

## Prayer of the Month • September 2015

Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so much in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others.



Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 26 August 1910 – 5 September 1997

This is a prayer of wholehearted commitment that recognises what God can do through someone who is willing to offer everything to him. The phrase 'shine through me' ascribes the working to God in a humble way. Reaching out to others is expressed in asking to be 'a light to others', shining as Jesus shines.

Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu, an ethnic Albanian, was born in Macedonia, and considered her baptismal date of 27 August 1910, to be her true birthday. As a young child she was fascinated by the stories of missionaries and by the age of 12 had decided to commit herself to the religious life. She left home at age 18 to join the Sisters of Loreto as a missionary. She initially went to the Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham, Ireland, where she learnt English and was then sent by the Sisters to India, where she was to spend most of her life. She enjoyed teaching but was disturbed by the poverty around her. Here she experienced what she later described as 'a call within a call'. 'I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them. It was an order. To fail would have been to break the faith.' She founded the Missionaries of Charity, a religious order that now has 4,500 sisters active in 133 countries. They run hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's and family counselling programmes; orphanages; and schools. Members must adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience as well as a fourth vow, to give 'wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor'. She has received numerous honours, but has also been criticised for her opposition to contraception. She died on 5 September 1997, and was beatified in 2003 as 'Blessed Teresa of Calcutta'.

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