

## Mother Teresa

# Nun Makes Poor 'Rich'

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The simplicity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta is almost profound; her message is somewhat paradoxical. But then, so is the Gospel. "The poor are the hope and salvation of mankind. Loving the poor is the most important thing in the world. And loving begins right where you are."

Before a packed audience in O'Laughlin Auditorium on the St. Mary's College campus, Mother Teresa related many anecdotes of her more than 25 years of working with "the poorest of the poor; those who hunger for food, and — more especially — those who hunger for love."

She recalled stories of the young and the old, the sick and the dying, and the lonely and the unloved whom she has brought in from the streets of Calcutta. "We cannot love the poor unless we know them," she repeats. "The poor are our true brothers and sisters."

Born of Albanian parents in Yugoslavia in 1910, Mother Teresa decided early in life to be a missionary. As a teacher in a girls' academy in Calcutta, she became aware of the enormity of the poverty problem, the waste of human life and the sufferings of the lonely. After requesting permission to leave her religious order, she spent a brief period studying medicine and then returned to Calcutta to begin what she terms her "true vocation."

### Hundreds Attracted

Since then, 26 years ago, hundreds of young women have been attracted to her way of life. The Missionaries of Charity number 850 and have 78 missions throughout the world. The Brothers of Charity, who assist her, number 150. Both religious groups are aided spiritually throughout the world by the Co-Workers for the Missionaries of Charity, who number 6,000 in the United States alone.

Mother Teresa's visit to St. Mary's and Notre Dame was sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross and Msgr. John J. Egan, head of the Pastoral Institute on Social Ministry at Notre Dame. Her busy schedule in her short visit to the United States has included a speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Thursday in Washington, D.C.

"I am anxious not for the poor," she says, "but for the people of the United States that they might miss the chance of sharing compassion with the poor. The poor of the world lock to the United States," she says quietly. "And if you do not come to know the poor now, you will miss the joy of giving."

### Profiles Missionaries' Work

Simply and briefly, Mother Teresa profiled the work of the Missionaries of Charity throughout the world. "We are not social workers," she says. "We are the carriers of God's love. The sisters may do very little," she says when comparing their work to that of organized governmental agencies, "but the care and the love and the touch make all the difference in the sisters' lives. Our strength is in the fourth vow we take in addition to the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. We vow to also give ourselves to the poorest of the poor, with trust and cheerfulness."

The film "Something Beautiful for God" was shown prior to Mother Teresa's talk Thursday evening. A 50-minute documentary filmed by the British Broadcasting Corp. and narrated by Malcolm Muggeridge, it captures beautifully the kind of work Mother Teresa and her sisters do. The work is not measured in terms of numbers healed or rewards or successes. "It is measured in terms of the joy of giving," she explains. "But our work is not our life. To continue to do our work with those who are outcast and poor, we have to have a life of prayer and sacrifice. The work is only a means to put Christ into action."

### Never Refused Anyone

The Missionaries of Charity have no income, though tens of thousands of people come to them for help. "But we have never refused anyone," Mother Teresa explains with a smile. "I do not accept government grants, either. I rely on the heavenly bankers. Recently, the poor have suffered so greatly in India, and when I asked the people of Calcutta for one handful of rice, for one teaspoon of sugar, I was overwhelmed with the response. I had enough for all."

Mother Teresa is small, and she is not young. She walks quietly and humbly and wears a modest cotton sari and a cross. Those who met her personally at St. Mary's Thursday know that her hand clasp is warm, and her smile is that of a person who has all the richness she could ever want. Many words have been written about Mother Teresa of Calcutta, but hearing her in person makes her message real and all the more disarming. "I am not asking for money," she says, "I want you to give something of your own. Get to know the poor; find them. Begin in your home and take time to care."

If anyone left O'Laughlin Auditorium unmoved by Mother Teresa, it was not because her message was not clear. It was probably the clearest — and quietest — social message many persons had heard in a long time. And they heard it from someone who lives every word.



CALCUTTA MISSIONARY HERE — Mother Teresa, 63-year-old Albanian nun who has aided the poor of Calcutta, India, for more than 25 years, spoke Thursday night at St. Mary's College. From left are Msgr. John J.

Egan, director of the Pastoral Institute of Social Ministry; Mother Teresa; and Sister Kathleen Ann Nelligan, C.S.C., Superior general of the Sisters of Holy Cross.

Photo by Tribune Staff Photographer

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