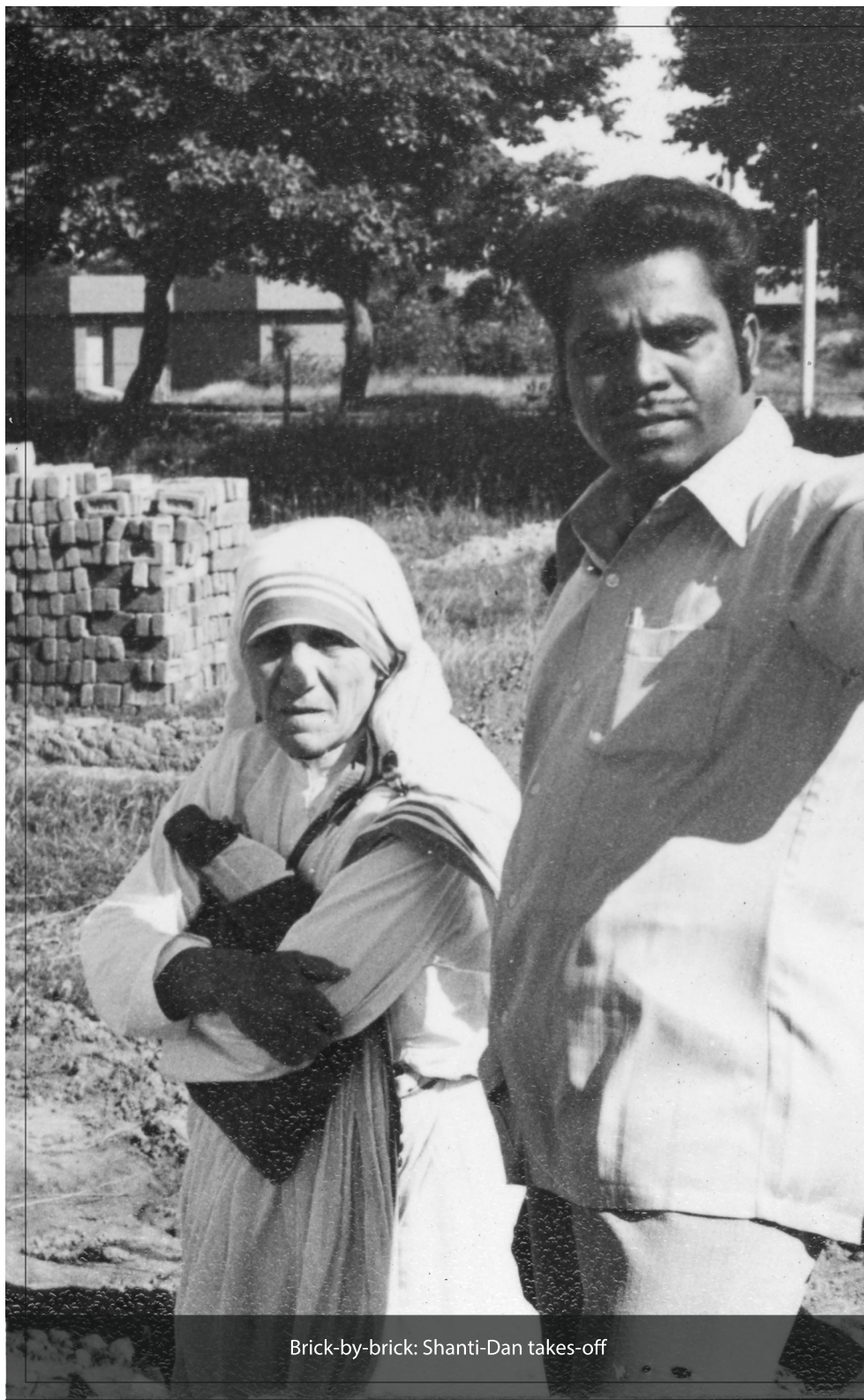
here at the end of 1975 finally sent five sisters to start the initial charity work."

Mother Teresa too was moved to see the slums which stood in great contrast to the rest of the city because of the wide disparity in the living standards of the people. The Mother then formulated her first project and applied to the Chandigarh Administration for allotment of land stating three purposes: (a) for setting up a home for the dying and the destitute; (b) a home for the mentally retarded children; (c) a home for abandoned unwed mothers.

What Bhanot has written about was only one of the projects. What Mother had in mind was a Home as above, a leper's rehabilitation centre and a night shelter for the poor relatives of patients in the PGI. Her letter dated 3rd October 1976 make it clear.

The certificate appended to this letter, signed by the Mother herself, lays down the ethos and the essence of Missionaries of Charity in abundant measure: "The society and all its branches, throughout India and outside India work and serve the poorest of the poor, irrespective of all castes and creed, nationality, race or place - giving the individual person whole-hearted and free service" The letter went on to describe: "The poorest of the poor are the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, the ignorant, the captives, the crippled, the leprosy sufferers, the unloved, the alcoholics, the dying and the sick destitute, the abandoned, the outcastes, all those who are a burden to human society, who have lost all hope and faith in life, and also every Missionary of Charity."





Brick-by-brick: Shanti-Dan takes-off

Shanti-Dan takes-off | 3

G. Devasahayam, I. A. S.

November 15, 1976.

Dear

I am writing this letter in connection with the request made by Mother Teresa of the Missionaries of Charity for allotment of 3 acres of land for opening a Home for the sick and dying destitutes, unwanted and mal-nutrient children, mentally and physically retarded children and rescue home for the abandoned women and unwed mothers. You will kindly refer to your letter No. D-23/STP-76/10884 dated the 2nd November, 1976 in this respect. I have gone through this letter and find that the proposal made therein does not fulfil the requirements. As you may be aware, Mother Teresa had personally visited Chandigarh for this purpose and had discussions with the Chief Commissioner as well as the undersigned in this respect. The Missionaries of Charity firmly believe in extreme simplicity and humility. The Home is to cater for the weakest and the poorest section of the society as I have already indicated. None of the people belonging to the category mentioned above, can possibly live on the first floor of the building except perhaps the unwed mothers who will constitute only a very small portion of the entire scheme. The Sisters of the

-2-

Missionaries of Charity who are already at Chandigarh pursuing their work have met me in this connection and have represented that the building should be only single storeyed, and as such their original request should be acceded to.

2. Though the city of Chandigarh may look very glamorous at the outside, there is problem of destitutes, mentally and physically retarded children, unwanted children and abandoned women. Furthermore, this centre is to cater for this kind of people not only of Chandigarh but also of the whole region comprising of states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir. As days go by, this problem is bound to increase. As such opening of this Home is a dire necessity. In fact Mother Teresa had agreed to come to Chandigarh only after personal requests made to her for this purpose. In view of the above I would request you to have a second look at the matter and suggest us a plot of land not less than 2.5 acres so that the Home can cater for to-day as well as for to-morrow, and the construction should be only single storey. If a plot of this size is not available in the sector adjacent to the P.G.I. or the General Hospital sector

From

The Chief Architect & Secretary,
Department of Architecture,
Chandigarh Administration,
Chandigarh.

To

Shri M.G. Devasahayam, I.A.S.,
Deputy Commissioner,
Chandigarh.

Memo.No. /STP/76/12663
Dated, the 31-12-76

Subject: Home for Destitutes at Chandigarh.

Kindly refer to your D.O. letter No. 8880/ACE-331, dated 15.11.76 addressed to Shri Aditya Prakash, Chief Architect, Chandigarh and subsequent discussions held with you by the Senior Town Planner on 21.12.76.

In view of the specific problems of the Institution mentioned by you, a site measuring 3 acres approximately as is illustrated in red on the enclosed layout plan of Sector 23-A is proposed for allotment to the Missionaries of the Charity for the construction of a home for the sick and dying destitutes. You would kindly recollect the discussions we have had and also observe from the plan for the proposed site includes the area with the kitchen garden society and as such the proposal necessitates the cancellation of the lease and allotment of an alternative site. The alternative site proposed for allotment to the kitchen garden society is illustrated on the plan (shaded yellow) which measures approximately 1.6 acres.

DA/copy of plan.

Divisional Town Planner, for I.T.P.
for Chief Architect & Secretary,
Department of Architecture,
Chandigarh Administration.

Encl.No. /STP/76

Dated

Copy alongwith copy of the layout plan of Sector 23-A showing the proposed site for home for destitutes as well as alternative site for kitchen garden society, forwarded to the Finance Secretary, Chandigarh Administration for information and further necessary action.

DA/copy of plan.

Divisional Town Planner,
for Chief Architect & Secretary,
Department of Architecture,
Chandigarh Administration.

On receipt of this letter and the certificate, I, in my capacity as Estate Officer of Chandigarh, moved the Chief Architect to locate a suitable site and intimate at the earliest. Their reaction was typical and routine. So I wrote personally to the Chief Architect.

Now the response was prompt and proper. We then went through all the formalities quickly and on 08-03-1977 issued the allotment letter to Missionaries of Charity for two acres of land in the centrally located Sector 23, for a nominal lease rent of Rs. 5/- per annum.

It was followed up with a letter from me to Mother Teresa.

In response to the letter Mother came to Chandigarh on 26th May 1977 and took possession of the land herself. It was a fleeting visit and she said that she would come later for a proper function. She however made it a point to meet the Chief Commissioner Mr. TN Chaturvedi, MS Chahal, Finance Secretary and Aditya Prakash, Chief Architect and thank them for their kindness and generosity. She also discussed her plans for Chandigarh with them.

As promised Mother came in October. I had asked the Lions Club and Rotary Club of Chandigarh to organise the function wherein the elite of the city could be invited. At the back of my mind was the need for collecting funds to complete the 'Home' and other projects likely to cost about Rs. 4 lakhs. Accordingly the function was arranged on 3rd October 1977. I briefly reproduce here the Indian Express report on the function and the exhortation made by the Mother:

"You and we together are going to do something beautiful for God. We shall do something for our brothers – the sick and hungry, unloved and uncared for, helpless and lonely – but who like us love and like to be loved. There are many of them around, but you don't know them and thus you don't love them. And because you don't love them, you don't

serve them..... which gives you and me the opportunity of sharing love together....

If we do not have peace in our hearts we can't give love. There should be peace and joy in every home. But the world has now become so busy, no one has even the time to smile at each other. It is a world full of disturbances. We must pray, love and know each other. There should be no living together without love. Let's bring God to our homes. God will come only where there is love, peace and prayer.....

"Our sisters lead a life of tremendous love and sacrifice. I need your help. I don't ask for money. But these are the things that you can do and we can't join as things that we can do and you can't. And together we can do beautiful things...."

This was the message that had melted countless hearts the world over. But not that of the Chandigarh 'elite-socialites' who attended the meeting. They had all come there mainly to have a 'photo opportunity' with an international celebrity! As for the Lions Club its President came up on the stage and announced a paltry donation of Rs. 1,001/- on behalf of the club! Not to be left behind the President of the Rotary Club made a speech and announced donation of a princely sum of Rs. 1,500/- ! This was the response of the elites of the town to the heart rending appeal of the messiah of the poorest of the poor! I felt ashamed and diminished. More so, because I knew that one of the prominent member of these clubs spent this kind of money on scotch whiskey every night! I salvaged the situation to some extent by writing and presenting a cheque for Rs. 21,000/- to the Mother on behalf of the St. John Ambulance Association.

During the day Mother got the plot of land blessed by Bishop Rego and kept a brick as symbolic of the beginning of construction work. She called on the Governor of Punjab and Haryana Mr. Jai Suklal Hathi, who

Son.

Missionaries of Charity
54A, Lower Circular Road,
Calcutta-16,
21/12/76

Dear Sri M G. Devasahayam,

God love you for all you have done and are doing for our people.

Your division of our peoples needs A, B, C are very clear. and I do hope we will soon be able to build up the different places - God willing. The two letters you have asked me to do I will do it.

We are fully exempted of gift tax of Income Tax act. As M. Feya has a copy of the exemption in her file, you could see it & if it this you are speaking about.

I do not know how soon I will be able to come. but as soon as I decide to visit our Sisters in that

area I will let you know often I remember you in my prayer - and I thank Him for what He has ^{done} in you and through you. Keep your heart always pure so that you can see God - for Jesus has said "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."

A very happy Christmas and God's blessing on 1977 is my prayer for you & yours.

God bless you
M Teresa me



M. G. Devasahayam, I.A.S.

D. O. No. DC/PA.77/77
Deputy Commissioner,
Chandigarh.

उपायुक्त, चण्डीगढ़।

March 10, 1977.

Dear Rev. Mother,

I am grateful to you for your nice letter that you had written to me sometime ago in reply to my letter dated 8th December, 1976. In that letter of mine I had mentioned about the action that was being taken by the Chandigarh Administration regarding allotment of land to the Missionaries of Charity for setting up a Home for the dying destitutes, mentally retarded children etc. There was some delay in this case because it took time to locate a suitable place. Now the matter has been finalised in consultation with your local representatives here and infact the allotment letter has also been issued by my office. This is being sent to you separately. All the same I am also attaching a copy of the allotment order. From the allotment order you would see that the area will be two acres and has been allotted to the Missionaries of Charity on a very nominal lease of Rs 5/- per annum.

2. Now that all that is required from our side has been done I would request you to start work on this Home as early as possible. It will be proper for you to make a visit to Chandigarh as early as possible. Please let me know the date and time. We would like to organise a proper function wherein the local philanthropists and social workers can be associated. Regarding Night Shelter near the PGI, this work can be taken up after the Home for the destitutes comes up.

3. In connection with the setting up of a Rehabilitation Centre for the lepers and other seriously afflicted persons, I am in touch with former Maharaja of Faridkot and will let you know the progress in this respect soon.

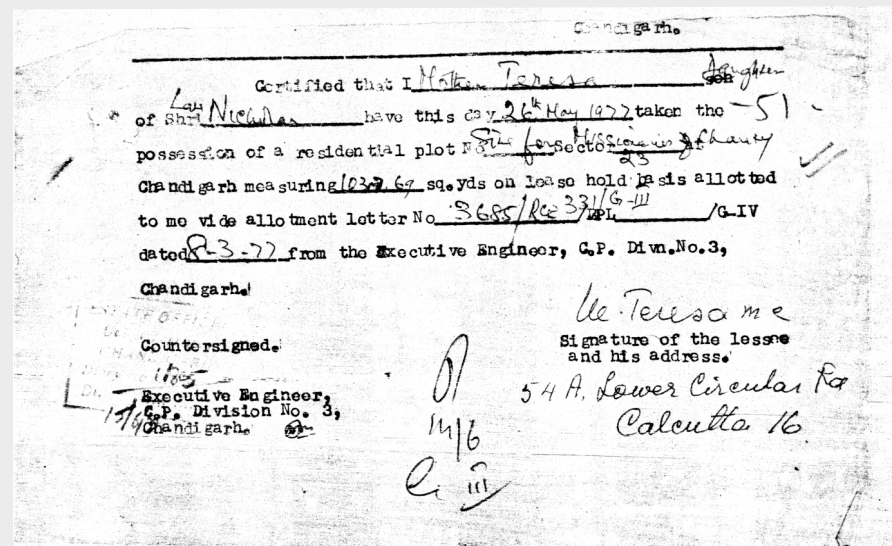
Aspirings for your prayers and
Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(M. G. Devasahayam)

Mother Teresa,
Missionaries of Charity,
54-A, Lower Bazar Lane,
Calcutta-16

gave a long winded speech eulogising the Mother and her work and the need to set up many homes in Punjab. He promised all help to the Mother in this respect. But he did hardly anything to follow up his promises. Mother also visited Ch. Devi Lal, Chief Minister of Haryana at the PGI where he was admitted due to some ailment. From Devi Lal's reactions and response on seeing the Mother I had a feeling that he had no knowledge about her and her work. Even when I tried to explain I drew only a blank and expressionless face!



Slowly and steadily construction work for the home started. Inspite of Mother's two visits and the efforts of sister Jaya, there was hardly any response or contribution by the elite and the wealthy of Chandigarh towards the construction efforts. Instead certain elements, mostly the hate-mongering communal fringes went around denigrating the 'Home' as an attempt of Christian infiltration. Nevertheless the sisters pressed on and the building came up inch by inch.



Mother addresses the Lions Club gathering

The Divine Hand | 4

In November/December 1977, within a month of the Lion's Club function I had to leave the Chandigarh Administration under agonising circumstances. I was hunted and hounded from all sides. I have briefly mentioned this in the opening chapter. It was then that the message from Mother Teresa came as if the voice of God was speaking through the Mother.

Faced with such torment and facing it all alone I could not contribute anything worthwhile towards the building up of 'The Home' for quite some time. This state of affairs went on till late 1979. But neither did that deter the noble work of the Sisters nor did it affect the construction work which was coming up slowly and steadily. With no funds coming forth from the people of Chandigarh or near about, Mother had to direct funds from Kolkata. For building up a home for the poorest of the poor in this affluent part of the country, Mother had to bring funds from the poor areas of Kolkata! This has been tormenting me for quite some time.

In fact while handing over the land, I had promised the Mother that we would raise adequate funds for construction in Chandigarh itself. This promise also I had to redeem. So sometime in late 1979 three of us friends – Prabhakar Kamat, Manager, Bharat Petroleum; Arun Malhotra, a leading printer and myself - got together. Sometime earlier in 1976 I had thought of a venture to raise funds for building a Tennis Stadium in the city, the foundation stone of which was laid by the tennis maestro Ramanathan Krishnan. But it became unnecessary when I managed to get Government funds sanctioned for this purpose. Now this idea was revived and I put it across to my friends. It was to bring out a comprehensive guide map of Chandigarh known as "Chandigarh Atlas" and raise funds through sponsorships, advertisement and sale. That way the twin purpose of large participation as well as raising a decent amount could be achieved. My proposal was accepted and we divided the task. I was to get the sector-wise base material for the Atlas. Arun was to print it and Kamat is to get the whole project sponsored by his company – Bharat Petroleum – and do the marketing.

With the unseen hand guiding us we went ahead with the task. A retired head draughtsman of Chandigarh Administration was commissioned to prepare the blueprints. Kamat sought and obtained his company's

approval for sponsoring the project and Arun worked out the printing arrangements. Indeed, Kamat and his boys went full hog to make a real job of the project. In this he was totally supported by his boss Kushalpal Singh. From the way he worked we felt as if Kamat was guided by divine inspiration!

When the preparations were at an advanced stage the momentous news of Mother Teresa being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize came through. Also the news of her getting large donations to her cause in addition to the big amount that went with the Nobel Prize. So much so, in January 1980 Mother issued a statement dissuading people to offer donations to her society. We were dispirited for a moment, Kamat more so. But he did not give up. We moved fast and Arun went to Kolkata with a personal letter from me to the Mother inviting her to come to Chandigarh to receive our humble contribution.

He came back with the confirmation from the Mother that she would accept our donation and would personally come to Chandigarh for the purpose.

Now we went through the project with renewed vigour. With the help of well wishers and friends everything went through as per schedule. Mother Teresa came in mid-1980 as promised. Since she had a very tight schedule we commissioned the Haryana State Aircraft to fly her from Delhi and back and Chief Minister Bhajan Lal was kind enough to give immediate consent free of cost. I had the privilege of receiving the Mother at the Delhi Airport and escorting her to Chandigarh. While waiting for the Mother at the Delhi Airport I was a bit tense and apprehensive. The Mother I had met and known was a humble nun from Kolkata. Now she is Bharat Ratna, a Nobel Laureate and world celebrity. All my apprehensions vanished at the sight of her. She was as humble, as saintly and as affectionate as she ever was.

M.G.Devasahayam,

H.No.515, Sector 16,
Chandigarh.

Dated : 6th Feb.,80.

Dear Mother,

I had written to you conveying our felicitations on your being conferred with the Nobel Peace Prize. I hope you still remember me and our association in setting up Your Home at Chandigarh.

Mother, during your last visit here about two years ago I had discussed with you our Project to raise some fund for completing the construction of Your Home at Chandigarh for which land is available. We had launched a Project bringing out a Chandigarh Atlas in this respect which at an advanced stage. This is being sponsored by the Bharat Petroleum Corpn. Ltd, which is a Public Sector Undertaking. Through this project we hope to raise a good amount for donating to you personally, if convenient, for completing the construction of Your Home here.

Everything is going on smoothly in the venture but for a small hitch i.e. non-receipt of your formal approval. Sister Joya and Rt. Rev. Gilbert Rego, Bishop of Simla and Chandigarh have written to you in this respect. But no reply has been received from your end. Since we are keen to complete the project latest by the middle of March, we need your formal approval to accept the donation immediately. This formality is necessary since the Sponsoring Organisation is a Public Sector Undertaking.

With above in view the bearer of this letter Mr. A.R.Malhotra is coming to Calcutta specifically for the purpose of obtaining your approval by hand. Mr. Malhotra is one of the driving forces behind this project and is otherwise also a good philanthropist. I would earnestly request you to convey your formal written approval to Mr. Malhotra. I would also request you on behalf of Bharat Petroleum Corporation and the People of Chandigarh to pay a visit to Chandigarh in the 3rd or 4th week of March (i.e. between 16th to 31st of March) to personally receive our humble contribution. This will give a great boost to everyone especially those who help humanitarian causes.

Seeking your blessings and Prayers,

With Best Wishes and Regards,

Yours affectionately,

(M.G.Devasahayam)

Mother Teresa MC

At the Chandigarh Airport Mother was received by a large gathering including my wife Aspil, young daughters Madona and Gina and little son Don each holding a big bouquet of flowers. The function went off beautifully. Ratan Dayal, the Marketing Director of Bharat Petroleum had flown all the way from Bombay to be present on the occasion. The PGI Auditorium, where the function was held was jam packed. All of us greatly rejoiced when Dayal presented a cheque for Rs. 1.5 lakhs for the noble venture of Mother Teresa. I was satisfied in the thought that though the amount was not enough to complete the entire project of the Mother, I had, at least in part, redeemed my promise and the commitment. Mother expressed her gratitude to all those who participated and contributed to the work of God.

✽✽✽



Climbing up with Prabhakar Kamat of Bharat Petroleum

A DROP OF LOVE SPEECH - Foundation Day of Presentation

I had the privilege of being associated with the city of Chandigarh rather intimately for over 3 years. Chandigarh is almost everything anyone can think of..... It is the City Beautiful..... It is the City of future..... a town planners' paradise..... A city of picturesque grace..... A heaven for tourists..... A City which has been described by no less a person than Jawaharlal Nehru as "Symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by the tradition of the past.... an expression of the nation's faith in the future."

The city has grown by leaps and bounds. Within 28 years of its origin the city of Chandigarh has achieved national eminence and international fame as one of the best planned and organised city in the world. The city also has the distinction of having the best medical and educational achievements in the Country. It is indeed a rare privilege to live in such openness with all facilities one could ask for. The City of Chandigarh can really be proud of its manifold achievements.

But in the midst of all this glory and pride the city has been desperately searching for something missing. Something without which no city or society can be complete. It was the search for a 'soul'. A 'soul' which would give meaning and content to the very existence of the city. Numerous people and organisations set out in their efforts to identify and organise activities which they thought would put the 'soul' in the city. Some sought to

- 2 -

achieve it through the theatre..... Some others through art..... Yet others through music..... Each had its place and they filled the void in their own way.

We also set out in this venture - just a handful of us. We thought we would give the city its soul by giving her an institution, an organisation, which would tender and care for the poorest of its poor. When we went to Mother Teresa with this request sometime in 1976 she was initially reticent. She justifiably felt that Chandigarh was a rich and glamorous city with hardly any poor worth the name. We had to explain that Chandigarh and its surrounding areas does have large number of poor people living below the poverty line. Furthermore this place also has problem of destitutes, retarded, abandoned and orphaned children as well as lepers. It was also impressed upon Mother Teresa that poverty in this part of the country is all the more pronounced and bitter because of the apparent affluence resulting in sharp disparity. We pleaded that the poor in this part of the country also needs the soothing and tender touch of love and compassion.

Once Mother was convinced things moved fast. Within weeks she sent a band of her workers under Sister Joya, who set up a temporary place and set to work among the poor and the down-trodden in the labour colonies. In March, 1977 the Missionaries of Charity were allotted a piece of land measuring 2 acres at a nominal lease of Rs.5/- per annum to set up their Home

Cond..3.

- 3 -

for the sick and dying destitutes, abandoned unwanted mothers, mentally and physically handicapped and abandoned children. This was a noble gesture by the Chandigarh Administration under the stewardship of Shri T.N.Chaturvedi. We are beholden to him. Initially it was hoped that the citizens of Chandigarh would respond to the noble gesture of the Chandigarh Administration by raising the funds required for the construction of the Home within the city, itself. But due to reasons known and unknown this hope was belied. Mother Teresa generously offered to spare whatever she could from her limited resources to build up the home. In fact some work has already been completed. But we took it as a matter of honour that a 'Home' primarily meant to look after the poorest of the poor of this City and nearabouts should be built by money brought from other poor areas. So we set about raising as much fund as possible from this part of the country so that we can have a sense of participation in this noble venture.

And in this effort came the towering participation by the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. The idea of bringing out the "Chandigarh Atlas" and though that raise funds for the 'Home' of the Missionaries of Charity was put across to them. Once they were convinced of the utility and nobility of the venture, they lost no time in adopting the scheme as their own. And they left no stone unturned in making the venture the memorable success as you see it today. It is perhaps for the first time in this country that such an

Cond..4.

- 4 -

elaborate, comprehensive and well laid out guide map has been brought out for any city. And that too to help a noble and humane cause. For this we are deeply indebted and grateful to all the officers and staff of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation at Chandigarh. Special mention must be made of Sh. P.U. Kamat, Asstt. Divisional Manager of the Corporation, who was the moving spirit behind the venture. He was primarily responsible for the Bharat Petroleum Corporation adopting this venture and spared no efforts to make it a success. It will not be out of place to mention that what impressed us most was that Mr. Kamat was swayed more by noble sentiments than material achievement in taking up this challenging task and making it a success. He was ably guided and directed by the Divisional Manager Mr. Kushalpal Singh and his team of officers. I have personally seen the efforts being put in by them day in and day out. Specific mention must be made of Mr. Madan Singhal who virtually went door to door to check and counter check so that utmost precision could be brought about in the map. In fact all of them worked as a well knit team. This speaks volumes for their dedication and efficiency. Out of these efforts we could also raise a decent sum of money which would be presented to Mother Teresa. We are beholden to Mr. Dayal, Marketing Director of the Corporation, who is with us and would be presenting the cheque to Mother Teresa.

Having given you a brief background of the project, I would like to say a few words about Mother

Contd.,5.

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Teresa and her work. Doing this, I know, would be like trying to explain about the Sun and its brightness. Nevertheless I should venture. All of you must have read and heard a lot about the work of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. But a few would have understood or appreciated the underlying ethos of the whole movement of love and compassion launched by Mother Teresa. For this I would take you through a brief passage from the Bible. Describing the Last Judgement, Jesus tells His disciples :

"Then the King will say to those on his right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; Sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me! Then the just will answer him saying 'Lord when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and take thee in, or naked, and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and come to thee? And answering the King will say to them 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me."

It is this faith, this belief that service to the poorest of the poor is the true service to God that has launched this great movement of love, care and compassion. And through this Mother Teresa stands out today as a true symbol of all that is good, all that is noble, all that is tender and all that is truly great. And humanity has lost no time in recognising this angel of love and saint of the slums.

The city of Chandigarh has a special relevance for the life and message of Mother Teresa. Describing

Contd.,6..

- 6 -

"The Open Hand" the symbol of this City Beautiful its founding architect Le Corbusier says :-

"Open for receiving the created richness.....
Open for the distribution to her people and
to others, and still more; Blessing Hand
of the Almighty for Peace and prosperity."

How apt it is Richness should be open to every one.....
distributed equally.

In this world ravaged by suffering and strains, torments and turmoils, Mother Teresa symbolises the "Blessing Hand of the Almighty..... She brings succour to the poorest, the lowliest and the unwanted..... Brings content and meaning to their lives..... Make them realise that they are human beings..... God's most beautiful creation. It will be for posterity to decide whether she is a saint. I only say of her that in a dark time she is a ^{living} burning and a shining light; in a cruel time, a living embodiment of God's Gospel of love; in a Godless time, the Lord dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. For this all who have the inestimable privilege of knowing her or knowing of her, must be extremely grateful.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the famous words of St. Ignatious of Loyola which Mother Teresa symbolises in full measure :-

"Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous,
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labour and not to ask for reward;
Except that of knowing that I am
doing your will."

Contd.7..

- 7 -

Mother Teresa is an instrument of God's will and we in Chandigarh are privileged not only to know her and know of her but also feel the soothing touch being imparted through her Home in Chandigarh. We are proud of being able to render a small service in bringing Mother's healing touch to Chandigarh. We are positive that this Home would be the rallying point through which the people of this City and neighbourhood can unfold their feelings of love and affection towards their less fortunate brethren. I would like to conclude by invoking the blessings of the Almighty on Mother Teresa and her dedicated band of workers.

Thank you.



Mother with author's children-Madona, Gina and Don

Something Beautiful for God | 6

The words of Mother Teresa, spoken on 3rd October 1977, resounded in my ears "you and we together are going to do something beautiful for God". Beauty they say is in the eyes of the beholder. The beauty Mother was referring to was not the beauty of the body but that of the soul. The city of Chandigarh renowned for its physical beauty would now see the beauty of the soul. Indeed it is. Today Mother's 'Shanti-Dan' is a full-fledged Home for destitutes, unmarried/abandoned children and mentally, physically retarded ones numbering hundreds. Besides giving new life to these miserable ones the Sisters of Charity have become a part and parcel of that side of the city where there is pain, privation and anguish. They do their best to wipe the tears off tormented eyes and give some meaning and content to their lives. Rest they leave it to His will.

This narrative would not be complete if I do not write of Mother Teresa's work and the ethos that underlie her mission of charity as I comprehend it. This no doubt would be like trying to explain about the sun and its brightness. Nevertheless I should venture. Lot has been written and said about the work of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. But only a few would have understood and appreciated the underlying ethos of the whole movement of love and compassion launched by the Mother. In order to comprehend this one has to go through the word as contained in the Bible. Describing the Last Judgement, Jesus tells his disciples:

"Then the king will say to those on his right hand, come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me...!"

Then the just will answer him saying; Lord when did we see thee hungry and feed thee; or thirsty and gave thee drink; and when did we see thee a stranger and take thee in, or naked and cloth thee? or when did we see thee sick or in prison and come to thee? And answering the king will say to them 'Amen I say to you as long as you did it for one of these, the least of any brethren, you did it unto me'..."

It is this faith, this belief that service to the poorest of the poor is the true service to God that has launched this great movement of love, care and compassion. And through that Mother Teresa stands out today as a true symbol of all that is good, all that is noble, all that is tender and all that is truly great. And humanity has lost no time in recognising the angel of love and "Saint of the Slums."

Blessed Mother Teresa of Kolkata established the congregation in 1950 which now consists of over 4,501 religious sisters and is active in 133 countries. Their mission was to care for (in Mother Teresa's words) "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone." It began as a small community with 12 members in Kolkata, and today it has over 4,500 Sisters running orphanages, AIDS hospices, charity centres worldwide, and caring for refugees, the blind, disabled, aged, alcoholics, the poor and homeless and victims of floods, epidemics and famine in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Europe and Australia. The Teresa sisters are present everywhere, treading their way down the ghetto streets and alleys of the poor. They shun the glitter of the fashionable areas and the glamour spots, invariably reaching out for the City's seamy underbelly, seeking out not only the hungry and the naked but also the old and the alienated, the flotsam for whom society does not care and thinks that its moral obligation towards them is honoured by keeping them under the carpet of freebies and 'welfare' programmes!

To sum it up, in this world ravaged by suffering and strains, torments and turmoils Mother Teresa symbolises the 'Blessing hand of the Almighty'... She brought succour to the poorest, the lowliest and the unwanted... Brought content and meaning to their lives... Made them realise that they are human beings... God's most beautiful creation.

In a dark time she was a burning and shining light; in a cruel time a living embodiment of God's Gospel of love; in a Godless time, the 'Word' dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. In short she is an instrument of God's will manifested in its many forms.

JD

Missionaries of Charity
54-A, Lower Circular Road,
CALCUTTA-700 016,

27. 12. 83

Dear Mr. M.G. Devasahayam,
Thank you for your kind
letter. I was very happy
to hear from you after
such a long time.
Thank God and also you
for all the help you gave
for Chandigarh. They are
all doing very well.
I am so happy to hear
about little Teresa. I hope
she will one day be an
M.C. Sister.
I am so happy to hear
you are doing so well
in your work. You have
always had a deep love
for the Poor.
Keep the joy of loving
God

in your heart and share
this joy with all you meet
especially your family
God bless you
Lu Teresa MC

On the wall at the Mother House at Kolkata hangs the famous prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which is closest to the heart of the Mother:

"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;
And 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".

"It is in giving that we receive" This one sentence sums up the ethos and essence of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. "Give until it hurts. Give from the core of your heart. Not from your abundances but out of your necessity." This has always been the Mother's message. And she had given everything that she had, her very self.

It has been a great honour and privilege to know her and of her. I have gone through many ups and downs in my life, many experiences. But one instance I will always keep in my heart and cherish. It was some day in September 1982 at about 9.00 p.m. My wife Aspil had a bout of illness and I was also a bit unwell and resting in my upstairs bedroom. In fact I was dozing off. My 10-year old daughter Madona ran up the stairs panting and breathless, shook me and said "Papa, get up and come

down quick". I was irritated and tried to shoe her off but nevertheless asked what the matter was. She said excitedly "Papa, Mother Teresa has come and is in the drawing room waiting for you."

All my fatigue and tiredness vanished. I jumped up from the bed got ready in a jiffy and went down. There was the Mother, her face ravined like parched earth; her frame small and stooping; her smile radiant but sad. I kissed her hands and before I could say anything she spoke in her characteristic simplicity: "Mr. Devasahayam I just came to Chandigarh for a few hours. At the Home I heard your wife was not keeping well and you too. And so the first thing I am doing is to look you up".

If that is not a 'drop of love' what else is? Did we do 'something beautiful for God?





'Children are the Soul of Life'-Mother with a Child

A Soul to the 'City Beautiful' | 7

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JUNE 12, 2003

Mother who gave soul to city

A.S. PRASHAR
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 11
Prominent citizens of the City Beautiful plan to celebrate later this year the beatification of the Nobel-laureate, Mother Teresa, who is bound to Chandigarh through her Missionaries of Charity's home for destitute women and abandoned children established by her in Sector 23 way back in 1976.

"Beatification of the Mother will take place on October 19 at the Vatican. The Pope himself will conduct it", says Mr M. G. Devasahayam, who, as the then Deputy Commissioner of Chandigarh, was primarily responsible for inviting the Mother to Chandigarh some 27 years ago and allotting a two-acre plot of land for setting up the home for destitute women and abandoned children.

"Beatification is an important step towards declaration of a person as a saint. Beatification will be a formal declaration to the world that the Mother is a fit case to be declared a saint", said Mr Devasahayam in a talk with TNS here today.

He said he had had an informal meeting with the sisters at the Missionaries of Charity where it was decided that the celebrations should be a three-day event. It will include a photo exhibition of the Mother's various visits to the city, an inter-faith prayer meeting, a public meeting and a Thanksgiving Mass at the Sector 19 church. The photo exhibition

and inter-faith prayer meeting will be held on October 31, public meeting on November 1 and Thanksgiving Mass on November 2.

An organising committee for the event has also begun to take shape. It includes Ms Bonnie Sodhi, wife of the former TRAI chief, Mr Justice S.S. Sodhi, Ms Madhvi Gujral, wife of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Punjab, Ms Goldie Malhotra, Principal, Modern School, Delhi, Mr Ashok Khanna, Managing Director of Khanna Watches, Mr Iqbal Singh Kalsia,



an engineer, to name only a few. Many others are being contacted, said Mr Devasahayam.

He recalled that the Mother was persuaded with great difficulty to come to Chandigarh and set up a home for destitute women and abandoned children. "As Deputy Commissioner of Chandigarh in 1974, I was keen on tackling the problem of destitute women, orphans and the poor. It was always at the back of mind. Then one day, I spoke to Bishop

op Gilbert Rego of Chandigarh about it. And he immediately suggested Mother Teresa. I wrote to the Mother but her refusal was prompt and blunt. Chandigarh is a city of rich people whereas I work among the poor only, she replied. Then Bishop Gilbert Rego and I wrote a joint letter to her. But her objection remained the same. It was then I suggested to her that poverty in the midst of plenty is even more painful. Therefore, Chandigarh needed her services more than any other city. This argument persuaded her and she agreed to visit Chandigarh".

Mr Devasahayam said before she came, the UT Administration had surveyed a few sites, including the one in Sector 23. The Mother was shown all of them but she liked the site in Sector 23 the most. The UT Administration also promised her financial assistance in the construction of the home, but soon she became so famous throughout the world because of her selfless work that there was no dearth of donations.

The home for destitute women and abandoned children now has 220 inmates. The sisters in charge of the home say there is no dearth of noble souls in Chandigarh who take care of all the needs of the home and its inmates.

"Chandigarh was known as a city without a soul. Mother has given it a soul through her home", says Mr Devasahayam.

poor begging for love, compassion: Teresa

Hindustan Times Correspondent
CHANDIGARH, Oct. 3.—Mother Teresa today said the journey to peace and joy could best be travelled by sharing love and compassion with the poor co-trekking. "They were there with you in millions—naked, hungry, sick and crippled. Smile at them and God will smile at you." This was the way she said life's journey could be covered without weariness or fatigue.

Mother Teresa, who came to Chandigarh today to see the progress of the centre she has set up here for the dying, the infirm, the destitute and the unwanted child, said "I don't need money. Give me your hand to serve them and your heart to love them."

"All I want is you. Come and see them. Let them feel that they are your brothers and sisters."

Mother Teresa, who was addressing a meeting of citizens jointly sponsored by the Chandigarh administration, the Rotary Club and the Lions Club, said the cause of all disturbance and bitterness in the world was lack of love and compassion.

The poor people were the creation of God and those who served them served God. That was what Mahatma Gandhi had said and that was all religions of the world preached.

Mother Teresa gave bits of her personal experiences in life in various parts of the world and said everywhere people were hungry for love, hungry for God.

This hunger could be more than satisfied only if we knew there were people right among us who were people who needed our love. Those who did not know them could not love them and those who could not love them could not serve them and those who could not

serve them could not serve God, she said.

Mother Teresa said they were a wonderful people and all they wanted in life was love. A home without love could neither have peace nor joy. "So begin it from your own home and the rest would be right."

She said in the present atmosphere there people were so busy that they did not have time to smile at each other. This atmosphere was by no means conducive to get along the journey of life with joy.

Mother Teresa deplored the practice of abortion. It was tantamount to killing of a life created by God. People, she thought, look to it because of the fear that they would not be able to feed or educate one more child. Fear

in itself was a bad thing and what was worse was the destruction of a gift from God.

Mother Teresa got instant donations of Rs 25,000 from the St. John's Ambulance Society, Rs 1,800 from the Rotary Club, Rs 2,100 from the Inner Wheel Club and Rs 1100 from the Lions Club to her centres.

Besides the above centre, there are two more in the office—one for lepers and the other for the poor relations attending the sick. She said they have no shelter and have to make do with what is present. They have no money to pay for the medicines.

Mr M. G. Devasahayam, Home Secretary of the Union Territory of Chandigarh, thanked Mother Teresa for coming to the town and giving it a "smile".

Prohibition in Kashmir not now

Hindustan Times Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Oct. 4.—Finance and Excise Minister Devi Das Thakur told the Assembly yesterday that there was no proposal to introduce prohibition in the State. This was stated by Maulvi Mohammed Yasin Hamdani of National Conference.

Clarifying the State Government's position, the Minister explained that they were committed to introduction of prohibition but it could not be done in isolation. He said that as and when the prohibition was enforced throughout the country by the Central Government the State would not lag behind even though it would result in huge financial loss.

Mobs teargassed, Sec 144 clamped in New Delhi

Continued from page 1
only after Mrs Gandhi drove out after the court order.

When the convoy of vehicles arrived from the Kingway Camp Police Lines at 10.05 a.m., Mrs Gandhi was greeted by a jeering crowd. Amidst the chorus of provocation, she was escorted to Mr. R. Dayal's court. The door was shut after her sons later—shortly before 12 noon.

In this space, teargas shells were fired seven or eight more times at intervals. After each round, the crowds, with eyes streaming, would scumble to the ways and throw water on the eyes and troop back to the scene of trouble.

The crowds repeatedly stormed the iron barricades in front of the court. The crowds lit burning

Prayer service for the Mother

'Albanian by birth, an Indian as citizen, Mother Teresa belonged to the world'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 1

"MOTHER Teresa...we miss you...the work that you began will go on." As the hymn rang out at the Thanksgiving Prayer Service in Honour of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata at the Catholic Church, Sector 19-A, there were tears in the eyes of a few sisters from the Missionaries of Charity.

Rt Rev Dr Gerald John Mathias, Bishop of Shimla Chandigarh Diocese, who was in Rome during the Beatification Ceremony on October 19, said that the Blessed Teresa of Kolkata was Albanian by birth, Indian by citizenship and belonged to the world by her calling.

He said that she was born in Skopje, Albania, on August 26, 1910 and came to India in January 1929 and in August 1948 dressed for the first time in a white sari with blue borders to enter the world of the poor.

Recounting the words of former Prime Minister I K



The members of Missionaries of Charity at the Sector 19 Church. Express photo

Gujral, it was stated at the ceremony that while the multinational corporations have globalised business, Blessed Teresa globalised compassion and care for the poor.

The former Deputy Commissioner of Chandigarh, M G Devashyam, recounted how Blessed Teresa was involved by the administration to set up a Home here. "While she was initially reluctant to set up a Home here as she felt that the city did not have the type of people she reached out to, she was attracted when we told her that poverty in the midst of prosperity is not as surprising a phenomenon as poverty in the midst of prosperity," recounted the former DC, who had specially come or the function from Chennai.

UT Home Secretary R S Gujral said that we must all learn from Blessed Teresa and strive to be at least five per cent as compassionate as she was and care for the poor.

Sisters With The Healing Touch

CHANDIGARH: A famished, looking young man was brought to the Deputy Commissioner for help. Besides physical hunger, he was under tremendous mental strain. He would not accept food when it was offered to him. Miss Jora and other Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity could help him only if they had a place to put him up. They had already taken four helpless and shelterless women into their Home. The man had to be sent to the Mental Hospital at Amritsar. Men like him, perhaps, do not need money or medicine but the healing touch.

When the smiling Sisters came to Chandigarh a couple of months ago they wanted to know at which end they could start their work. They wanted to pick the most neglected slum areas where poverty stood in glaring contrast to the beautiful neighbourhood. For the first few months the Sisters worked in the labour colony in Sector 14. In the South Indian section they found that both men and women went to work, leaving the children at home.

Not all the boys went to school. Most of the girls stayed away from school and went to work with their parents. The drainage was bad and no one attended to the problem of sanitation. But because of proximity, the staff of the Post-graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research moved and quite helpful to the people.

COLONY ADOPTED
The Sisters have now adopted the labour colony immediately behind the Grain Market in Sector 25. They visit other colonies also. The Hal Bhavan in the market attracts 100 children—those below six years of age



Sister Jora sitting at a table in the Hal Bhavan.

sevika from the Chandigarh Child Welfare Council and those above six years by the Sisters. Sister Jora and others go through the slums to see if they need any kind of help—medical aid, clothes, money.

They clean the slums and the area. The seriously ill patients are taken to hospital in a van and provided with medical aid through a pooling of the efforts of locally responsive organisations. Sister Jora also

roof of a shed with their belongings scattered here and there.

Steadily the Sisters have won full confidence of the labourers who regard them as no less than angels. They feel that now their children get education and are being looked after in a way they themselves cannot do. It is, in fact, due to the efforts of Mr. M. G. Devasahayam, Deputy Commissioner, and Rev. Gilbert Reso, Bishop of



Children of the Power House Labour Colony, who attend classes run by the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity.

the Simla and Chandigarh Diocese, that Mother Teresa, who visited Chandigarh to explore the possibility of opening an aid centre here at the end of 1975, finally sent five Sisters to start the initial charity work.

Mother Teresa too was moved to see the slums which stand in great contrast to the rest of the city because of the wide disparity in the living standards of the people. The Mother then

formulated her first project and applied for land for three purposes: (a) for setting up a home for the dying and men- destitute; (b) a home for mentally retarded children; and (c) a home for abandoned and un- wed mothers. On May 15 last, land was allotted for the pro- ject in Sector 23.

Mr. Devasahayam told this correspondent that a survey of the colonies had revealed that people in the labour colonies needed much more than Govern- ment help. The assistance of some voluntary agencies, and there could be none better than the internationally recognised Missionaries of Charity. There are the sick and the under- nourished who would not seek any medical aid by themselves and would die uncared for, or end would die isolated there with- out being isolated for medical treatment would be a danger to others.

There was need for some trained people in charity work who could teach these people how to live or to help them- selves. The Sisters have also helped in the adoption of some of the poor children by the needy families.

NIGHT SHELTER
A second project on the cards is a night shelter for relatives and friends of the poor patients who come to the Post-graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, and a third for the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for leprosy and other seriously afflicted persons outside the city. Efforts are being made to provide plots for the second and third projects. It is understood that the PGI is agreeable to providing land for the night shelter and a former Maharaja of Patiala is willing to help with the third project.

The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Monday, October 6, 2003, Chandigarh, India

MOTHER TERESA'S BEATIFICATION A proud moment for City Beautiful by M.G. Devasahayam

BEATIFICATION is the "declaration by the Pope as head of the Catholic Church that one of its members deserves, for saintly life as confessor or heroic death as martyr, to be entitled to be blessed, that is, regarded as dwelling in the happiness of heaven." Mother Teresa is being beatified on October 19 which is a prelude to conferring sainthood on her.



Indeed the Mother rightly "dwells in the happiness of heaven" because she truly lived the mandate of serving the poor and the unloved that the Bible describes in the "Last Judgment":

"Then the King will say to those on his right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me."

Then the just will answer him saying, "when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee; or thirsty and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and take thee in, or naked and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and come to thee?"

And answering the King will say to them, "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

Mother Teresa's life has been judged as one dedicated to serving "the least of God's brethren" and she has indeed taken "possession of the Kingdom prepared for her from the foundation of the world" as her beatification bears testimony.

On this occasion my mind goes back to the mid-seventies when Chandigarh, hailed as the City Beautiful with its wide vistas, wider avenues, enchanting landscape and lovely gardens, was desperately searching for a "soul". Beneath the veneer of physical beauty, Chandigarh and its neighbouring areas had their share of the wretched, the poor, the unwanted, the mentally retarded, the abandoned, the leprosy patients and the dying destitutes.

It was in this context that the Bishop of the Shimla-Chandigarh Diocese, Rev. Gilbert Rego, and myself decided to invite Mother Teresa to Chandigarh, with the hope of persuading her to open one of her homes in the city. The appeal we sent out must have touched a nerve and the Mother arrived in the city during December 1975. The Bishop and I took her around and the Mother was soon convinced of the need for a Home like Nirmal Hriday in the city.

Once the Mother had decided, things moved fast. In May 1976, she sent a band of five Sisters headed by Sister Joya to start a home for the abandoned and dying destitutes and also work among the poorest of the poor. Temporary accommodation was provided to the "Home", courtesy the local unit of St. John's Ambulance Association and that is how the Mother's work started in Chandigarh. The Sisters of Charity immediately plunged into their "mission of love" among the poor, sick, abandoned leprosy patients and the dying destitutes.

Within a year of commencing work the Sisters made such an impact as to motivate the Chandigarh Administration to find a permanent abode for them in the city. Accordingly, we soon located a place for the "Home"

in Sector 23 and it was allotted to the Missionaries of Charity at a nominal annual lease. What prompted the Chandigarh Administration in this noble act was the letter signed by the Mother wherein she had described the core objectives of the Society of Missionaries of Charity:

"The society and all its branches throughout India and outside India work and serve the poorest of the poor, irrespective of all castes and creed, nationality, race or place — giving the individual person whole-hearted and free service. The poorest of the poor are the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, the ignorant, the captives, the crippled, the leprosy sufferers, the unloved, the alcoholics, the dying and the sick destitutes, the abandoned, the outcastes, all those who are a burden on human society, who have lost all hope and faith in life."

For this noble act, credit must go to Mr T.N. Chaturvedi, former Chief Commissioner, Mr M.S. Chahal, former Finance Secretary, and Mr Aditya Prakash, former Chief Architect.

On October 3, 1977, the Mother came to Chandigarh and laid the foundation stone of the "Home". That was to cost Rs. 4 lakh. In 1980, through a Chandigarh Atlas project sponsored by Bharat Petroleum, we raised about Rs. 1.5 lakh. The Mother in the meantime, had received the Nobel Peace Prize and had become a world celebrity. She had issued an appeal not to offer any cash donations to her society. Yet, when we made the request she promptly responded and some time in mid-1980 came all the way from Kolkata to accept our felicitations, prayers and small donation.

"Shanti-dan", has indeed become a "soul" to the city of Chandigarh. This is evidenced from the kind of people's participation in providing for the upkeep and feeding of all the inmates who number over 200. Worthy of note is the gesture of local hoteliers and restaurateurs supplying fresh food specially cooked for the inmates on a daily basis. It is a new

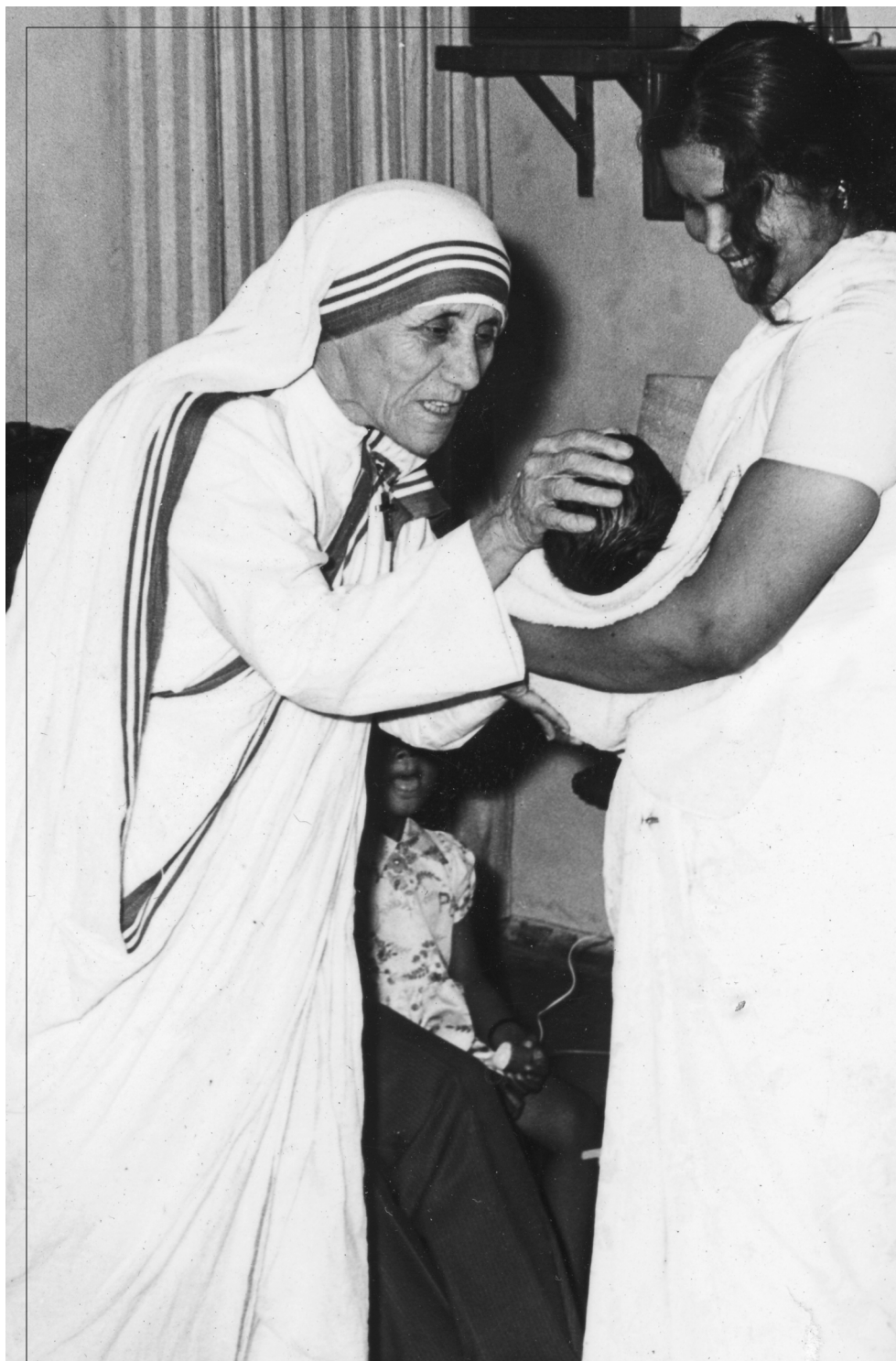
experiment in voluntary effort and people's participation in helping the poor, the disadvantaged and the needy. Through this citizens of Chandigarh are finding an expression of their own inner need for loving and sharing which, in essence, is the "soul" that the city has been searching for. Besides, the "Home" has become an instrument for the "spread of God's love and compassion" in and around the city. And the Mother in her true devotion and humility had made it possible.

"It is in giving, that you receive". This innocuous passage, which is part of the 400-year-old prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, titled "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace", is the rock on which Mother Teresa had built the infrastructure of "love and compassion" spanning the length and breadth of this vast universe. Chandigarh's "Shanti-dan" is but a small part of this massive infrastructure. Some time ago I had an occasion to visit "Shanti-dan". What I saw there moved me beyond words. Young, mentally retarded teenagers fondly clinging to the Sisters; old, homeless and lonely destitutes staring with a warm tinkle in the eyes; and, above all, the starry-eyed, tender, abandoned infants, giggling and smiling without a worry in the world.

The "drop of love" that fell on Chandigarh in May 1976 has become a flowing river of joy for the "least of our brethren" and a stream of love and compassion for the more fortunate ones. This, in fact, is the ethos of the Mother and her Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa was a saint even when she lived. Her beatification now and canonization (conferring Sainthood) that would follow soon are only formal recognition of what has been informally accepted for long. Chandigarh has the rare honour of bearing the footprint of a Saint who as a "frail and feeble" woman symbolised humanity and humility more than anyone who walked the earth this last century. This indeed is the city's moment of pride.

— The writer is a former IAS officer



The 'Blessing Hand'-Mother with author's wife Aspil and infant son Don

The Road to Sainthood | 8

On Oct. 19, 2003, Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa of Kolkata, who died in 1997. This took place in Rome, and since then her popularity has remained strong.

The process leading up to the beatification has been the shortest in modern history. In early 1999—less than two years after Mother Teresa's death—Pope John Paul waived the normal five-year waiting period and allowed the immediate opening of her canonization cause.

In 2002, the Holy Father recognized the healing of an Indian woman as the miracle needed to beatify Mother Teresa of Kolkata. That healing occurred on the first anniversary of Mother Teresa's death. It involved a non-Christian woman in India who had a huge abdominal tumor and woke up to find the tumor gone. Members of the Missionaries of Charity prayed for their founder's intervention to help the sick woman.

According to members of the Missionaries of Charity "Mother's life of loving service to the poor has inspired many to follow the same path. Her witness and message are cherished by those of every religion as a sign that 'God still loves the world today.' Since her death, they said, "people have sought her help and have experienced God's love for them through her prayers. Every day, pilgrims from India and around the world come to pray at her tomb, and many more follow her example of humble service of love to the most needy, beginning in their own families."

In 2001, on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, officials closed the diocesan inquiry into Mother Teresa's sanctity. The year long gathering of testimony from those who knew Mother Teresa was the first major step in a typically long process. A year earlier, at an August 26, 2000, celebration in Kolkata marking Mother Teresa's birth anniversary, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim admirers joined in common prayers for her speedy canonization.

After her beatification, the recognition of another miracle was required for sainthood.

Process to sainthood

If Mother Teresa of Kolkata had lived in earlier centuries, the Church might have gathered at her funeral to declare her a saint. That's the way things worked in ancient Christianity. Now achieving official sainthood is more complicated—and not without its own brand of politics and other human imperfections. But just as this "Saint of the Gutters" seemed above politics in her life, her utter and simple devotion to the poor transcended bureaucratic obstacles between her and official sainthood.

Mother Teresa is already revered as a modern-day saint by Christians from all corners and denominations. Why the formal process of canonization? Why the delay? It has been observed that the Catholic Church thinks in centuries, not in years. It is good for the Church to test the enthusiasm of the day, to wait awhile, to discern whether one seen as a saint today will stand the test of time.

It was Teresa's single-mindedness, her simplicity and consistency that captured the world's imagination. One can only recall the beatitude of Jesus, "How happy are the pure of heart." That pureness of heart is a simple, single-minded commitment to the ways of God. We computer-dependent citizens of the 20th-century long for simplicity; Mother Teresa of Kolkata lived it.

Francis of Assisi's example

In a 1981 interview, Mother Teresa spoke about another champion of the poor—St. Francis of Assisi. In a turning point in Francis' life, he encounters a leper by the side of the road and passes him by. Then he realizes that if he is going to devote his life to the poor he must embrace the leper—he must welcome him into his life as a brother. Francis then runs to the leper's aid. Mother Teresa commented, "The encounter with the leper made St. Francis." So, too, it is her selfless encounter with the dying that made Mother Teresa.

It is the calling of Christians to serve the poor, to make room at the table for everyone. Francis came to see that. He reveled in the foolishness of God who has special love for those whom most of us would rather avoid. Teresa learned that, too, during mid-life. She is named a saint because she cleared away life's clutter and allowed God to work through her in a powerful way.

Post-beatification testimonies for the Mother from far and wide poured in:

Life Lessons: Mother Teresa inspires me so much because she has shown a very affectionate love to the poorest of the poor without counting the cost. She prayed for them; she showed them love that we cannot attain in our lives. Her life to us is a lesson that God wanted us to learn what true love means. To me, she remains the most powerful human being of our time. May she ever dwell in our hearts and may her soul rest in peace.

Tshwarelo | Polokwane, South Africa | Tuesday, August 12, 2003

Like the Good Samaritan: Mother Teresa lived the message of Jesus. Everything Jesus taught was always incorporated with a central focus of love. Jesus was love, as was Mother Teresa. She didn't take the easy road, and give a sandwich to a hungry person and move on to something else. She got down in the dirt with them, just like the Good Samaritan of the Bible!

Jacinta | Louisiana | Tuesday, August 05, 2003

True Symbol of Christ : It is incredible the world had such a great person in modern times. Mother Teresa was and still is the true symbol of what Christ asks us to do, as he says, "When you visit the sick, you would have visited me; when you clothe the poor, you would have clothed me." She presents a big challenge to us contemporary Christians, Most of us simply say that we are Christian but are not worthy to be called so. Just like Gandhi, she was the epitome of love and justice and care. I continuously ask God to give us in the world more people like her. As the Bible says, "The harvest is rich but the workers are few." Let us request the Lord of the harvest to grant us such workers in his garden.

Bisaso | Kampala, Uganda | Wednesday, July 30, 2003

Moved by Quote: In fifth grade, our Sister Josepha told us the story that ends with Mother Teresa saying, "Neither would I wash up this dying person covered in sores for a million dollars. I'm doing it for God." As a fifth-grader I had no idea who Mother Teresa was, but was very moved and inspired by the quote. As an adult I made the connection between this statement I carried in my heart and Mother Teresa, and considered that nun so hip to know about Mother Teresa way back before all the media hype.

Mary | Chicago , Illinois | Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Love From Jesus: Mother Teresa shared with us the love of hers which she received from Jesus, through Mary. She was obedient to Jesus' sayings, "Love others as I have loved you; as the Father has loved me, so I love you." There is no barrier to love, and she created such a high hope for life, and for us to reach the Kingdom of Heaven as children of God.

Vincent | New York, New York | Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Giving Her All to Jesus: I love Mother Teresa, and she inspires me through her words and missionary works. Her house for the poor here in the Philippines is one of my favorite charities that we frequently visit with friends. I always carry with me a book containing her words of wisdom. I pray for the intercession of Mother that someday I may be, like her, humble and able to give my all to Jesus by serving the poorest of the poor.

Baldwin | Manila, Philippines | Sunday, July 20, 2003

International Mother: I love Mother Teresa because she has given selfless service to the poor, unwanted, neglected people throughout the world. She has helped all the needy people without caste, creed or religion. She was an international mother. She has always insisted for the unity of all the family members as she has quoted, "A family who prays together, stays together." To me she was a living God. I get peace

from her orphanage homes. I have learned to live a simple but meaningful life from her mission. Whenever I pray to her for my genuine demands, I always receive.

Narendra | Dehardun, Uttarakhand, India | Friday, July 18, 2003

Words of True Faith: I love Mother Teresa because she practiced her religion by helping the poorest of the poor. Teresa inspires me because she was most humble and she did something in her life which made a difference. There are enough of her words to inspire the least person who does not have true faith. Mother, please help me in my daily mission of teaching young people religion; may I do so with humility and conviction.

Clementine | Mosta, Malta | Wednesday, July 16, 2003

'God Bless Her Path': Mother Teresa has been for me the perfect model of love and compassion. Her love for everyone from every creed, culture and nation is a symbol of God's love for humankind, and a path to follow. She reached all kinds of people worldwide; she cared for the soul and heart of men and women, babies, children and elderly, giving meaning to what God certainly dreamed of for our world. She reached the essence. God bless her path. May she bless us from the heart of Our Lord.

Celia | São Paulo, Brazil | Friday, July 04, 2003

Letters to Treasure: Many years ago I sent cash to Mother Teresa in Kolkata. She always sent me a receipt and a small thank-you note full of love and spirituality. I have many notes from her, and I keep them like a treasure. That love! That humanity! This world of troubles lacks people like her. I will remember Mother Teresa always!

Ezequiel | San Juan, Puerto Rico | Sunday, June 29, 2003

High Expectations: Even though I only saw a handful of interviews or stories about Mother Teresa, they always affected me deeply. I

remember a news conference of some sort, where she could barely reach the microphone. I don't even remember the specific questions she was asked. I only remember the lump in my throat each time she responded in her soft, loving voice. The love seemed to emanate from every part of her. I'm reminded of the line from a movie: "She makes me want to be a better person." I hope I can live up to her expectations.

Larry | Kansas City, Missouri | Wednesday, June 25, 2003

Financial Advice: A friend, now settled in California, recently related this deeply moving account of an interaction he had with Mother Teresa many years ago. In the mid-1970s, he was the manager of a bank in Kolkata where her order maintained their main banking accounts. On one occasion they had received a particularly large sum of money from abroad. As it happened, the exchange rate used by the bank to convert the amount was not at all favorable. He discovered this when it was too late to effect appropriate redressal. After spending several sleepless nights, he decided he would lay the matter before Mother Teresa and take the consequences. After listening to all he had to say, in her uniquely soft and quiet voice she said, "What does it matter, son? After all, it is only money." Even to this day, he has difficulty controlling his emotions whenever he remembers what she told him.

Ranjith | Bangalore, India | Tuesday, June 24, 2003

Inspiration to Me: She inspired me to help people who are less fortunate, like those who are disabled or blind.

Sandesh | London, England | Sunday, June 22, 2003

A Person to Look Up To: Mother Teresa is a person we can look to for help in understanding others. She served the Lord and was not ashamed.

Vicky | New Jersey | Sunday, June 15, 2003

Precious Relic: Back in 1980 I carved a linoleum print of Mother Teresa, while I studied art in college. I loved Mother Teresa and hoped to one day meet her. Fifteen years later, my former kindergarten student said she was going to the cathedral in Peoria, Illinois, to meet Mother Teresa (in the winter of 1995). I was so excited for her! Her uncle had actually picked up Mother Teresa at the airport and brought her out to Peoria to speak with their parish and start another Missionaries of Charity house there. My husband and two young children and I tried to drive there too, only hoping for a glimpse of this wonderful lady. Snow storms came through, though, making driving treacherous as roads became drifted over and impassable. Disheartened, we returned home. A few years later, when Mother Teresa died (on my own mother's birthday, September 5) I lamented that I never got to see Mother Teresa in this lifetime.

More than a year later I prayed that God would grant me healing from depression that has plagued me for most of my life. I begged God to heal me from daily early morning awakening (awaking at 3:00 a.m. every day for 20 years) and the immeasurable grief that felt like a death in the family. I felt a "dark night of the soul," which I later read that Mother Teresa had also suffered.

In January of 2003, Mother Teresa had something to give me. I was given a relic of hers by a kind man from Ireland whom I had recently met. We had been at Mass that morning and I had been crying for joyful reasons. I had learned earlier that morning the news of her upcoming beatification in October. When I briefly shared with him my story, he reached into his wallet and handed me a holy card with her picture on it. I noticed a small swatch of blue and white fabric from what looked like a piece of her veil. It was laminated next to her image. "Is this a relic of hers?" I cried. He said, "Yes. This is for you. Somebody gave it to me when

I was still in Ireland but I didn't know why. I know now that it was meant for you!"

Maureen | Bonita Springs, Florida | Saturday, June 14, 2003

Going Home: I was inspired by Mother Teresa last winter when I was diagnosed with a chronic illness and had to take a leave of absence from my job. My husband had also lost his job. We were in a place without family, and I prayed to Mother Teresa to help us get home. We both now have jobs and are going home. I credit Mother Teresa for answering my prayers in times of need. She never fails me. When people ask me how I am able to overcome my difficulties, I only have to say two words: Mother Teresa.

Pamela | Chicago, Illinois | Tuesday, June 10, 2003

Two Heroes: Mother Teresa was a real hero, as is the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. Why? Because they live as Jesus lived, caring for others, setting a great example for the rest of us to follow. They are strong yet humble, looking for Christ in every human being that they encounter on their Way of the Cross.

Adryan | San Diego, California | Sunday, June 08, 2003

International Family: In 1988 I kept hearing my inner voice saying I would become Catholic in a foreign country. Over and over I heard this message. I even went to Tijuana which was close to where I lived and tried to find a church. Nothing happened so I let everything go. Finally in 1991 after being guided to go to Amsterdam, Holland, it happened. Not only did I become Catholic it happened in Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity chapel in Amsterdam. My spiritual director was the Missionaries of Charity superior, the priest was Dutch and my godmother from Africa. So I am truly blessed with having an international family and to have become Catholic in Mother's own chapel. Also I was given the name of Teresa after the Little Flower, Saint

Terese of Liseux! I had carried her picture around with me in my wallet for years and when my spiritual director suggested I take her name, I couldn't believe it! God works in the most mysterious ways, and I believe our inner voice is that of the Holy Spirit and if followed we are doing our Lord's will.

Joy | San Francisco, California | Thursday, June 05, 2003

Sign of the Cross: In 1990 after going through an extremely difficult period in my life and journey as an artist, I was in a half-awake, half-asleep state and Mother Teresa came to me and made the sign of the cross on my forehead. I understood this as God's way of explaining my difficulties and knew that I must learn to embrace "carrying the cross" because that is my lot.

Joy | San Francisco, Canada | Thursday, June 05, 2003

Great Inspiration: Mother has given me great inspiration. While I was devastated financially after the collapse of the stock market in March 2000, I decided to spend my entire life devoted to helping those who were even less fortunate than myself. I turned to Mother Teresa for help. I now know what it is like to have nothing and have a much better feeling for the poor, the oppressed and the homeless. I pray daily that Mother will be canonized in October by his Holiness John Paul II. May she be a great inspiration for those who have lost hope!

Gary | Cupertino, California | Thursday, June 05, 2003

A Living Angel: Mother Teresa was an inspiration to me. She was such a humble, kind, caring, thoughtful and considerate nun. She was like Jesus: She was there for everyone with her humbleness. She did not favor anyone; she treated everyone the same. She was a little walking saint. She never complained. She did Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother's work. Mother Teresa was a living angel.

Angel | California | Wednesday, June 04, 2003

Venezuelan Mission: I am living in Venezuela now because of Mother Teresa. I was inspired by Mother Teresa in December 1999, after I had lost a job in the U.S. and returned to Canada for a brief vacation. At that time I had purchased the book Madre Teresa in Spanish. I wrote a promise to God that if I could only find a good job again, I would later develop a way to help overcome the heartbreaking poverty in Venezuela.

Over the past four years I improved my Spanish and now I live in Caracas and Houston, Texas. I lead a U.S. firm and I am at the same time the Fundador of the Fundacion Potencial Humano, Caminos para superar la Pobreza in Caracas, Venezuela. My fiancée is a lady from Maracaibo, Venezuela, and she is a cofounder of this organization. Our first project is to work with 25 doctors in the Barrio St. Augustine in Caracas. The 30,000 people in the Barrio St. Augustine often live without roofs, like animals, and families often send their daughters out for prostitution. The effect on the dignity of woman is terrifying. When I first came to Venezuela I thought I had arrived in a country in Africa, the poverty is so severe. We will raise the money to ensure that people have food, medicine and job training. My employer in the U.S. has been very supportive, thanks to God.

Christopher | Caracas, Venezuela | Tuesday, May 27, 2003

Long-time Inspiration: Mother Teresa has been my inspiration for 22 years now. I first saw her on TV when I was little and from then on never stopped admiring her. She identifies with Christ in the most vivid way possible. Once I dreamed about her telling me to pray to her because she is a powerful intercessor in heaven. Seeing the testimonies of people in this Web site is a strong confirmation of this, indeed.

Marsha | Mississauga, Ontario | Saturday, May 24, 2003

Strong Example: I've read a book about Mother Teresa, and I can't understand how a human being can be as strong as she was. I love her and I think that she is a great example for us as Catholics.

Miguel | Burke, Virginia | Thursday, May 22, 2003

Inspirational Assignment: For the last big assignment in my history class for this year, I had to choose a person of integrity and write about him or her. My mom had mentioned Mother Teresa, and after some thought I realized she would be wonderful to do my report on. As I have studied her life, it has shed light on my own selfishness and pride. I never realized that Mother Teresa grew up in a wealthy family. I thought she might have always been poor. Her life was in full submission and in faithful worship to God. That's what our life is all about and the only reason we exist; to glorify God. Mother Teresa lived the amazing example of how Christ has called us to live.

This report I am doing on Mother Teresa has changed me, because I have seen she had all her needs met. She chose to leave her family. Right now my family is going through the process of developing a mission for homeless families with the help of our mighty God. Mother Teresa's life and legacy have inspired me to live a better life in full and reverent submission to Christ. Her story will forever be in my heart and mind.

Grace | Mt. Vernon, Washington | Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Message in a Dream: Mother Teresa became an inspiration to me in a dream. One night I dreamed that Mother Teresa appeared at the foot of my bed. She was telling me to do something, but I could not remember a word that she was saying. All I could remember was telling her, "I can't do this." I kept saying in my dream, "Why me?" I was thinking I wasn't good enough to do what she wanted me to do.

Ever since that dream I have been trying to become a teacher. I am going through so much to become a teacher, because I have had a hard life and a learning disability.

Daisfette | Wilson, North Carolina | Sunday, May 18, 2003

Miracle of Comfort: I would like to submit a miracle that happened to me the night my mother died. I had a very difficult mother to get along with. She constantly harassed me. The night she died, I needed comfort. I opened a book about the life of Mother Teresa. After I read for a while, I closed the book and I felt Mother Teresa hold me in her arms the whole night long. It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I felt it to be a real miracle. I truly felt at peace the whole night long. I knew that she was truly a special saint to me.

Linda | Pennsylvania | Sunday, May 18, 2003

Personal Blessing: Mother Teresa inspired not only me but also my entire family. I met Mother at the Blue Army Shrine, New Jersey. She gave me a blessing on my forehead and looked in my eyes. This woman loved as I felt Jesus loved when he walked the earth. She saw him in everyone, regardless of race, creed or religion. She loved with unconditional love. I pray for the grace to love as she did. I pray she is made a saint very quickly.

Fran | Roslyn, Pennsylvania | Friday, May 16, 2003

Amazing and Inspiring: Mother Teresa inspired me in many ways. I hope someday to be half the woman she was. Even though she has passed on she still lives in my heart and soul. I'm 15 years old, and Mother Teresa inspired me to want to be a nun. My friends don't, and can't understand why I'm taking the road toward the Lord and they will probably never know. But in my heart I know I've been called; the Lord will be my shepherd and I'll be his sheep till my last breath. Mother Teresa is an amazing woman. Without her I would have never had the

courage to stand up and accept my call and for that I'm forever thankful. I know she is watching over me with the Lord, and somehow I know she is smiling.

Amanda | Edinburg, Texas | Friday, May 16, 2003

Love to Share: Mother Teresa was so kind to the poorest of the poor. She had a lot of love to share and did just that.

Judy | Independence, Ohio | Thursday, May 15, 2003

Serene Dignity: Ever since I learned about Mother Teresa, I was impressed with her simple, serene dignity. She never owned anything or had beautiful clothes. She was a small, unassuming woman who gave her whole life to the comfort of the ill and the oppressed. She did not do it for money or fame, and that was obvious. Through all of this she had the respect and awe of the rich and poor. She impressed the politicians and the royalty of the world. All of this was truly remarkable and one wonders how this was possible. One only has to look in her eyes and see God working through her actions. Words cannot express the respect that I have for her.

Roberta | Austin, Texas | Thursday, May 15, 2003

Two Reasons: Mother Teresa really inspires me because she served the Lord and helped others.

Annie | Zanesville, Ohio | Tuesday, May 06, 2003

Inspired to Be Like Her: Mother Teresa inspired lots of people, including me. She actually should be considered a saint for what she has done. She saved many people's lives. I wanted to meet her, and someday I'm sure I will. She was so inspiring and caring to other people. She took people off the street she didn't even know and cared for them. She fed them and gave them clothes to wear. I want to be just like Mother Teresa when I get older. I probably will become a sister in the

church. She didn't have to be nice to other people but she did anyway. She is so inspiring that I'm going to do a report on her for school.

Kayla | Wolf Point, Montana | Monday, May 05, 2003

Symbol of Goodness: I've always loved Mother Teresa. She is the symbol of goodness in the harsh world. I carry her picture in my wallet. I know I can never be her, but I try to mimic her every day. I now work in elder care. After 24 years of being in another field, I changed fields. I try to be like her.

Karen | Bayshore, New York | Thursday, May 01, 2003

Courage and Love: Mother Teresa of Kolkata inspires me because of her unconditional love, her continuing to help those who do not show gratitude and her courage in proclaiming the gospel of Christ even in an audience where it would be unpopular.

Maryland | Thursday, May 01, 2003

Complete Cure: Very shortly after the passing of Mother Teresa, my husband's cousin was diagnosed with lymphoma and given only a few months to live. I immediately began to pray to Mother Teresa to intercede for a miraculous cure for David. I asked every other praying person to join in asking Mother Teresa for her intercession. David was completely cured and lives a healthy life. Thanks be to God, and the intercession of Mother Teresa.

Sharon | Parkland, Florida | Wednesday, April 30, 2003

A Better Person: Mother Teresa is great. She is magnificent, super and very generous to other people. When I grow up all I want to be is a better person just like her.

Kate | Toronto, Ontario, Canada | Wednesday, April 30, 2003

Amazing Love: Mother Teresa looked into a person's heart and soul, and she reached out her hand to anyone in need. The amazing love she

gave to others was a heartfelt memory which shall remain in our hearts forever. In this world we need a reason to believe in others and to see the good in people, and Mother Teresa was a model of genuine love. I don't think we shall ever know a love so beautiful in our time again. She was loved by all. In times of despair her radiant smile should be a reminder to all of us that life is what you make it. We all could learn a lot from her.

Phyllis | New Jersey | Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Great Courage: Mother Teresa inspired me by the great courage she had to be with the famous and at the same time be so humble. I will never forget her.

M. Newark | New Jersey | Sunday, April 27, 2003

Kindness: Mother Teresa's kindness in helping people impressed me. That's the way I have been since I was young.

Yosso | Pennsylvania | Thursday, April 24, 2003

Selfless Giving: I always found Mother Teresa to be a special person, even though I didn't know much about her. She gave of herself, and the ones she gave of herself to are the ones who could not give back, only through love, which is the ultimate gift. Her spirit still lives on. I just found out her birthday is the same as mine!

Michele | Topeka, Kansas | Saturday, April 19, 2003

Respected by All: Mother Teresa has inspired me in many ways. One way I am inspired by her is her kindness and love to many poor people she helped. She also inspired me to help people and give them what they need. Mother Teresa is respected by rich, poor and old people.

Arijana | New Jersey | Monday, April 14, 2003

Helping Others: I am very much inspired by Mother Teresa because she took the call of God as if nothing else could get in her way. I believe that

the world needs to stress the call of friendliness, love and helping anyone in need. I want to help my community to be more like Mother Teresa. It can only help you, never hurt you, to help someone out.

Katlyn | Connecticut | Thursday, April 03, 2003

Care and Inspiration: I am doing a project about Mother Teresa, and when we got asked to research about her she really inspired me. I just love the way she cared about everyone. She is probably the most loving person I have learned about.

Gemma | England | Friday, March 28, 2003

Not Just a Catholic Inspiration: You don't have to be Catholic to honor Mother Teresa. She is my inspiration. I often read many of her quotes on life over and over again for insight into the Christian walk.

Sue | Grand Rapids, Michigan | Thursday, March 27, 2003

True Heroine: Mother Teresa is a true heroine of mine. She has influenced me to become a devoted missionary. Ever since I was young I helped those less fortunate than myself. I just hope that many other people realize how wonderful this humanitarian was.

Fifi | Mississippi | Thursday, March 27, 2003

Humility and Love: I am inspired by her humility and her love for the destitute.

Raphael | Oakhurst, New Jersey | Wednesday, March 26, 2003

True Faith: When I first started learning and reading about Mother Teresa, almost eight years ago, I was inspired by her everyday holiness and wisdom. Her love for Jesus deeply touched me. Little did I know that later in life, I would be one of the poor and homeless she spoke of. I continued to read her messages whenever I could. She touched my heart because I was one of the people she spoke of.

Today, I know that I would like to minister to the poor, homeless and mentally ill. Now I can look to her for inspiration. She has taught a truth on the subject: Don't come to give just money to the poor but actually work with them. The poor, homeless and mentally ill are just like you and me: They are children of God and deserve to be treated as such. She was not afraid of them and neither should we be. When we see these people, as she said, smile at them. A smile costs nothing to us but means much to those who receive it.

Mother Teresa is to me a true example of faith in Christ in the late 20th century. She showed us that true faith is possible if we only let Jesus into our lives. I hope she continues to be a strong inspiration to me and my life.

Gina | Lafayette, Louisiana | Monday, March 17, 2003

Mother's Medal: My friend gave me a medal that Mother Teresa had in the pocket of her habit. She told me that I'd know what to do with it. For about a year I carried it in my wallet. I saw it almost daily, and I'd utter a quick prayer for Mother's enlightenment.

My son's girlfriend, a nurse, became aware of a very sick child; the doctors could not find out what was wrong. The mother thought that the boy was possessed. I sent the medal to my son's girlfriend to lend to the mother for her son. The son recovered and the medal was returned to me.

Upon receiving the medal, I heard that a colleague's mother was gravely ill. I sent the medal with her boyfriend with a note about the young boy who had recovered in Texas. I told her to pin it to her mom and return it when the mom was well. The irony in this particular instance is that the daughter, my colleague, had been praying for Mother Teresa to intercede in her own mother's behalf. My colleague returned weeks later to tell me how comforted her mother had been

upon receiving this medal. Although not cured, the mother is regaining her strength far beyond what the doctors had predicted. She still has the medal. I can make no claims because I have only been the instrument.

Cindy | La Mesa, California | Saturday, March 15, 2003

Huge Task Made Easier: Mother Teresa was a true inspiration to me when I was caring for my terminally ill wife. I was seeking strength to carry on, and the reasoning came to me that she was a little woman in stature but with a huge task. So if I was only caring for one person it was a very small task compared to hers. She loved humanity so much that it must have broken her heart when someone in her care passed away. But on the other hand, there was a joy that the soul was going home to the Father.

Harry | New Orleans, Louisiana | Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Blessings: I had the chance to meet Mother Teresa in person four times when she came to Albania. Meeting her in person, and working for her and her sisters, changed my life completely. She has been all my life an inspiration of love and respect for all human beings. She was so humble, so simple and so loving and so respectful. I still have her blessings with me.

Valentina | Tyler, Texas | Monday, March 10, 2003

Wanting to Help: I'm not Catholic, but Mother Teresa still inspires me. I only came to this Web site because I had to do a project on her. I found a lot of information on this Web site; it has been very helpful. She inspires me because she helped the poor when no one else would. She makes me want to help the poor or make some differences in the community, city, state, country and even world. So when I grow up, whether it is my job or not, I want to help a lot of people.

Adrienne | North Carolina | Thursday, March 06, 2003

Volunteer Spirit: I had the opportunity to hear Mother speak during one of her rallies in India. What touched me most was the way she spoke; it was with such sincerity and simplicity. Yet I knew what she was saying was so difficult for many of us. It was to be kind, considerate and respectful to human beings in whatever shape, color or religion. I was a teenager at that time, and what touched me most about this wonderful person was that she did not just preach, she actually practiced it. I try to be her example and be there for the people I come in contact with; and the peace and happiness I get from it, no money can buy. I will always owe Mother Teresa for giving me that gift. I have since moved to Canada, and most people thought that I would change; but I must say that when I find myself faltering, I go and volunteer in her home and it all comes back to me.

Annette | Canada | Thursday, March 06, 2003

Love and Happiness: I always admired Mother Teresa for the love she gave to others and I always saw her as a model. Last summer I decided to go to Palermo with a group of young people from Malta. There the group organizes a summer school for the poor children in the region of La Kalsa. During that period the young people live with the Missionaries of Charity. Unfortunately my mother developed an illness and it was impossible for me to leave Malta for five weeks. But the leaders decided to give me a taste of this experience, so I went up to Palermo for one week. I left a huge mountain of problems here in Malta; however, during the whole week that I was helping these children, there was not even one single moment in which I felt sad. I also accepted my mother's illness and never complained about it any more. Now I understand why Mother Teresa was always happy! And I also understand why I can't wait till June to go to Palermo again!

Ritienne | Mosta, Malta | Tuesday, March 04, 2003

God's Blessing: God blessed us all in this lifetime with Mother Teresa. By her example, we learned to know him. She was truly his saint, living as he wants us all to live, loving as he wants us all to love.

Theresa | Annapolis, Maryland | Tuesday, March 04, 2003

'A Saint of Our Days': I had the great chance to meet Mother Teresa several times in Rome. Every time I was deeply impressed by her strong personality and her sense of realism. She is for me the example of a saint of our days. She knew the problems around her, and she did all to resolve them with the power God gave her. All this was done in a strong unity with the Church. She admired Pope John Paul II and had a great respect for him. He on his side was proud to see her every time she came to Rome. He asked his collaborators to inform him as soon as she arrived in Rome. My moments with her stayed deeply impressed in my heart.

Manfred | Rome, Italy | Tuesday, March 04, 2003

Hope and Inspiration: Mother Teresa is a source of hope and inspiration for me. She helps me to remember what is important in life. I often pray to her. In one instance I prayed to her for help with an ailment and soon after was cured.

Dawn | Washington, D.C. | Monday, March 03, 2003

A Great Catholic: Mother Teresa inspired me when I found out she was not just some lady who won the Nobel Peace Prize; she was a great Catholic nun who helped people a lot. I wish she were still alive.

Michele | El Paso, Texas | Monday, March 03, 2003

A Close Friend: My friend Katie worked with Mother Teresa. She went to India several times to be by her side; she would leave everything behind in order to serve others. Because of Katie, Mother became a close friend to our group. We never did meet her, but we would hear

about her and Katie would read to us her letters. She has inspired me in many ways, and if I can be a particle of who she was as a woman of God, then I have served God with all my heart and mind.

Nora | Santa Rosa, California | Sunday, March 02, 2003

Never-ending Love: After reading short devotions by Mother Teresa, I actually felt energized. While at work, I could not put my book down. Mother Teresa's love for the poor is never-ending and it makes me want to become her servant too. I felt empowered and I definitely want to visit one of her houses.

Janice | Pt. Lookout, New York | Friday, February 28, 2003

A Changed Life: I'm originally from India, and during the 1970s I was in an audience where Mother Teresa was the guest of honor. I was young and although I had lived most of my adult life in India, I paid very little attention to the works of Mother Teresa and her order. But the day I stood only a few feet away from her changed my life forever. At that moment, I realized how little I had done to serve humanity and how "small" I felt standing next to Mother Teresa.

I was raised a Buddhist, married a Catholic and converted. I've been in the United States since 1984, and I've been fortunate to visit my family in India and Nepal over the years. During my visits, I always make it a point to visit one of Mother Teresa's homes for the children and her home for the dying destitutes (the elderly) in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Whenever I visit Nepal or India, I take up a collection at work, and Christians of all denominations give to Mother Teresa's works. Mother Teresa has been the inspiration in my life. If I could do just a fraction of what she did, I would be happy.

Pema | Davison, Michigan | Friday, February 28, 2003

Miraculous Medal: In 1986, I attended a meeting at a bank where there had been allegations of mismanagement. There was a really tense atmosphere. Suddenly, there was a hush that somebody was coming. We all held our breath. Mother Teresa was entering the hall. In her humble stature, no pomp at all, we could not deny the fact that water extinguished whatever fire of anger we had in our hearts. She slowly walked to the center and in her mellow voice spoke of love and love and love. We listened intently to every word she spoke in such simple language a child would understand. Then she began handing out Miraculous Medals. There was no crowding. There was real awe in the atmosphere. She handed me two. I declined the second one, telling her I already had one. But she said in her soft, mellow voice, "Get the second one and keep it!"

Today, I am afflicted with glaucoma. I took the medal Mother Teresa gave me years back and attached it to my scapular. I have implored her intercession for my eyes. Of course, I followed the doctor's advice for me, too. The pressure in my eyes has remarkably gone down. My doctor, in fact, exclaimed, "I cannot believe this! To whom are you praying?" Prayers work in unfathomable ways. Miracles do happen and through intercessions I believe that the Lord will not refuse a persistent prayer.

Josefina | Muntinlupa City, Philippines | Friday, February 28, 2003

The second miracle involved the healing of a Brazilian man with several brain tumours in 2008. On March 16, 2016 Pope Francis approved the canonization of Mother Teresa of Kolkata and set September 4 as the date for the formal declaration of one of the most iconic figures of the 20th century as a saint of the Catholic Church. **Vox Populi, Vox Dei**





"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"

Canards and Crucifixes | 9

A. International (Mother is a Hypocrite)

Of the billions of words written about Jesus Christ this is the most poignant passage that I have come across:

"...He was born in a manger in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop till he was thirty. He then became an itinerant preacher. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He had no credentials but himself.

...He was only thirty-three when sinful men condemned him as blasphemer and handed him over to the Roman rulers, who in turn branded him as anti-national traitor. The lotus-eating public believed it and turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His closest disciple disowned him. While he was dying his executioners gambled for his meager clothing, the only property he had on earth. He was laid in a borrowed grave...

...Twenty Centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race. All the Armies that ever marched, all the Navies that ever sailed, all the Parliaments that ever sat, and all the Kings that ever reigned have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as this One Solitary Life..."

As the most ardent and most renowned ambassador of Jesus and His values, it is but natural that some of these should rub on the frail and humble woman who called herself the 'servant of the poor'. Hence the canards and crucifixes that haunted Mother Teresa during her life and after.

Ever since she came into prominence with Nobel Prize award when she lived and more particularly when she was beatified after she died

allegations and abuses against her has been flying thick and fast. This included a study conducted by Researchers Serge Larivee and Genevieve Chenard from the University of Montreal's department of psycho-education, and Carole Senechal of the University of Ottawa's faculty of education. Gravamen of these allegations and accusations is that Mother Teresa is a hypocrite meaning a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion. She had "questionable" contacts with dodgy characters such as the Haitian dictator, Jean-Claude Duvalier, had overly 'Catholic' views on contraception, abortion and divorce, and that she offered rudimentary and sometimes unhygienic medical care to the sick and dying in her hospices, instead of setting up a proper hospital in Kolkata. There was also a cruel twist to the tale — that when she herself fell ill, she benefited from the best medical attention on offer.

Now let us look at the other accusations:

1. Bhopal tragedy happened on 3rd December 1984 in the early hours killing 3,800 workers of Union Carbide factory in their sleep due to leakage of methyl isocyanate gas. At that juncture Mother Teresa flew from Kolkata city to Bhopal, not to console the families of the victims but to plead that the management of Union Carbide be forgiven. This is the distorted version of a 5-second byte from Christopher Hitchen's 'Hell's Angel' wherein Mother Teresa talks of 'forgiveness' as a virtue and it has nothing to do with the 'management of Union Carbide'.
2. When Indira Gandhi, the prime minister of India imposed emergency during 1975 and suspended constitutional fundamental rights of citizens, Mother Teresa praised her saying that the people were happy, and the unemployment problem of India was solved! As reward thereof Mother Teresa received Bharat Ratna, the highest honor from Government of India. It was during

this time I moved with Mother Teresa and I had protected and safeguarded Jayaprakash Narayan (JP-Indira Gandhi's archrival, who defeated her later) from the harshness of Emergency regime and in fact had saved his life twice. When Mother came to know about it she was all appreciation. I have never heard her speaking a word in favour of Emergency. As for award of Bharat Ratna in 1980, Government of India conferred it on the Mother as a follow-up of her receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

3. Sushan Sheilds who worked with Mother Teresa for 9 years dealing with her accounts of donations revealed that there was \$ 50 million in New York Bank. The amount was received by various donors. That amount was supposed to be spent for poor, destitute children in her charity homes. She never bothered about the ethics of her donors.
 - Robert Maxwell, the mega publisher who embezzled the employee's funds to the tune of 450 million pounds, donated \$1.25 million to Mother Teresa.
 - The inhuman dictator of Haiti, Jean Claude Duvalier, honored Mother Teresa. She flew all the way to Haitito receive the honors. She praised him as kind person who helped poor people while the fact was that he tortured Haitians. He fled the country in 1986 and returned in 2011. He was arrested. He tortured people and killed several persons during his regime. At that time Mother Teresa received honors! Jean Claude escaped from the country to return in 2011 and he was promptly arrested.
 - Mother Teresa received \$1.25 million from Charles Keating in California, USA. He floated a company called Keating Savings and Loans during 1980. He cheated the public to the tune of \$250 million. He was arrested and imprisoned. During his trial

Mother Teresa appealed to the judge, requesting him to pardon Keating. Then Paul Turley, deputy attorney of Los Angeles, asked Mother Teresa to return the amount so that it could be distributed to the victims of Keating. Mother Teresa observed stoic silence!

- Walter Weber, after thorough research about the funds received by Mother Teresa published articles in Stern magazine in Germany in 1998. Germany alone donated \$3 million annually to Mother Teresa charity homes. There was absolute secrecy about the donations received by Mother Teresa.

In an article published in The Hindu Navin Chawla, Delhi based former Civil Servant and biographer of Mother Teresa rebutted these accusations point by point: [[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-mother-teresa-her-critics-choose-to ignore/article5058894.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-mother-teresa-her-critics-choose-to-ignore/article5058894.ece)]

Mother Teresa was only 18 when she was convinced that her life's vocation lay in her becoming a missionary in far-off India: Skopje, where she was born on August 26, 1910, was so far removed from Bengal that, barring a few Yugoslav Jesuits who fired her young imagination, no one in the small Catholic community would even have known where India lay. Yet, the early seeds of her faith, determination and compassion, nurtured by her widowed mother, impelled her to leave her close-knit family, first for Ireland to join the Loreto Order of teaching nuns, (and also to learn some English), and then by boat to faraway Kolkata, which she would grow to love so much that it would become indistinguishable with her own name. She lived and worked as a Loreto nun for close to 20 years before her true calling once again propelled her to find a way to the street, not as a lay woman but continuing to be an ordained nun. The Vatican itself gave her permission, fantastically for

the first time in Church history, to step outside her secure convent into a huge and bewildering city. In 1948, Kolkata's pavements were swarming with teeming millions uprooted by Partition, who now joined the hapless sufferers of the Great Bengal Famine of 1942-43. Here stepped in a 38-year-old nun, now dressed not in the recognisable nun's habit, but a sari similar to what the municipal sweepresses wore, with no companion, no helper and no money.

Confronted with disease, destitution and death all around her at a time (1948) when there was hardly any health-care service to speak of, she did what was to become her hallmark. Finding a man dying in the street, she took him to a public hospital, which refused to admit him, precisely on the grounds that since he was about to die, they would not waste a hospital bed on a life they said they could not save! It was only when she sat before the hospital in a dharna that they relented. The man died a few hours later. It was at this point that she began her search for a place where she could take those people whom hospitals refused; where she could nurse them — she had some medical training — and they could at least die being comforted and with some dignity. She begged various authorities and finally, an officer in the Kolkata Municipality gave her a pilgrims' hall adjacent to the Kalighat temple, where she requested the police and municipal authorities to bring her all and any of those dying whom the hospitals refused.

Mother Teresa did not set up a full-fledged hospital because that would tie down all her Sisters to a single establishment, and none will be left to care for those who fell by the wayside—the infant abandoned on a street, the sick and elderly turned out of their homes, often enough by their own families, the leprosy sufferers or AIDS patients that no one wanted to even go near. Although staunchly and devoutly Catholic, she reached out to people of all denominations irrespective of their faith, or even the lack of it. She did not believe that conversion was her work. That was god's work. So while she lifted the abandoned baby off a street

full of prowling dogs for the sanctuary of her Shishu Bhawan, she would never convert her, because that child would probably be adopted into a nice Hindu household, and such a conversion would then have been a cardinal sin which she would never commit. That is why people of all faiths were so accepting of this diminutive Catholic nun.

As to the uncharitable allegation of Mother Teresa benefitting from the best medical attention on offer Chawla has this to say: "In 1994, Mother Teresa fell ill in Delhi when she had come to receive an award. She developed high fever and possibly gastro-enteritis. Against her will ("I will be all right by tomorrow"), I rushed her to a large, public hospital, where she was hospitalised for over a week. I stood vigil. She was known to have a cardiac history, and it was up to the cardiology department or the gastro department to "take charge." The sad truth is that no one wanted to, frankly scared she might die on their hands. She sensed this too, pleading with me to take her back to her beloved Kolkata. But she could not possibly have been moved. In those days when there were no mobile phones, the switchboard at the hospital was jammed with enquiries. I not only took almost daily calls from Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Prime Minister's Office, but also from the White House, the Vatican, and chancelleries all over Europe. Ambassadors called frequently. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao offered her treatment anywhere in the world. Finally, not quite recovered in my view, her Sisters took her back to Kolkata."

As to the Duvalier story Navin Chawla punctures it very effectively: "When I was writing the biography on Mother Teresa, I asked her why she took money from dodgy characters like Duvalier. Her answer was concise. In charity, she said, everyone had a right to give. How was this different from thousands of people who each day feed the poor? ...Meanwhile, I researched the Duvalier story. Mother had set up a small mission in Port-au-Prince, one of the world's most desperately poor places. A day after Mother Teresa visited and left, Duvalier's

daughter-in-law went to Mother Teresa's mission and donated 1,000 dollars. It was not, as was reported, a million dollars, but Mother Teresa's reply would still have been the same: if that gives peace to the giver, so be it."

Christopher Hitchens is the tallest of all Mother Teresa's condemnors and he had made a business of it. He described himself variously as a socialist, Marxist and antitheist. According to him, the concept of a god or a supreme being is a totalitarian belief that destroys individual freedom, and that free expression and scientific discovery should replace religion as a means of teaching ethics and defining human civilisation. Hating religious personalities therefore comes natural to him. In collaboration with Tariq Ali he produced a documentary titled: Hell's Angel. He also wrote and published a book titled: 'Missionary Position', after visiting Mother Teresa's charity homes and after interviewing her. His accusations are also on similar lines – Mother's stand against abortion, deficiency in healthcare rendered by the Sisters, meeting with autocrats and dictators, accepting donations from questionable sources and glorifying poverty. I have viewed 'Hells Angel' and read the summary of his book 'Missionary Position'. He comes out as an extremely self-opinionated person and his allegations are vague. When Bill Donohue American sociologist and civil activist and president of the Catholic League in the United States confronted Christopher Hitchens in the TV debate "Mother Teresa: Saint or Scandal?" with the question whether he has the evidence or citation for what all he has been saying and writing about Mother Teresa he fumbled and rambled.

The recorded critique of his Book 'Missionary Position' by one of the Readers sums it all up: "Hitchens is to atheist science-ists what C. S. Lewis is to American Evangelical Christians...There; I got it out of my system. I've been wanting to write that sentence for a long time, but never had an excuse...I read this book and pretty much hated it. As I

have done so often in the past, I tried reading one of the "new atheists" in the hopes of finding calm, dispassionate, unemotional discourse. Instead, I find petulance and nastiness take over, just like when I read any kind of fundamentalist, whether it be Christian, Islamic, liberal, feminist, American exceptionalist, or whatever. Fundamentalism is fundamentalism, and Hitchens is as fundamentalist as they come... Here is the biggest problem: Given the author and subject, the book practically writes itself. I don't think he is capable of putting himself into another person's mind and seeing the world from any perspective but his own narrow fundamentalism." This says it all!

B. National (Mother is a Proselytiser)

Back home, at the height of the deeply polarising '*gharwapasi*' (home-coming) episodes being enacted by fundamentalist and fringe elements, after BJP came to power Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) Chief Mohan Bhagwat had this to say about Mother Teresa: "*Unki seva achhi rahi hogi, lekin uske pichhe ek uddeshya tha ki jiski seva ki ja rahi hai, wah Isaai ban jae* (Her service may have been great but there was an objective behind her social work: she wanted to convert people to Christianity)." He said this while inaugurating a *Mahila Sadan* (women's home) and *Shishu Bal Grah* (orphanage) of an NGO called *Apna Ghar* in Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

Mother Teresa was not among the living to respond to this canard. So her Missionary of Charity reacted: "Mohan Bhagwat is ill informed. He should come and visit the mission to know more about our work...The mission works for the poor irrespective of their religious background. The people of the country and especially Kolkata remembers the Mother for her compassion and love for the poor...People in Kolkata and across the world cutting across religious affiliations revere the Mother."

Mohan Bhagwat is the chief honcho of a 'cultural organization' which is the strongest votary of Manusmriti's *varnas* (castes)- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras - created by Brahma (creator of this world) from his mouth, hands, thighs and feet respectively. Manu claims that the same Brahma, who created this world, also created Manusmriti and taught it to him. The duties of the different varnas are also mentioned in the Manusmriti. The Brahmins were created for teaching, studying, performing yajnas (ceremonial sacrifices), getting yajnas performed, giving and accepting dan (gifts). The Kshatriyas were created for protecting the citizens, giving gifts, getting yajnas performed and studying. The Vaishyas were created for protecting animals, giving gifts, getting yajnas performed, studying, trading, lending money on interest and doing agricultural work. The Shudras were created by Brahma for serving Brahmins and the other two varnas without being critical of them.

It is interesting to note that studying, getting yajnas performed and giving gifts or charity are common duties of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas; whereas teaching, accepting gifts and performing yajnas are reserved exclusively for Brahmins. The Shudras, of course, are denied the rights to study, getting yajnas performed by Brahmins or even giving gifts to them. Manusmriti assigned different duties and occupations for different varnas, which is to be enforced strictly by the king. According to Manusmriti, if a person of lower caste adopts the occupation of a higher caste, the king ought to deprive him of all his property and expel him from his kingdom.

Manusmriti treats Brahmins as superior and other varnas, namely, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra as inferior to him in descending order with the Shudra occupying the bottom of the hierarchy. A Brahmin is to be treated as god and respected even if he is ignorant. Even a hundred-year old Kshatriya is to treat a ten year old Brahmin as his father. Brahmin alone is entitled to teach. If a Shudra dares to give moral lessons to the

Brahmin, the king is to get him punished by pouring hot oil in his ear and mouth. Similarly, if a Shudra occupies the same seat as a Brahmin, he is to be punished by branding his waist (with hot rod) or getting his buttocks cut!

If the totally distorted and unjust social system advocated in Manusmriti is applied to modern day the lowest of the low and the poorest of the poor that Mother Teresa served would belong to the *Shudra varna*. It is but natural that Mohan Bhagwat, would fume at the love and compassion that Mother Teresa bestowed on this 'wretched of the earth'.

Be that as it may, RSS Chief's remark kicked up a huge controversy. Indians from all walks of life and religions joined to condemn allegations made against the Mother by Mohan Bhagwat. His comments have evoked fierce reactions over social media, as well as protests. In the Rajya Sabha (upper house of India's Parliament) opposition parties staged protests which led to adjournment of the sitting. They demanded statements from the ruling government and from prime minister Narendra Modi, whose BJP party is closely aligned with RSS.

There was also across the board criticism of Mohan Bhagwat's communally tainted remarks. But Opinions differed. Those who wanted to put their civilized face forward held a secularist argument. Those who genuinely believed that Mother Teresa was an embodiment of compassion rose above narrow religious considerations. Hardcore fundamentalist elements kept on throwing mud at Mother Teresa's monumental compassion and humanitarian work? Some said that Christianity elevates evangelism and conversion to a religious duty. More devout you are more strictly you would adhere to it. And the love for humanity is just a means to achieve this. They fitted Mother Teresa into this stereotype and branded her as a proselytizer.

Status-quoists rationalized this notion by arguing that Christian missionaries notoriously start with social and humanitarian work, like medical help, opening schools, taking care of poor and down-trodden before impressing upon them, directly or not, the benefits of adapting their religion. And at all such endeavors, they are not without introducing elements of Christian theology in one form or the other. They may introduce passages from Bible or New Testament. They may introduce religious experiences of the converted people... etc. They virtually endorsed Mohan Bhagwat by suggesting that the primary motive of Mother Teresa was conversion.

When Mohan Bhagwat made this statement 'ghar wapasi' was high on the agenda of the Sangh Parivar, and verbal duel on Hindu to Christian conversion has been raging with demand for a stringent All-India anti-conversion law. Such demand is not new. In the late 1970s when Janata Party was ruling at the Centre with Sangh Parivar as its part there was a move to enact a similar law for the whole country and a private member bill for the purpose was introduced in Parliament. But with saner elements prevailing this was nipped in the bud and the bill did not see the light of the day. In late 1990s when BJP (in minority) headed the NDA government a bogey of Hindu-Christian divide was trumped up to revive this demand. This also fizzled out. Now, with the 'Sangh Parivar' in full majority at the Centre the cry for a nation-wide anti-conversion law had become loud. As prelude, reverse conversions have been taking place in full public view with 'ghar wapasi' jamborees planned at many places for mass 're-conversions' from Christianity to Hinduism.

Let us look at the why of this recurring conversion debate. The first anti-conversion laws in India were the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act 1967 and the Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam 1968. These states had predominant tribal population. Though clothed in the language of social reform, the main purpose of these legislations was to perpetuate the subjugation of the poor and illiterate tribals to the

corrupt politician-bureaucrat-trader troika. As is known, tribal areas are rich in forests and forest produce which legally belong to the tribals. Corrupt minions of the state in cohort with traders and forest contractors ensured that education and empowerment schemes did not really reach the tribals. The objective was to take advantage of the illiteracy and vulnerability of the tribal population and ruthlessly exploit their precious and valuable resources.

The primary objective of these legislations was to checkmate the Christian missionaries from 'teaching and healing the tribals' and to prevent them from empowering the tribals by opening schools and health centres to tender to the unlettered and the sick. With whatever literacy they were imparted, tribals realised their exploitation and started resisting it. In anger against the oppressive system and to register their protest, some tribals did get converted to Christianity. The "forest-mafia" started collapsing. And so the bogey of "foreign missionaries" and "forced conversions" was whipped up with the purpose of banishing the missionaries and voluntary workers, leaving the field open for the mafia.

Later, anti-conversion laws were passed in Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Gujarat (2003), Chhattisgarh (2006) and Himachal Pradesh (2007). In Tamil Nadu Jayalalithaa-led AIDMK government stealthily promulgated Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2002, which was enacted into a law prohibiting conversion by 'force, fraud or allurement'. In all these laws Christianity was the obvious target. Allurement was defined as: "offer of any gift or gratification either in cash or kind and grant of any material benefit, either monetary or otherwise". Stretching this definition, a sister of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity can be arrested and prosecuted for picking up a leper-abandoned by the state-from the street and nurture him/her to health. It could be worse if this leper decided to convert and become a

Christian! Faced with outrage and stiff opposition Jayalalithaa government beat a hasty retreat and annulled the law!

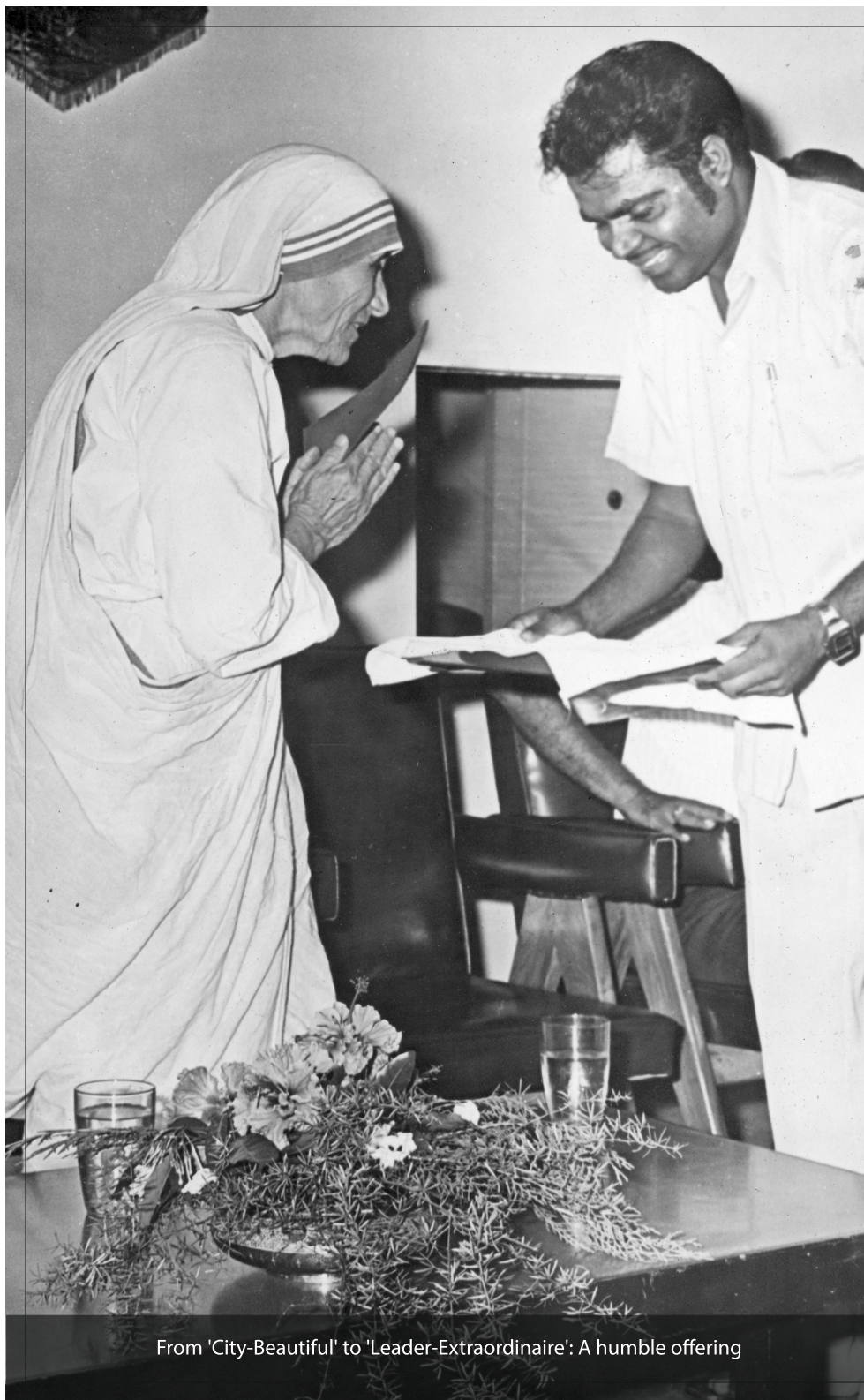
After BJP captured power in 2014, Sangh Parivar rekindled the effort to enact an all-India law against conversion on above lines and its intellectual flotilla was raring to go by declaring that "the stage is now clearly set for this mother of all debates". This debate has abated recently only to be replaced by a hate cum intolerance agenda that is becoming all pervading.

It is time some irrefutable facts about Christianity in India are clearly stated. First and foremost Christianity is neither a western religion nor did it come to India as a "religion of conquerors/colonisers" as is being widely propagated. This religion did not accompany the Portuguese, Dutch, French, or English armies when they came to this country in the 16th and 17th centuries to conquer and colonise. Christianity in India is as old as Christ Himself and the lonely person who came to our shores "to spread Christ's Gospel" was St Thomas, one of Christ's 12 apostles. He landed on the Cochin coast in 52 AD, "spread the word of God" for a few years before being 'martyred' at Madras (Chennai). When he sowed the seeds of Christianity in India, this religion had not even entered the western countries. Christianity has been present in India for two millennia and is centuries older than the Christianity of Europe!

Early missionaries were content with opening educational institutions, hospitals and charitable organisations and spreading the message of Christ through their spirit of service. A small segment of the population, which came in touch with these missionaries or benefited from their services, opted to convert themselves from Hinduism to Christianity. Those who converted belonged to all castes and communities-forward, backward and the untouchables. The larger numbers were from the dalit and oppressed castes, for the simple reason that they were more deeply touched by the selfless service of the missionaries. Besides,

Now, seven decades after India became independent only a little over 2 per cent of the population is Christian. Socio-economic factors rather than any coercion or compulsion have influenced the miniscule conversions in post-Independence India. The genuinely Christian laity or clergy offer education to children, medical help to the sick and sometimes food to the hungry. By no stretch of the imagination can these basic necessities given to those in need be termed as “allurements” for conversion. They are not to be mixed up with ‘commercial evangelists’ who make all kind of tall claims to make quick money.

Mother sincerely served her adopted country through its poor whom she loved most. But she never sought the title 'messiah of the poor'. She contented herself saying: "Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work."



From 'City-Beautiful' to 'Leader-Extraordinaire': A humble offering

A Leader par excellence | 10

Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) defines servant-leader thus: "A servant leader is servant first...it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. The conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of a need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve-after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them are shadings and blends that part of the infinite variety of human nature."



Laub (1999) refines it further and says that a servant-leader sees himself or herself as a servant first. From there the desire to lead emerges. In a sense for them leading becomes a form of serving. Servant-leadership is a state of mind and way

of being rather than a concept that is defined. The true measure of the servant-leader "will be the positive growth of the people he or she leads."

Out of these definitions flow ten key characteristics of servant-leadership:

- Listens respectfully what other have to say
- Accepts others and empathises with them
- Possesses foresight and intuition
- Is aware and perceptive
- Possesses highly developed power of persuasion
- Conceptualises and communicates concepts
- Exerts a healing influence upon individuals and institutions
- Builds community in the work place
- Practices the art of contemplation
- Recognises that servant leadership begins with the desire to change oneself. It then becomes possible to practice servant leadership at the institutional level

Servant-leaders falling in this category exercise very high levels of moral authority that has the capacity to overshadow leader-servant contemporaries who occupied top-most positions of power and authority. Typical examples in the Indian context are Mohandas Gandhi-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru; Jayaprakash Narayan-Prime

Minister Morarji Desai and Mother Teresa-Prime Minister Indira Gamdhi.

Mother Teresa is almost a perfect model of a servant leader. She was a charity worker in India and also a nun. She had a clear vision. She founded Missionaries of charity in Kolkata, India. For 45 years she was looking after the poor, sick, orphaned and dying. It was a pretty depressing job. She was a selfless servant leader who dedicated her whole life to making others lives better. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity has 610 missions in 123 countries which served people with HIV, leprosy and tuberculosis. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and India's highest civilian honor in 1980 for her humanitarian work. Thousands of people were inspired by her servant leader behavior and followed her footprint to contribute their life to the charity. Mother Teresa had always insisted that her followers live in the same poverty as the people they served. Just like what she said when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: "I am unworthy, I accepted the prize in the name of the poor. The prize is the reorganization of the poor world...By serving the poor I am serving Him."

Today, more than 4,800 Missionary Sisters of Charity, about 400 Brothers, and thousands of volunteers continue Mother Teresa's work in Kolkata and around the world. The Missionaries of Charity organization continues to grow and attract new followers. It was Mother Teresa who said "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." That is the statement that joined millions of people in unity.

From another dimension there is 'Integral Leadership' which has been exemplified by exemplary leaders such as Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King or Mohandas Gandhi. These leaders are perceived today not only as some of the most ethical of the 20th and

21st centuries, but also as some of the most efficient, having tackled the deepest scars of our world. These leaders have not only had the capacity to mobilize many followers and to be efficient; they themselves followed their deepest Self and, in the process, helped themselves and others to become more integral.

Mother Teresa belongs to this category too. As opposed to many leaders idolised by the business community, Mother Teresa was operating at a spiritual level. This propelled her to create and lead an organization entirely devoted to the love and the service of the poor. Further, she did not want to become herself a leader. She accepted to become one, a serving leader. Giving her life and her comfort for the sake of others. "Loving until it hurts", as she liked to say.

In 1946, as she was traveling, she intensely experienced a divine presence, that she called God from her Christian perspective, and felt she was given an "inner command". She was to leave the comfort of her convent and help the poorest of the poor while living among them: "It was an order" she declared "to fail it would have been to break faith with God." Through her faith and obedience to this spiritual calling she achieved what some consider as unachievable for a human being. Colleagues at work saw in her "a mix between a military commander and St. Francis of Assisi". For example, when she flew in the war torn West Beirut, a Red Cross officials said, "What stunned everybody was her energy and efficiency. She saw the problem, felt to her knees, prayed for a few seconds, then she was rattling off a list of the supplies she needed – nappies, plastic pants, chamber pots."

Differing from many leaders, Mother Teresa's was simple and humble. She kept no account of the awards heaped upon her. During her life time she received 124 Awards, the more prominent among them being:

- Padmashree Award (from the President of India)-August 1962
- Pope John XXIII Peace Prize-January 1971
- John F. Kennedy International Award-September 1971
- Jawahalar Nehru Award for International Understanding-November 1972
- Templeton Prize for "Progress in Religion"-April 1973
- Nobel Peace Prize-December 1979
- Bharat Ratna (Jewel of India)-March 1980
- Order of Merit (from Queen Elizabeth)-November 1983
- Gold Medal of the Soviet Peace Committee-August 1987
- United States Congressional Gold Medal-June 1997

Mother accepted these awards but did so with a profound sense of her own unworthiness and an insistence that she did so only on behalf of the poor.

The way Mother Teresa lead organizations was also quite surprising, going against most current advise in traditional leadership books. For example, she was not afraid of giving up all resources and keep nothing for the future. This unique trait of giving up everything is reflected in Mother's own words: "One day, while I was walking along the streets of Kolkata, a priest came up to me, asking me to give a contribution for some worthy project. That morning I had left the house with all the money I had, five rupees, which amounted to about 30 cents. During the day, I had spent four on the poor. I had only one rupee to live on the next day and the following days if something didn't happen. Trusting in God, I gave my last rupee to that priest. In my mind I prayed, 'Lord, I don't have anything more, [but] I must think of You.' (as told to Renzo Allegri)

She was unshakable in her conviction that, as she said, "God provides". "Money," she declared "I never give it a thought. It always comes. We do all our work for our Lord. He must look after us". Accordingly, she

would be attentive to "spiritual signs". For her, if God did not provide for a given project, it meant that what she was planning to do was not to be, a very different conception of traditional decision-making and strategic planning: "If He wants something done, He must provide us with the means. If he does not provide us with the means, then it shows that he does not want that particular work. I forget about it."

Mother Teresa did not get involved in politics as most current leaders do in order to achieve what they want. But she used her influence when it came to promote the respect of human dignity and freedom. For example, in 1978/79 when an anti-conversion Bill was introduced in the Indian parliament, she wrote a letter to Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister of India: "This new move that is being brought before Parliament under the cover of freedom of religion is false. There is no freedom if a person is not free to choose according to his or her conscience... All these years our people have lived together in peace. Now religion is used as a deadly weapon to destroy the love they have for each other, just because some are Christians, some Hindus, some Tribals."

On March 25, 1979 Morarji Desai responded to Mother Teresa thus: "If charity and philanthropy is not connected with an ulterior motive, they are beneficial. But charity and conversions cannot go together. Religion prospers only when charity and philanthropy are undertaken without any motive. The Bill you have mentioned does not affect adversely the propagation of religion. In fact, the Bill is an attempt to see that the poor and illiterate may enjoy religious freedom without fear." This did not carry conviction and the Bill fell through.

As a last difference with traditional leadership, Mother Teresa was not only about "doing". She founded her order first on the depth of contemplation. As opposed to focus on the future, she insisted that actions needed to be grounded in the present moment and be filled

with love. She considered lack of love and charity as this world's greatest evil. Her beliefs were simple, almost limpid, revolving around a unique principle: loving God and others. Communion and obedience to this Principle gave her the ambition and faith to do something, in fact anything she could, for the poorest of the poorest and lead an organization that answered the most pressing human needs.

But Mother Teresa was not perfect. She was indeed "one of us". Her life demonstrates that she had herself to grow, sometimes painfully, in the different dimensions of her life, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, ethical and spiritual. Her life demonstrates that we too could take a similar path towards Integral Leadership.

That Mother Teresa was a natural leader comes out from this quote of hers: "Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail..." And that is exactly what Mother Teresa did. To many Mother Teresa has been an icon of love and care. To others she may have been someone who worked for the unprivileged. But above all Mother Teresa was an exceptional leader who exhibited charisma and had the ability to inspire the members of her order to transcend their own self-interests to achieve the vision. She is an ultimate example of transformational leadership a model for helping others aspire to and attain high levels of performance for themselves and the organization.

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well. Mother Teresa motivated her followers to achieve the vision and mission of her association which is helping people who need help. She could influence people to transcend their personal interests for the sake of the

group. Mother Teresa was also a charismatic leader. She inspired people in the world to help the ones who need help without seeing their status or race. She was highly esteemed and confident, displayed exemplary qualities, had a strong sense of purpose, articulated the goals and ideas for which her followers were psychologically prepared, secured her followers' unquestioning cognitive and emotional commitment, and had extraordinary moral inspiration, attraction, and influence over her followers. Furthermore, she was able to move people to act with only simple words.

The foremost ability of a leader is to create a vision.....seeing with an eye a future that till now does not exist. Mother had a clear vision that she was able to articulate to followers. She was also able to help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfill these goals. All the sisters of the wonderful Mission serve the patients of leprosy with great love and devotion. She has been a role model and her followers –Sisters of the Mission take great pride in the white and blue saree. The transformational leader serves as a role model for followers. Because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate this individual and internalize his or her ideals. Mother Teresa not only cared for the people she dedicated her life to but also the people who worked with her in the noble mission.

One of Mother Teresa's great strengths was her relentless focus on the core mission of her organization: helping the poorest of the poor. She spent much of her own time helping individuals in extreme need. Her personal example still serves as the model for the Missionaries of Charity. She did not have big plans which she may not have executed-her idea was simple- treating all her people-those in need with the same dignity and respect. Mother Teresa had great listening skills. Mother Teresa had played an active role in the orientation of new novitiates and always made an effort to get to know each of her pupil's

strengths and needs. Mother Teresa was also a great listener and focused a great deal on helping others grow.

Sister Prema, who succeeded Mother Teresa as Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity says that Mother had never set any big, audacious goals, like eliminating poverty: "Mother Teresa was completely focused on helping one person at a time." Politicians, government agencies and NGOs have devised big, systemic plans to address major societal problems like poverty, drug abuse, illiteracy, or crime. Coming up with a big idea is the easy part. The hard part is the execution at the front lines. The fact is that most of them never get implemented despite spending huge amounts of money. One of Mother Teresa's great strengths was her relentless focus on the core mission of her organization: helping the poorest of the poor. She spent much of her own time helping individuals in extreme need. Her personal example still serves as the model for the Missionaries of Charity.

Two cardinal traits helped Mother to achieve this-Faithfulness instead of big dreams and giving herself fully to the task before her. She is a combination of servant, integral and transformational leadership. No wonder she is hailed as a leader par excellence.

And this leadership is not confined to any religion, sect or faith, but is universal, because humanity that Mother served is universal. This is the abiding beauty of the Mother and her Mission.





Mother with Sister Joya, who made the 'Drop' into a 'Stream'***

Premonition: Is the 'Drop' being Diluted? | 11

I was at Chandigarh on the 21st of June 2016 where the 2nd International Yoga Day was celebrated with a mass assembly of 30,000 yoga enthusiasts headed by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Capitol Complex. Addressing the gathering he said that yoga is not a religious practice and people must embrace it for a better mental and physical health without any religious consideration. He went on to say: "Yoga is not about what one will get, it is about what one can give up." This is a message akin to the famous words of St. Francis of Assisi that motivated Mother Teresa to launch her Missionaries of Charity: "It is in giving that we receive."

But on that very day at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, presiding over the Yoga day celebration BJP's Hindutva mascot and elected Member of Parliament Yogi Adityanath (frontline candidate for UP Chief Ministership) sang a different song. Out of the blues without any rhyme or reason he ranted that Mother Teresa's social service was part of a mission to spread Christianity in the country. Pearls of wisdom then dropped from his 'holy' lips: "Teresa was part of a conspiracy to Christianise India... When people are not able to provide medical aid to their sick or differently-abled children due to poverty, these people (missionaries) provide them facilities. During that period, they brainwash and make them Christians." As a panacea he urged the promotion of Indian traditions like yoga to counter the "conspiracy".

Nominated Member of Parliament and BJP's Man Friday Subramanian Swamy chipped in favour of the Yogi saying that the issue of Adityanath expressing his view is not an isolated one, but has been expressed by writers like Christopher Hitchens. We have seen about Hitchens and his motives in the earlier chapter. PM is talking about Yoga as a healer while the two stalwarts of his party are inflicting wounds. Who is speaking the

truth-Prime Minister Modi or his factotums? Is the Yoga Day of peace and serenity being celebrated to conceal the real agenda of hate and turbulence? Given what the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat said about the Mother some months ago, one cannot help asking this question.

Be that as it may, I took the opportunity to visit Mother's Shanti Dan twice. Last time I visited the Home was in 2012. This time I found it different. Two activities which gave the Home lots of vibrancy were missing – one, there were no abandoned infants or babies and two there were hardly any juveniles. Inmates were all adults and this has stolen the depth and beauty of the Home. I did not ask the Sisters anything.

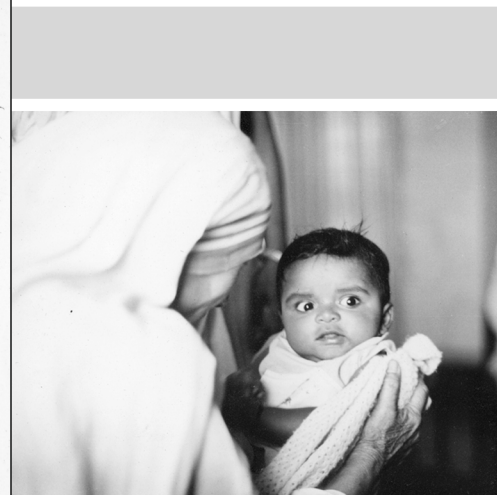
It looks as if the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 that kicked in on 15 January, 2016 has taken its toll. This Act has stringent provisions for both children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law. Some of the key provisions include: change in nomenclature from 'juvenile' to 'child' or 'child in conflict with law', across the Act; inclusion of several new definitions such as orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children and petty, serious and heinous offences committed by children; clarity in powers, function and responsibilities of Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committee; clear timelines for inquiry by the Board; special provisions for heinous offences committed by children above the age of sixteen; separate new chapter to streamline adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children; inclusion of new offences committed against children; and mandatory registration of Child Care Institutions.

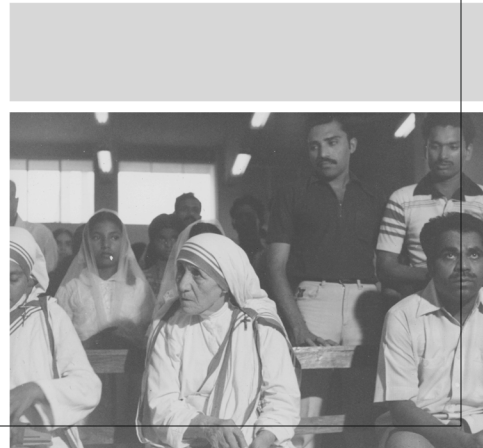
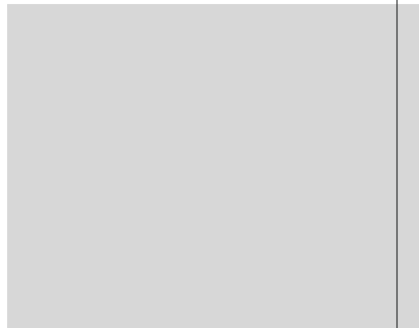
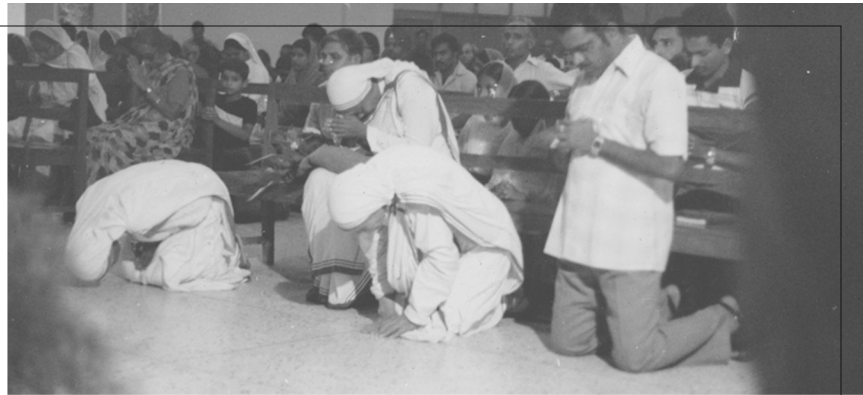
Missionaries of Charity are concerned with the first category - children in need of care and protection. In this the new JJ Act lays down cumbersome procedures for orphan, abandoned and surrendered children and the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority is given the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively. Separate chapter has detailed provisions relating to adoption and punishments for not complying with the laid down procedure.

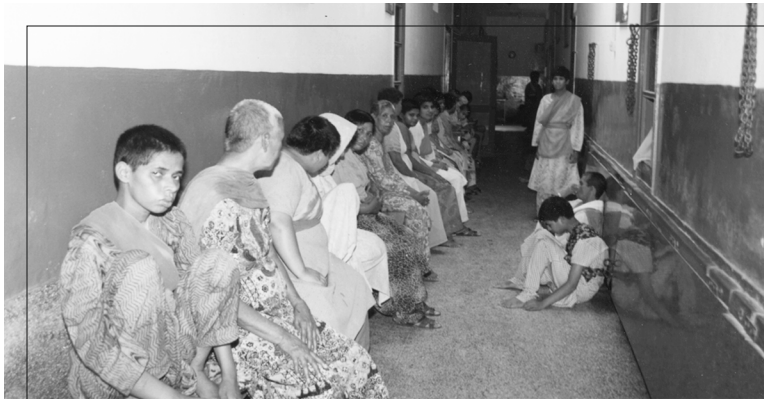
Several new offences committed against children, which are so far not adequately covered under any other law, are covered under the Act. These include: sale and procurement of children for any purpose including illegal adoption, corporal punishment in child care institutions, use of child by militant groups, offences against disabled children and, kidnapping and abduction of children. All child care institutions, whether run by State Government or by voluntary or non-governmental organisations, which are meant, either wholly or partially for housing children, regardless of whether they receive grants from the Government, are to be mandatorily registered within 6 months from the date of commencement of the Act. Stringent penalty is provided in the law in case of non-compliance.

Missionaries of Charity are opposed to the adoption of infants/children by single parents (unmarried, separated or divorced), gays or lesbians which the new law insists on. Besides, the new law brings in rigid policing and government controls wherein corruption and malpractices thrive. As we have already noted, despite best intentions, State 'welfare' apparatus as structured in India are incapable of understanding and handling this intensely human and humane issue. It is learnt that good/healthy-looking infants and children are sold for upwards of Rs. 5 lakhs (500,000) in the name of adoption and raping/child abuse has become common at Children Homes run by government and seedy characters in the name of NGOs.

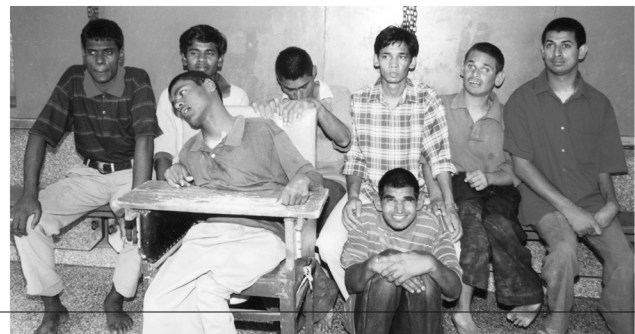
Shanti-Dan, functioning for the last four decades as a symbol of love and compassion has indeed become a 'soul' to the city of Chandigarh. It would be difficult for the 'Home' to stand-up to the rigidity, compulsions and unfair competition thrust on it. Is there any link between the sustained assault on Mother Teresa and the new-found stringent 'command and control' over "children/juveniles in need of care and protection" which is the *raison d'être* of her Missionaries of Charity? Also another big question arises: Is Chandigarh's soul being stymied and the 'Drop of Love' getting diluted? The jury is out.







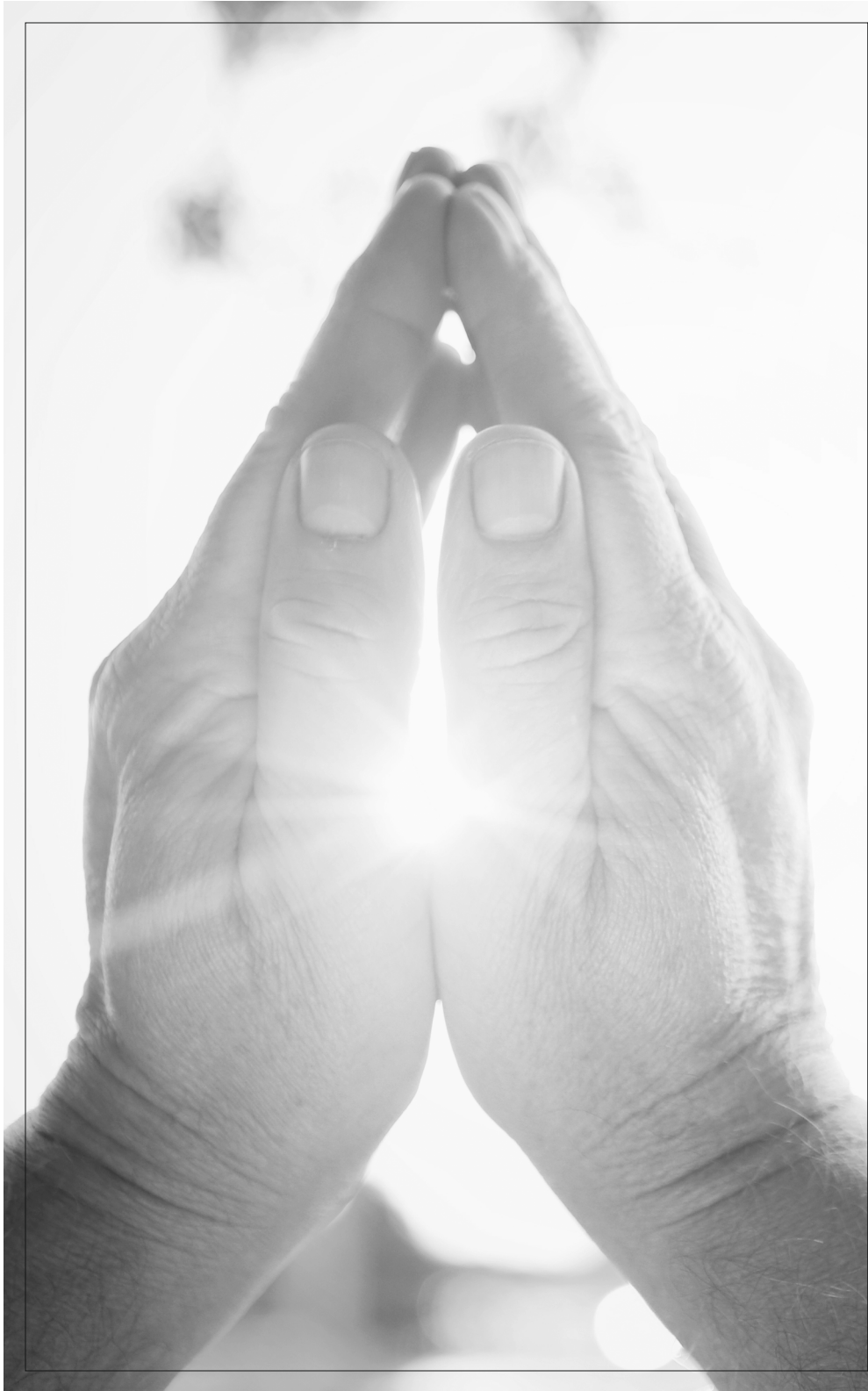
2012





2016





Epilogue: *Luceat Lux Vestra*

It is said that only trees that bear fruits attract stones and people who truly serve receive abuses. Mother Teresa falls in that category. The worst abuse hurled at the Mother by certain international busybodies was that she was money-minded and pandered to the money-bags in the garb of serving the poor.

The most telling rebuttal to this canard did not come from the Mother, her Sisters, any bishop or priest but from an International cricketer and former Member of Parliament. This is the first-person narrative from Navjot Singh Sidhu the ebullient and irrepressible Sardar:

"In the early nineties we used to be paid Rs. 10,000/- to play a test match. During those days after playing a match in Kolkata, I was keen to meet Mother Teresa and donate this amount as my contribution to the selfless and humane service being rendered by her. Driven by this

motive I went to the 'Mother House'. Their office was small and I asked a Sister where the Mother was. She said: "Mother is at the Home for the Dying." I stared at her without understanding what she said and she took me to a building behind the office that lodged the terminal patients counting the very last minutes of their life.

An unbearable stink of decaying flesh was emanating from the building which made my stomach churn. Suppressing the vomiting sensation I walked through the narrow lane and reached a room where I met Mother Teresa for the first time in my life. A long haired man in his death-throes was lying there. There was no dress on his body, only a loincloth covering him. His entire body was rotted with puss flowing from the wounds. I did not know what dreaded disease – leprosy or scabbies – was afflicting him. What I saw was the Mother with great compassion cleaning the puss from the wounds. The man was agonizing with great pain.

Unable to bear the stench coming out of his body even for a few seconds I ran out of the building holding my stomach. I, Navjot Singh Sidhu, the international cricketer vomited violently in the nearby sewer.

About ten minutes later Mother came to me with a smile and said "Yes, my son". I told the Mother that I wanted to meet her. She walked towards the office asking me to follow her. With great ego I took out the Rs. 10,000/- from my pocket and placed it on the table. I bowed and said: "Mother, you are an instrument of God... I have come here to assist you. I would be really obliged if you accept this".

She looked at me with kindness: "Son, I don't need your money. I need your time. Can you spend time with these people? Can you give me some days when you can nurse them?" Tears rolled down my eyes. Does this world have such people who refuse to take money but instead ask you to spend time with these stinking patients, I wondered. When I

could not even stand in this stench for two minutes, how am I going to serve here, I mused.

My arrogant thought that one can serve people by just giving money was shattered to pieces. That day Mother Teresa gave me the lesson of my life that selfless service blended with a drop of love is far, far superior to any amount of money!" This says it all!

Mother Teresa's conviction of serving God and humanity, come what may, is reflected in the 10 Entreaties she made:

- i. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway.
- ii. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway.
- iii. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway.
- iv. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.
- v. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.
- vi. Even if you do justice to others, you may not get justice yourself; Do justice anyway.
- vii. Give the world your best, you may not get the fruits; Always give your best anyway.
- viii. Even if you love everyone, you may be hated by many; Keep on loving anyway.

- ix. If you truly serve humanity, you could get abuses in return; Keep on serving anyway.
- x. In the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.

Only a saint can speak such words!

Unknown to many, at times when the Mother was deeply distressed by the lies and calumny heaped on her, she heeded the clarion of that great son of India, Rabindranath Tagore:

"If they do not hold up the light when the night is troubled with storm, oh unfortunate one, With the thunder-flame of pain ignite thine own heart, and let it burn alone."

I was also troubled with similar storm in my life—in government service, private vocation, friendships, family relationships, public life and even in matters in the Church. During these devastating times the 'drop of love' I had received from the Mother enabled me to ignite my own heart, and let the pain burn alone.

Be that as it may, Mother Teresa had sunk herself in true humility and served God and the People. And true to His words God has raised her High. Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

'*Luceat Lux Vestra*' (Let your light shine) is the motto of my *alma mater*, Loyola College, Madras (Chennai) which I always carried in my heart, I am too small for my light to shine. By writing this book I have brought out the light through Mother Teresa. Let Saint Teresa's light shine eternally.



Author's Profile

M.G. Devasahayam is an Economist with a distinguished career spanning over decades, with direct and first-hand experience in the working and ethos of Indian Army, Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Public & Private Sector, Political system as well as Non Government Organisations.

During the Emergency [1975-77], when Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), popularly called India's Second Mahatma, was jailed at Chandigarh, Mr. Devasahayam, as District Magistrate of the Union Territory was his custodian. During this period Devasahayam developed a humane and warm relationship with JP which sustained after the Emergency and lasted till JP, the architect of 'India's Second Freedom', passed away in October 1979. Mr. Devasahayam had the privilege of being a small instrument in making India's second freedom possible.

Mahatma Gandhi, Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan, Saint Teresa of Kolkata are the greatest three to walk the Indian sub-continent during the last century who wielded no power but had immense moral authority. Of these Devasahayam did not have the age to know the Mahatma. But the privilege of knowing the other two and associating with them closely has been the greatest achievement of his life.

Devasahayam is the recipient of Loyola College, Madras World Alumni Lifetime Achiever Award.

