



*Hearts to Love and Hands to Serve:
Celebrating the Life of Mother Teresa
Part 1 of a Series in Commemoration of
the Canonization of Saint Teresa of Calcutta
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When we think about the difference that love can make, many people very often think of one person: Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. A tiny woman, just under five feet tall, with no tools except prayer, love, and the unique qualities God had given her, Mother Teresa is probably the most powerful symbol of the virtue of charity today.

Born in Albania with the name Agnes, she was very interested in missionary work around the world. As a child she didn't really think about becoming a nun; but when she turned 18, she felt that God was beginning to tug at her heart, to call her, asking her to follow him.

Now Agnes, like all of us, had a choice. She could have ignored the tug on her heart. She could have filled her life up with other things so maybe she wouldn't hear God's call. But of course, she didn't do that. She listened and followed, joining a religious order called the Sisters of Loreto, who were based in Dublin, Ireland.

In India, Agnes took her final vows as a sister and took the name Teresa, after Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower. She spent 15 years teaching in a girl's school in Calcutta, a job that she loved and was very good at. But then one day, she heard that call again.

The voice in her heart was telling her that she was to make a very big change in her life—that she should leave her teaching position and go into the streets of Calcutta and care for the poor.

So Sister Teresa listened and said yes. She had lived in India for years, and she knew how desperate the poor of that country were, especially in the big cities. It was these people, the dying poor, that Sister Teresa felt a special call to love. After all, these were people who had absolutely no one else in the world to love them.

Teresa saw these people differently. She saw them through God's eyes, which means that she saw each of them as his dear child, suffering and yearning for some kind touch or word, some comfort in their last days on earth. She heard that call and chose to live it out—to let God love the forgotten ones through her charity.