

Remembering
Mother Teresa's
Spirit



Journey of Hope

Authorized by Mother Teresa

www.anaganza.ca

Ana Ganza



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*In memory of Mother Teresa,
with immeasurable love.*

+
LDM

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY
56/A, A. J. C. Bose Road
Calcutta - 700016 (Indi.)

Dear Ana Ganza,

Warm thanks for your beautiful poem and book, and for allowing Jesus to use your mind and heart to sing of His love and to give His message of peace and compassion. I am praying much for you and for the homeless children.

You are welcome to share in our humble works of love for the poorest of the poor in Calcutta. Come with a heart to love and hands to serve Jesus in the crippled, the abandoned, the sick and the dying in any one of our centres. On arrival you may meet the sister in charge of volunteers at the above address which is opposite the Bamboo Villa Income Tax office between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. daily, except Thursday and Sunday.

Regarding your visa - you can come on a tourist visa and of course you would be expected to tour. When you arrive it is best if you take a prepaid taxi from the airport to the hotel.

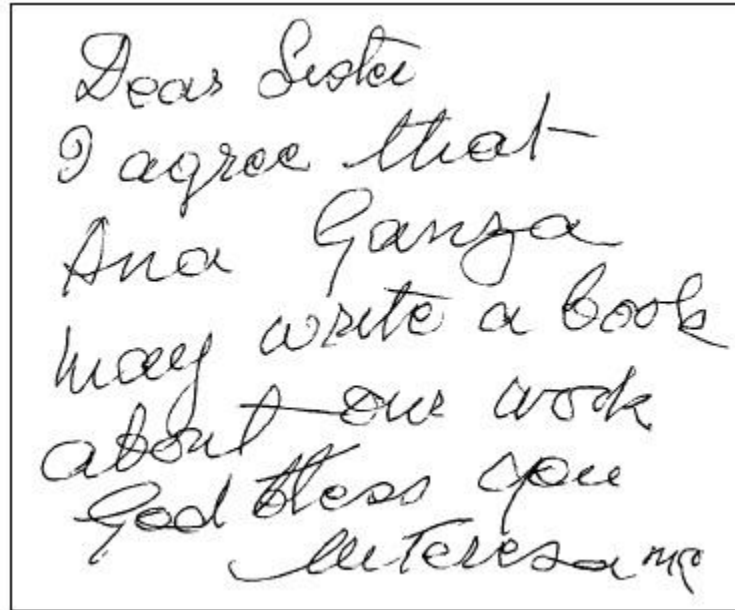
God loves you. He will reward your generous desire to serve Him in His little ones - the poor.

God bless you

Mother Teresa mc

This is a copy of the letter Mother Teresa sent to the author inviting her to come to Calcutta. (July 26, 1995)

MOTHER TERESA'S AUTHORIZATION OF THIS BOOK

A handwritten note in cursive script, enclosed in a rectangular border. The text reads: "Dear Sister, I agree that Anu Ganga may write a book about our work. God bless you. Mother Teresa" data-bbox="270 224 720 512"/>

Dear Sister
I agree that
Anu Ganga
may write a book
about our work
God bless you
Mother Teresa

This is a copy of the authorization note Mother Teresa gave to the author.
(August 2, 1996)

*This book will be a great
homage to the courage of
the poorest of the poor.*

Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa to the author on August 2, 1996

*To my dear mother Milka,
my wonderful sons
Ivan, Marko and Petar,
my “adopted” son, Daniel Gonzalez
and to my dear friend and colleague,
the late Dr. Stan Golowacz.*

How This Book Came to Light

Thursday, August 1, 1996, was the first day during my visit with Mother Teresa, which I spent with the Leprosy Patients at Gandhiji Prem Nivas Leprosy Centre, in Titargarh, India. The Centre was co-founded by Mother Teresa, in 1958, and run by the brothers of the Missionaries of Charity.

The impact which the Leprosy Patients left on me during that day drastically changed the focus of my life. Should you inquire about my return trip from the Leprosy Centre to Calcutta, I would have little to say as I don't remember the details, because my mind was just as numb as my body. By the time I reached Calcutta in a train wagon, the experience reminded me of a box of sardines placed vertically. My very feet became numb too. In order to get to Mother Teresa's house, I, along with the other volunteers, took a cab. We arrived just on time to get blessed by Mother Teresa, and I can assure you that on that evening I truly depended on her blessings more than at any other time so far.

After the blessing I joined Mother Teresa, the Missionary Sisters and the volunteers for a Rosary prayer in the Chapel. At this time I pleaded to the Blessed Virgin to release the Leprosy Patients from their pain.

That evening, I could not even think about consuming any food. Thinking of the wounds of the Leprosy Patients upset my stomach terribly. I withdrew into the quietness of my room. The only way to sustain myself that night was to pray and meditate, and eventually, to come to grip with my emotions, I started to jot down my experiences of the close encounter with the Lepers. I kept writing until 3:00 a.m., by which time I had written nineteen pages, and with no intent about writing a book.

One would think that after emptying my emotions and pain through my writing, I would be through dealing with it. Instead, much more pain surfaced. I was convulsed with sobs. Being all alone in a hotel room on the other part of the globe, (for so it seemed) I knelt on my bed and wept. It seemed as if someone had scraped off a few layers of my skin without any anesthetic. This caused me unbearable pain, and at the same time, it made me realize the agony within. At the time I did not understand what was really happening, because I thought that by nature I was always a happy person and I never knew that in my life I could absorb so much pain. It appeared as if a volcano erupted twisting and burning me inside while covering me with hot ashes on the outside.

My whole life unraveled itself before my eyes. I wept for the pain of my mother and for my father's tortures in the communist prison. I gasped for air of my prematurely first born son, as he stopped breathing and had to be put on a respirator, and I throttled with my second son's asthma attacks. I felt a razor-sharp lance ravage through my chest after the car accident, as I desperately tried to reach my youngest son, who was lifelessly laying in blood on the floor of the passenger seat.

I relived the agony of a refugee who left everything behind, as I escaped from Croatia to flee into the freedom of a refugee camp in Italy, with my husband and two toddler sons. We carried only the possessions we could fit in two plastic bags. I suppose, my family and I could be classified as homeless at that time, and so indeed we were for the next seven and a half months, while we stayed in the refugee camps in Padriciano and Latina. Perhaps, this experience shaped what later became my tender care for the homeless children.

I remembered the pain and the tears on my mother's face when I, her only child told her about our escape. Through my sobs, I discovered that I actually never let go of her desperate embrace. I wept for all the innocent children, the victims of bomb explosions in Croatia, Bosnia/Herzegovina and the other countries struck by the war. I could identify with the painful torture of those suffering souls beyond any human imagining. I could feel the bullets ravaging through my skin, and hear the bombarding of Vukovar as it was being completely razed to the ground. I heard the last screams of thousands of Croats, the victims of the latest Genocide.

The remnants of the most painful moments of my life surfaced, and I could identify with them in the wounds of the lepers. It was all connected. Their pain was my pain, and my pain surfaced because I experienced theirs. I realized that our encounter was the breaking point for me to tap so deeply into myself. I came face to face with my pain, fear, and losses. I came face to face with Calcutta, and I realized that this was the face of poverty, a face that will remain indelibly etched in my memory.

Blessed are you who are poor.
– Luke 6:20

While still kneeling on my bed, I looked through a large window directly in front of me, and I raised my hands towards the Lord, in complete self-surrender. I felt shivers all over my body, as if a gust of cold wind had engulfed me.

Then an overwhelming sense of joy and peace washed over me. I thanked God for the gift of Mother Teresa, and for bringing me here. I also thanked Him for allowing me to live through so much pain in my life, otherwise I would never have been where I was today, I mean deep inside and faith wise. It was a journey to the core of my soul, a journey of tearful disclosures of my personal pain and grief and my soul's cleansing.

As the messengers of the morning started to pulsate the light through the windows of my room, it left an impression of some thousand of pilgrims holding lit candles on Christmas Eve, at Manger Square in Bethlehem. That beautiful and solemn moment filled me with hope. Christ's hope. Mother Teresa instilled the message of hope. A thought came into my mind, "Today, I will ask Mother Teresa to give me permission to write a book about her work of grace, about her extended hand the sisters and brothers of the Missionaries of Charity, the Missionary Fathers, Co-Workers and volunteers. The complexity of it never crossed my mind. Yet, I realized that fear is not present when you create with God.

I also thought, since the humble circumstances of the poorest of the poor touched me so deeply, perhaps by writing about my experiences, and by enlightening the world about the work of Mother Teresa, and her Sisters, and the dedicated volunteers, I may touch some of you to make some positive changes in reaching out, on a more personal level.

During the day, I prayed and worked as usual, except I returned to the Mother House a bit earlier than usual, around

4:30 p.m. I went to Mother Teresa's office and I asked to see Sister Joel-to seek her advice on how best to approach Mother Teresa for permission to write a book about their work. One of the Sisters told me to wait for a few minutes. I sat on a bench on the balcony and waited. However, when Mother Teresa heard that I was there she came out. She greeted me and asked me, "Is everything okay?" when I responded that I was fine, and that I am waiting to see Sister Joel, she continued, "Can I help you with anything?"

As she sat beside me on the bench, I said, “Actually, I wanted to see Sister Joel to ask her how to go about asking you for permission to write a book about your work of grace. She looked at me and asked again, “So, you like to write a book about our work?” I responded that I did, she said, “I like that you asked me to write a book about our work, since through our work we serve Jesus in the abandoned, the homeless, the sick and the dying, and the lepers.” Then she asked me to tell her a little bit about the book which I am planning to write, and what had prompted me to write it.

Then I shared my experience of the previous day from the Leprosy Centre and my hotel room during the last night. She stood up, went to the window of her office, which could be spoken through from the balcony, and asked, from a Sister who happened to be there, for a piece of paper and a pen, and then she wrote: ‘Dear Sister, I agree that Ana Ganza may write a book about our work. God Bless, Mother Teresa MC.’ While I thought, this is all God’s work, she handed to me the authorized note, and she said,

“This book will be a great homage to the courage of the poorest of the poor.”
Then she blessed me while saying,
“May God Bless you and your future work. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Mother Teresa also told me to ask her and the Sisters for whatever I need for this book. I also asked her to allow me to interview the sisters and to take the pictures in the Convent and her house, and in the centres, which she gladly approved.

Yet, our official picture taking, which was planned for her Birthday, August 26, 1996, with the framed poem I gave her, unfortunately, never took place, because she was in the Woodlands Hospital on her 86th Birthday.

As far as the book is concerned, it was my labour of love for four years. The chapters were coming to light along with my spiritual growth, and my journey of hope. Through it all, I may say that it was a life enhancing journey. Not only did I analyze and deliver Mother Teresa’s inspiring messages, but I also found the way to incorporate them and apply them into my life and charity work. This is something that I struggled with and wanted to do for a long period of time, especially for my students.

One time when I used the saintly Mother as an example in my classroom, a student responded, “But, Miss! What is this going to do for me? She is very holy. She is a Saint. How am I going to use her example and apply it in my life?”

I believe that through this book I was able to unveil Mother Teresa’s spirit, and through remembering her spirit we may remember our own, as well as the spirit of others around us. It was a voyage into the euphoria of soul cleansing in some beautiful, profound, yet simple way. Through her saintly vocation Mother reminded us of a complex task to keep our values and perspectives intact, regardless of the fast pace of life and the equally fast growing pace of science and technology.

Mother Teresa will remain the voice of the homeless children. She provoked humility and charity. She showed us that we can get in touch with God through self-surrendering, or we can get in touch with God through our spirituality.

I had a vision for some time that I wanted something more than what life was offering me. My spiritual growth was developing slowly through the years, but the biggest self-examination

took place during my stay with Mother Teresa, and it continued after my return to Canada. I struggled for some time until I found the Kingdom of God, here on Earth.

My spiritual search has increased my love for God, purification of heart, and God's presence in my daily activities. Based on my experience, I felt that spirituality was worth pondering and writing about. The blessing I received from Mother Teresa pervaded my soul with vigor, prudence and holiness.

The spirit travels beyond known horizons, and not everyone is able to follow it, and redeem it. I had the privilege of Mother Teresa's priceless guidance on my spiritual journey. Nothing can ever blemish the inside beauty born out of holiness and natural allure. Those who are not aware of their inner beauty may have a harder time to appreciate the beauty outside.

At the time of my visit with Mother Teresa I did not understand why did beautiful spiritual experiences happen to me, since I am only a simple mortal person. Yet, I realised that God knows the reason.

According to my knowledge, Mother Teresa never talked about her mystical experiences, except that the Lord was with her all the time. I believe that Mother Teresa was "withholding" some of her experiences, her power and knowledge. Some believe that His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, and some of the spiritual masters, such as; Tenzin Gyatso, or the fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, who is considered a living Buddha "withhold" some of their power.

I am sure that countless future scholars will be looking into Mother Teresa's phenomenon and legacy. My approach was only one of the ways to show the beauty of her soul, the power of her faith, and the richness she left behind. I am still not done. There is plenty more that she has left behind for us to emulate, to learn from, and to draw inspiration from. I found hope, yet my journey did not end in Calcutta, as she gave me a new vision to continue.



Mother Teresa with Ana Ganza

PART ONE

Journey to a Living Saint

Just before the flight, as my sons and I embraced each other, shedding tears of joy, they knew that I was about to take the journey of my life, a Journey to a Living Saint.

I thought of the Latin word “sanctus”, which means holy, from which the word saint comes. Through the history of Christianity the word was used to describe a holy person who is charitable, humble, and who has surrendered to God. In other words, a saint is a person that has led an exemplary life, such as Mother Teresa.

The love of Jesus Christ and his miracles have healed, converted, and saved numerous lives. Mother Teresa also saved numerous souls during her exemplary vocation. Jesus’ proclaiming of Good News about the Kingdom of God, his death and resurrection have deeply influenced religions of the world and our lives. He left us a mighty inspiration to follow in his path. One of the most sanctifying followers was the late Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa was an exceptional Catholic Missionary Nun who surrendered to Christ through her faith, unconditional love, hard work and suffering. Yet, she never tired of repeating the words, “Let us do something beautiful for God.”

After hearing Jesus’ “call within a call” to go and work with the poorest of the poor, while on her way to a religious retreat in Darjeeling, in 1946, she took her cross and followed Jesus Christ into Calcutta’s slums in order to serve him amid the poorest of the poor. She never considered her struggle to be a burden, but rather a joy. Mother Teresa was a holy Nun through whom God worked to invoke changes in our lives. She was a true servant of God.

“Actually we are touching Christ’s body in the poor. In the poor it is the hungry Christ that we are feeding, it is the naked Christ that we are clothing, it is to the homeless Christ, that we are given shelter.”¹

Mother Teresa

Throughout the history of Christianity saints have been honoured by the Roman Catholic Church. This is also true in other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. In the early Christian Church, the faithful followers of Christ were called saints by the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote to his converts: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:33).

Mother Teresa was a true servant and follower of God. She led a remarkable life of fearless virtue. She was our link to God and a channel of God’s love. Through Mother Teresa, God shows us how to become better people. Mother Teresa inspired us to lead good, honest and charitable lives.

Not all of us can give up the lives we lead and commit to a life in a Convent (even though it has crossed my mind a number of times), or join a monastery, but we still can become the best we can be. In our own way, by using Mother Teresa’s wisdom and spirit, we can offer hope to our families and communities.

I believe that saints can help us through prayers. We can pray to a certain saint or, to a group of saints for a certain cause. There are thousands of heavenly and holy, significant saints, from

St. Agnes to St. Zita, to whom we can pray. In June of 1985, two days after I was offered a full time teaching job at the Catholic High School of Saint Martin, in Mississauga, I was still flying high in my spirit. On that day, my oldest son Ivan was hit by a car while riding a bicycle along the street close to our home in the city of Hamilton. Thanks to a nurse who happened to be on the scene and the quick Emergency Ambulance team's response, in a matter of minutes he was rushed to the McMaster Hospital.

With a deep and open injury on his forehead, two fractures on his left leg, and a broken shoulder, he went into a coma. Twelve hours later, after all the efforts of doctors, specialists and surgeons to improve his critical condition and bring him back to consciousness failed, I knew I had to make a phone call to our Parish Priest, father Franjo Sprajc. While awaiting his arrival, my husband Kresimir and I prayed the "Our Father". I asked God not to take my first born son so early. He was only twelve at the time. I prayed to Holy Mary and to the Croatian Martyrs. Mercifully, I begged them to help him.

After the Priest ministered the Sacrament of the sick, and had anointed our son, he kneeled beside his bed and told him, "Ivan, father Franjo is here, if you hear me show me that you hear me." He repeated the same sentence three times, each time coming closer to his head. The third time he repeated it into his right ear. After that, all of us including the doctors and nurses looked in shock as our son, who, still without opening his eyes, started to bring his hands very slowly together. Then he clasped them together as if he was going to pray. What a blessing! Our son had responded. I am grateful to God, Holy Mary and all the Martyrs and Saints who looked after him. Thanks to the astonishing power of prayer, our son responded.

Before a person is pronounced a saint he/she would be nominated for sainthood by the local Church where the person was living and working. The local Bishop verifies the saintliness of the nominated servant of God. The next step is beatification. Beatification is penultimate to canonization. This act is considered the blessing of the Servant of God and the person is declared beatus (blessed). In order for the nominated Servant of God to get blessed, the congregation must agree that the person was leading a virtuous life, or that the nominated person was martyred. The local Bishop or Committee then verifies the information and forwards the authentic verified documents to the Vatican, in Rome, where they are examined by a group of Cardinals from the Congregation of Rites called the Commission for Sainthood (the Sacred Congregation for Sainthood). After the inquiry by the diocese and the Vatican some divine signs must confirm the Church's position about the nominated individual's virtue. A decision about the person's heroic virtue or martyrdom is made, in Rome, and if either of those two is validated, the person is entitled venerable.

If a servant of God died as a martyr, no miracles should be proven for a martyr to be beatified, yet, one miracle is required for canonization. However, if the person was not martyred, in the past, two or more miracles after their death were needed, and it has to be established with the help of an expert, that those miracles were performed by God through the intercession of the nominated servant of God. Since the change in the canonization process, in 1983, under Pope John Paul II, for a non-martyr, one miracle is needed for beatification and another for canonization. Apparently, this reform was the biggest since the decrees of Urban VIII in the 17th century. Once experts offer proof, the saint gets venerated, and the title of "blessed" is conferred on the individual. The Pope may then proceed to canonize the blessed. Canonization is the Church's official declaration that a person is already in heaven and that a person is worthy of public veneration and imitation. Canonization is also a measure of a person's holiness. The

saint's name is added to the list of saints. The Pope announces the final judgement in a special rite held in Saint Peter's Basilica.

Mother Teresa's place of rest, in the Convent of the Missionaries of Charity, in Calcutta, is becoming a place of pilgrimage, a holy place, somewhat like St. Peter's Basilica, which was built over the tomb of Peter. Christians pray to them for help. It takes a long time for a person to be pronounced a saint, sometimes even centuries may pass. It is also possible that some servants of God who have been beatified may never be canonized. It took 464 years for Saint Joan of Arc to be canonized, 135 years for Saint John of the Cross, 81 years for Saint Catherine of Siena, and 54 years for Saint Bernadette to be declared a saint.

Mother Teresa's vocation was highly respected and supported by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father went so far as to have part of the Vatican renovated to accommodate Mother Teresa's Sisters of Religious Order of Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa and the Holy Father had a very special bond. They stepped onto the world's stage around the same time; the Holy Father as a Pontiff, and Mother Teresa as a foundress of the Religious Order of Missionaries of Charity. They both came from very strong Eastern European Catholic families, surrendering themselves completely to God through their faith. They supported each other's good deeds and actions, and understood each other very well. We all hope that the Holy Father will canonize Mother Teresa, since during her exemplary life and saintly vocation, she performed a number of miracles every day. Also, since Mother Teresa's death a number of miracles were linked to her name. I believe that there will be an exemption in terms of the usual time delay concerning the declaration of Sainthood of Mother Teresa. However, with or without canonization, Mother Teresa is already considered in the eyes of many, including mine -to be a Living Saint. Mother Teresa, when asked about her holiness answered,

"holiness is a necessity in life, and not a luxury of a few, who take a course of a religious life."

She continued,

*"holiness is a simple duty of all. Holiness is for everyone. Thoughtfulness, the kindly regard for others, is the beginning of holiness."*²

Pope John Paul II, on Saints and holiness, stated the following:

"The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church's history."

"Holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal."

In March of 1999, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II has announced that the process of Mother Teresa's Sainthood has already begun.

Sister Nirmala, Mother Teresa's successor, informed me in her letter (June 1999) the following:

“The Holy Father has waived the normal 5-year waiting period after a person’s death before beginning Mother’s Cause. We pray that the interest in Mother’s beatification and canonization may encourage all the “little” people of the world to aspire to holiness.”

I believe that countless people around the world, who were inspired by Mother Teresa’s exemplary vocation, her own “apostolic activity and missionary zeal” will precipitate the Holy Father’s willingness to beatify and canonize our dear Mother.

On August 15, 2001, in Calcutta, a weighty dossier on the life of Mother Teresa was officially closed and forwarded to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. According to Father Brian Kolodiejchuk’s remarks published in Famiglia Cristina Magazine, on August 28, 2001, the dossier included details of a healing miracle performed after Mother Teresa died. Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, one of the experts of a Commission for Mother Teresa’s Sainthood said that an Indian woman with a stomach tumor miraculously recovered after being touched with a Miraculous medal that had been in contact with Mother Teresa’s body. “During the night, the woman woke up and realized the tumor had gone. Subsequent checks by doctors showed it never came back,” father Kolodiejchuk said.

Mother Teresa’s official Sainthood proclamation will be a public acknowledgement of what we feel in our hearts.

A Delicacy of an Indian Woman

Since the poem I was carrying for Mother Teresa was largely printed and framed, it did not take too long for others to find out the destination of my journey, making my check-in with “Air India” such a memorable event.

Seated by the window I saw the flakes fly and felt the plane ascend through the layers of white, silky clouds, whose purity set me at peace. I enjoyed analyzing their mystic shapes while searching for the meaning of it all. I did not fear the flight. After all, this was a journey of promise and of hope. I realized how much blessing, faith and work of charity bring.

“Faith is a gift of God. Without it there would be no life. And our work, to be fruitful, and to be all for God, and to be beautiful, has to be built on faith-faith in Christ, who has said, “I was hungry, I was naked, I was sick, and I was homeless, and you ministered to me.” On these words of his all our work is based.”¹

Mother Teresa

Through faith, I have found so much strength and perseverance to go on helping others. Since I have spent much of my life working for many charitable organizations; in my local community, in the community of schools, in the Canadian community at large, and internationally, I am aware of how much blessing a well accomplished deed can bring. Most of my joy comes from assisting children, especially those unprivileged, the orphans of war, the terminally ill, and new immigrants to the country.

Now, I was on the way to serve the poorest of the poor. I thanked Our Lord for choosing me for this special mission. I prayed for my health and safety during the mission so I could render my best service, and asked Him to look after my sons while I was away. Anyway, prior to my journey I did discuss my trip with a doctor who specialized in tropical medicine and I received a

vaccination against tropical diseases. I also carried a medicine bag with Imodium, aspirins, anti-fungus creams, antibiotic creams, antihistamine, and insect repellents to stop the mosquitoes from feasting on my skin.

A marvelous smell of grains and spices blended with Indian music winsomed my attention. This was an essence that I would learn to appreciate during my stay in Calcutta. The main Indian foods contain such grains as wheat, barley, rice, and vegetables such as peas and beans. Soon I was about to enjoy Tandoori Chicken, curry prepared with eggs and vegetables in a spicy sauce and bread cakes cooked from the grain flour. Curry could also be prepared for fish or meat in a spicy sauce. However, every time I had the sauce, it felt as if I took “Vong’s” from New York, 150 spices at once, and I needed a bottle of water to “curry” it down. Because of their religious views, Hindu inhabitants do not eat beef. Muslims on the other hand do not eat pork.

Through my living and teaching in a multicultural society of Canada, I learned to appreciate the richness of different religions, languages and customs. Learning about someone else’s heritage enhances ones’ own. There is always something we can learn from each another. Today in Canada, among other nations, about half a million South east Asians live in the Toronto area. Some of their children attend my classes. I find them very capable, attentive and hard working. As a teacher, having an understanding of students’ cultures helps me make them feel more comfortable and accepted in the classroom setting. It helps me to be more sensitive toward their needs, and guide them to be more sensitive towards one another. This creates a positive atmosphere and builds harmony.

I was eager to hear about some of Mother Teresa’s experiences while she was a teacher at Loreto and St. Mary’s school before starting her own Religious Order of Missionaries of Charity.

The amicable music notes followed Hindi words until the noise of the plane’s engines jarred them away. As I sipped delicious mango juice, I enjoyed glimpsing at their saris and at the colourful “bindis” in the middle of stewardess’ foreheads. Most of them wore purple dots. Red dots are reserved for brides. Widows wear white.

I wondered how stewardesses could wear their fabulous saris, containing some six yards of fabric, without seams, pins or buttons. It was not until my visit to Agra, two days later, that I learned how to assemble a sari. What an art! First you crease one side of the sari into your slip, wrap the sari around your body, then pleat the rest of the sari and tuck the pleats under the waist band. The rest of the fabric should be wrapped over one hip, and then over the shoulder.

Mother Teresa choose white saris for her Order. This showed how much she respected those among whom she served and lived. The sari also serves as a substitute for the Most Blessed Mary’s mantle of modesty, making them more like the Blessed Virgin, in traditional depiction of her. The colour white also reminds us of Christ’s resurrection. All Missionaries of Charity nuns possess only two saris. The Missionaries of Charity nuns who take final vows wear white saris bordered with three blue lines, with a wider line on the edge of the fabric with Jesus on the cross pinned on the left shoulder. The Novice nuns wear completely white saris until they also take final vows.

“The sari allows the Sisters to feel poor amongst the poor, to identify themselves with the sick, with the children, with the old and destitute. The Missionaries of Charity share, in their way of dressing, the way of life of the poorest in the world.”²

Mother Teresa

The image I have of Mother Teresa wearing a white sari and cuddling a homeless child who came to visit her had always lingered in my mind. It had such a healing power. A power to eliminate the physical and the material and to respond to an open hand of a homeless child, a sick, dying, or lonely person. And now I was on the way to a world of poverty and hunger to serve along with Mother Teresa herself, the poorest of the poor.

The noise of the plane engines lowering down disturbed my thoughts. We were about to land at London's Heathrow Airport from where I would continue my journey to Delhi. It seemed that the rain helped our plane glide along the runway to a stop before the gate. All the passengers flying to United Kingdom departed the plane leaving on board only those who were continuing their flight to India. Even though the plane was getting refueled I stayed on board, since it would be complicated to carry my large, fragile, framed poem around. The poem was very valuable to me because it captured the essence of Mother Teresa's work, (as per critics) and I was about to hand the framed version to Mother personally. Asked by a stewardess to share the poem with her, I gladly read my created verses. As others were touched by the verses of the poem, Amvapali Krishna, one of the stewardesses said that she saw Mother Teresa on one of the flights to New York and that Mother Teresa has the delicacy of an Indian woman. According to what I have learned about their perception of delicacy, and considering the fact that the compliment came from an Indian woman, I found it to be a very profound statement.

*"I feel Indian to the most profound depths of my soul."*²
Mother Teresa

Once the section of the plane where I was seated was refreshed, I returned to my seat. Still to remain at the London's Heathrow Airport for another hour, I could not help but to think of Her Royal Highness, Diana, Princess of Wales. I thought of the empathy she had for the children, which was also evident through affection for her own sons, Prince William and Prince Harry. At that time I could not even imagine the tragic car accident in the tunnel along Seine River, beneath the Pont de l'Alma bridge in Paris, in 1997, that would have made her a late Diana by the time I would have finalized this book. It is still hard to believe that her life was heartlessly razed by cold steel.

There are many women in the world who have selflessly given of themselves to other people, such as Princess Diana. Diana helped those who needed to be treated with more dignity, especially those considered in some ways outcasts of society. During some of her visits, she even served the unprivileged, such at Nemazuva Child feeding centre, in July 1993. This Centre, near Masvingo, in Zimbabwe, is still run by the Red Cross. Princess Diana worked for the Red Cross until her death. She had her own way of drawing the world's attention to the places of misery.

As the royal patron or the president of some one hundred twenty different charities, Princess Diana touched our hearts by her compassion and love for the unprivileged and sick, and by offering them encouragement and support. She had an incredible ability to focus world's attention on crucial issues, such as the danger caused by the existence of ten million land mines around the world.

Diana's charitable work and mine, crossed on the bombarded grounds of Bosnia. Since 1993, Diana was involved in providing therapy for children wounded by bomb explosions during the war in Bosnia. Similarly, through fundraising events and the art of my writing - I donated a volume of my books of poetry "The Old Hearth" for the same cause - I helped in raising the funds for the orphans of the war of Croatia and Bosnia/Herzegovina. Some of

the funds were used to obtain artificial aids for these unfortunate children.

I will never forget how Diana cared for little Irma, an eight-year-old Bosnian girl who was seriously wounded when a bomb exploded during the fighting in 1993, leaving her, and many others paralyzed. Nor, will I forget, how Diana phoned daily to check on Mother Teresa's condition, while Mother Teresa was critically ill in Woodland's Hospital after her cardiac arrest, in August of 1996.

Diana adored Mother Teresa, and she had planned to visit her in hospital. This was never realized, since Mother Teresa's condition worsened and consequently she could not receive her.

In 1997, Diana took a lead to bring worlds attention to land mines and to have them banned worldwide. This eventually led to a Conference in Oslo. In July of 1997, after an advice from the Foreign office, Diana went to Sarajevo, Bosnia, to visit with some of the wounded children she cared for, and to meet with the leaders to carry her mission further by the banning of land mines. Sadly though, this tending to the wounded Bosnian children turned out to be Princess Diana's last official engagement.

How captivating and marvelous a moment it was, when Mother Teresa and Princess Diana met in July of 1997, in New York, which was the last time they saw each other.

A Dream In a Marble

Before leaving for India, my Indian friend and colleague Jessica told me, while helping me select and pack a proper wardrobe, that for someone to visit India, and not see the Taj Mahal would be like seeing nothing. To my advantage, without having planned it thus, the flight arrangements worked out perfectly in a way that set me free in Delhi, for a day, just enough time to visit the Old Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra.

Upon arrival at Delhi Airport, I had my first shocking encounter with the homeless as they hosted me begging for money. I gave away my first rupees, a practice that would continue in Calcutta, until I gave away all the cash I had, and was forced to run up my MasterCard.

“If sometimes our poor people have had to die of starvation, it is not because God didn't care for them, but because you and I didn't give, were not instruments of love in the hands of God, to give them that bread, to give them that clothing; because we did not recognize him, when once more Christ came in distressing dis-guise-in the hungry man, in the lonely man, in the homeless child, and seeking for shelter.”¹

Mother Teresa

Too fearful to take a taxi alone, I paired up with Rose Rai, a lady from Delhi, whom I met during the flight. I arrived at the hotel “Central” at 2:00 a.m. The assistance I received and the interior of the reception area of the hotel “Central” exceeded my expectations. I asked if a bus service was available from the hotel to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal. I was delighted to find out that a taxi could take me to Agra at 6 o'clock in the morning.

My room was on the second floor and although it was air conditioned, it felt stuffy. The wall along the bed was covered with what seemed as a combination of mould, mildew and Nicotine. However, I was not about to ask the attendants to scrub it off, even though, I could not sleep at

all. The next few hours I spent writing about my trip so far, which turned out to be quite a chore since the lamp would not work without frequently receiving a good shake.

As the rays of dawn joyfully danced in from the seamless sky, I walked to a large window. A bird that had found refuge on the trim of the window, disturbed by my sudden appearance, flew for its life. Through the window I could see spacious fields covered with green blankets, inviting me into their freedom. Some tall trees stood proudly while the bushes hid in the misery. In the middle of the field there stood a shack, and in the yard - a playground for children awaiting for the touch of their little, busy feet.

The children always had a very soft spot in Mother Teresa's heart. Her love for children was boundless. She frequently used to repeat: "Every child that you do not want to have, I will take it." I was grateful that I was on the way to take care of some of her children, love them and maybe add one more colourful thread of hope to their rainbow.

The horizon was still very peaceful. Delhi holding on its arms grey and white skies. If I had more time in Delhi, I would have taken a trip on India's "Palace on Wheels" - a tourist train which originated in 1982, and reopened in September, 1995. The Palace on Wheels connects northern India's "Golden Triangle" - the Delhi-Jaipur-Agra. With its fourteen saloons, containing four coupes with two beds in each, showers, wardrobes, piped music, ornamental lights, and with two restaurants named Maharaja and the Maharani - the King and the Queen, this would be a trip of luxury.

A journey through Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bharatpur, Agra and Delhi, offers a delightful opportunity to visit numerous palaces and monuments, attend cultural events and even take a boat ride to the Lake Palace in Udaipur. However, my destination was "elsewhere" and "the stations of my journey" were yet to be discovered. In the meantime, I decided only to visit the Taj Mahal.

My cab driver Krishan Komar, his younger brother and I left for Agra at 6 a.m. Without any sleep and so early in the morning, it took me a while to get used to the noise of the cab's engine. I also had a hard time getting used to the wheel on the right side of the car. My driver, a young father of a little girl took his job very seriously, aiming to bring me safely to Agra. He drove on the left side of the road while passing on the right. I found him very capable of missing all the approaching and interestingly designed cars, trucks, bicycles, other moving objects, vendors with their heavy loads, open rickshaws bearing those who had no trouble paying for it, horses and dogs, and cows resting in the middle of the road.

As we drove by houses without roofs and tents, I got touched by the environment which was steeped in poverty. Some souls lived in these tents. I recognized a familiar smell of diesel. The cars that were passing by had so many passengers in them that I believe one had to shake it to fit in so many souls. I noticed very young people at work and women carrying baskets on their heads. There was life everywhere. Saint Martin High School's overcrowding back in Canada where I taught would not bother me this year.

Agra and Varanasi are located southeast of Delhi, in southern Uttar Pradesh. India's Sacred Temples, Ghats and Tombs, Agra, Khajuraho and Varanasi offer a glimpse of the country's monuments as well as an insight into India's spirituality. In the Sacred Temples one can feel ancient mysteries. You can hear xylophones being played without a presence of patalo, if you open yourself to it. India is such a mysterious land. It is romantic and fabled, truly a place of wonder.

In Agra, there are vendors everywhere selling just about anything a creative soul can make. They are persistent, but not detestable or aggressive. I am impressed with the beautiful saris, the

pillow cases, the rugs and kilims with their rich patterns. However, it was heartbreaking to see frail mothers begging for their babies' food and some of the worst cases of leprosy.

*"I try to give to the poor people for love what the rich could get for money. No, I wouldn't touch a leper for a thousand pounds; yet I willingly cure him for the love of God."*²

Mother Teresa

The foundation of Agra is attributed to Raja Badal Singh, around 1475 AD. The present city was first made its capital by the king Sikander Lodi, and gained its importance with the arrival of Mughals in 1526. Beside the Taj Mahal, this royal Mughal city has 20 other magnificent monuments, such as: the Agra Fort (built by emperor Akber in 1565 AD., which I visited), the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula, Sikandra-Tomb of Mughal emperor Akber, and others.

Agra is a very busy city with everyone doing something, or going somewhere. It reminded me of the drive on the inner lane around Charles De Gaulle's statue, in Paris. Once your vehicle starts to spiral on it, there is no way out.

The Taj Mahal also referred to as "The Known Palace" or "The Crown Palace" is a dream come true in marble, gold and ivory. The architectural glories of the two empires, the Ottoman and Byzantine, blended in one. The Taj Mahal is located on the Jumna river in the city of Agra, India.

The mausoleum is a part of a colossal complex comprising a main gateway, a huge garden, a mosque and a rest house, the actual tomb, as well as outer enclosures and walls. I was impressed by the unique contrast between the marble white facade of the mausoleum and the red sandstone of the outer buildings. Even though I do not concern myself with material things, this monument is a glorious, exquisite and breathtaking crown of love. The Taj Mahal is one of the world's most magnificent monuments - a monument of "an undying love", and a testimonial of the patience of Indian people. It was built by the Mughal emperor of India, Shah Jahal Muntaz Mahal (r.1628-1658), in the memory of his late wife Arjunand, who died while delivering their fourteenth child.

Mother Teresa fearlessly addressed the issue of abortion.

*"Nobody has a right to take someone else's life, since the life is a gift from God."*³ *Mother Teresa*

The Taj Mahal is a symbol of great love, and a tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood. From an architectural point of view, it is a great monument, a great Indian heritage, and also a historical pride of the late King. The beauty of Toronto's Caribana Carnival, London's Notting Hill festival and San Francisco Carnival has become consumed in the business and the splendor of colours at the entrance of the Taj Mahal.

According to the custom, I removed my shoes among countless other visitors, handed them to be placed in my shoe slot, collected a number and walked into this glorious Palace to pay the respect to both, the late King and his beloved wife. I joined the line up of the quiet souls who were already waiting to pay their respects.

Upon gathering the money for the entrance into the fenced room, before the secured resting space where their sarcophagus were placed, I patiently awaited my turn. Moved by it all, I paid my respects, thanked and walked away while listening to the echo of the past. I believe that as a tomb, it has no match on earth. It is a grandiose resting place.

There were many great Kings in Indian history, but Shah Jahal Muntaz Mahal was an Emperor who built many wonderful architectural buildings like the Romans did. I learned that he is considered Romanian, Faraon or Neron of India. I have never seen so much gold, marble or ivory in one place, nor the hand carved images which spread all the way up to the tower.

The Taj Mahal seems to give you a different feeling when you see it in the early morning, at sunset, at noon or in the moon light, and apparently, during a black moon. As you stand alone in the sunrise, the sun reflects on the start of the day. It gives you a feeling of happiness. It gives you strength. The moon light leaves you with romantic feelings. During a black moon, feelings of sadness and loneliness surface. It gives you a feeling that one day you too will be lost in the black moon. The Taj Mahal is a creation to feel the existence of life at different times in different moods. I understood from the inhabitants that three hundred and fifty years ago there was music coming with the sunrise at five o'clock from the Eastern Gate, which enhanced the quality of life. The South Gate was a colony for the labourers, whereas, the East Gate was designated for the high dignitaries.

Still barefooted, I toured both Gates and gazed at the Red Port, which, in the past, was used to protect the Taj Mahal's entrance from intruders coming along the river. The view was absolutely magnificent.

I have to admit that I was impressed with the efficiency of those who have found my sandals. I decided to rest a bit on the bench in front of the Taj Mahal. As I sat down, I remembered the picture of Princess Diana also sitting alone on this very bench in February, 1992, while visiting the Taj Mahal on her own.

Reflecting the beauty of the Taj Mahal, Mother Teresa showed love and devotion. She imprinted her own Taj Mahal in people left behind. She bequeathed us a living monument, not to be admired, but to be lived.

Holy Mess

The next morning around six a.m., I leave the hotel "Central". My taxi driver, the same one that had driven me safely to Agra, takes me to the Domestic flights Airport instead of the International one; luckily I have enough time to make a change.

The heat is already simmering around 90 degrees as I board a small Indian plane. However, after having spent 45 minutes in the overcrowded flying sauna, I am instructed along with the other passengers to take my luggage and follow the stewardess to board another plane, since our damaged plane cannot be repaired. I thanked the Lord that the damage did not occur while in the air. An hour and a half later I landed safely at "Indira Gandji International", in Calcutta.

Nothing could have prepared me for the real Calcutta, the home of the late Mother Teresa and the poorest of the poor; neither the readings about her work of grace and love, nor studying India's history, customs and religions. One has to experience it in order to understand it, and the wonderful souls with which Calcutta's streets are paved. Once, for a change, I believe in the importance of predictions, since they identify what I feel today; the tragedy and the joy.

While in the prepaid taxi as instructed by Mother Teresa, I welcome the change within me, and yet, I also become confused by it. I think of the tender nature which should ensure a safe environment and allow breathing space, however, this is not the case. In a wild swing of driving to miss the moving objects of the condensed traffic, my taxi driver knows exactly how to find his way through this mess, which the poor souls make holy. Everything animate is out here and

everyone that cannot move is out here trying to move. I am reminded of yesterday's five hour suicidal drive from Delhi to Agra on the way to visit the Taj Mahal. It is the second time since first touching the soil of India, a mysterious, magnificent, and spiritual land, that I ask the Lord to take my life and hold it in the "hollow of His hand." However, after the travelling experience from Delhi to Agra and back, my travelling paranoia changes shape.

The Lower Circular Road along which we are travelling perilously fast, is one of the busiest streets in Calcutta. It seems as though the rush hour of St. George, Utah, the congestion of 401 East Highway, Toronto, and the joy of bumper to bumper on the Hollywood Freeway, have blended into one. It appears to me that people ride anything that has wheels and drive anything that takes diesel. I have never seen so many inhabitants in one place and so many islands of people so close by. To count them would be as impossible as counting the islands of Maldiva Archipelago.

Despite this, the cheerfulness of New Year's Eve from New York's Times Square finds its way here, and endures on their faces throughout the year. I am impressed with the unusual designs of vehicles on the street. Autosaws designed for four are carrying up to six people. Damaged cabs, whose wreckage no one bothers to claim, emerge into the traffic. Steel buses without windows or doors have people hanging out because they do not fit inside. On such buses you can also see some of the rupeeless children hanging on to the back. The busy mosaic is enhanced with rickshaws pulled by wallahs who rise at four a.m. hoping to find someone to carry from one side of the city to another regardless of weather conditions such as monsoon rain, for merely 10 rupees (a quarter). As soon as our car slows down, or stops at traffic lights, homeless mothers, holding infants in their arms, beg for money. Indeed, it is heartbreaking to see them gesture for their babies' food.

Calcutta appears as the reality of predictions of visitors to Rome in the year 2000. The traffic is absolutely insane. I suppose only New York's Bell Air Hospital could absorb all this commotion. However, this is one time that I do not dream of refuge in Croatia's Dubrovnik, a "Diamond of the Sea", or in Spain's San Sebastian, a "Pearl of the Sea". I have Calcutta to learn from.

Calcutta's streets tell stories. They are places of miracles and marvels. The logging paths are swept by wisdom. Puddles are filled with gravel that glitter like the edges of hope. Anything you need can be bought on the streets: leather goods, handcrafts, woodcarvings, hand-made silk saris, and other creations. Indian people are wonderful souls and besides being very spirited, they are exceptionally creative, fearless, and inventive.

You will not find sheer beaded jackets or dazzling sequin embroidered evening gowns by Giorgio Armani that flourish in the streets. Do not search for Catherine Walker's, Victor Edenstein's or Bruce Oldfield's royal gowns. Here, one can only dream of the late Gianni Versace's evening wear and hot and feisty mini dresses. Donna Karen's and Yves Saint Laurent's iridescent leather and other magnificent creations are out of sight. There is no sound of Gucci's high stilettos, lethal spike heels, or Chanel slingbacks. The shoes from Lobb may be obliterated from mind as well. Karl Lager's forage art is left at Chanel and Cloe. You will not encounter crystal evening clutches by Davis, or Casadei twotone patent spectators by Browns. They are not toting evening purses from the "House of Ivana", or rectangular, top handle leather bags with a gilded cane motif from the French designer house of Christian Dior. Yet, it seems that all the colourful alleys of Spain's Las Ramblas with Galiano's spring collection stretch along the streets.

There are so many ostentatious choices and rich colours for only one option - wear whatever little you have, or can obtain. However, they run a gamut of styles of their own sophisticated fashion. You can see sheer fabrics over cotton saris, embroidered silk and soft flowing tops over pants. The American stars' fashion statements would be free here from Mr. Earl Blackwell's fashion lists. Fashion did not get them on their feet. Reality did. However, the most glitter radiates from the people's souls and from the joy in their hearts.

Looking at their humble circumstance, one can understand the possibility of being prone to depression and pessimism; yet, it seems that they do not invite emotional loneliness into their quarters, and that they do not desire a privileged life. They are moulded on the plateau of their own distinct protocol and numerous clichés, which made them become so soft around the edges. They have their own "gourmet delis" with intrusion of spices on the streets. Calcutta's inhabitants appear very fit, even though their fitness can not be credited to fitness centres, body massages, body wraps and facials at the spa, or to body sculpting classes. They are born into healthy diets and, in time, became experts in natural remedies. Looking at some of them, I am faced with the irony of the strife that some of the ladies out west experience, while trying to look like toothpicks on Pablo Picasso's paintings.

Here you can feel the therapeutic touch of the contemporary version of ancient healing. The possessions were not handed to them on a silver platter, yet, they were blessed with a privilege to find out if they can, indeed, make it on their own.

My mind takes a walk along the luxurious shops of Passeig de Grazia and then along New York's Fifth Avenue to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to exhibit some of the two hundred pieces of Cartiers collection located in homeless souls and discover so much beauty and wealth residing within. I feel magnetized by it. Inspired by inner riches, my thoughts search for other women around the world who have contributed through their own inner riches in various spheres of influence, just to mention a few.

My thoughts travel to the King's World in Chicago, to admire the constant, priceless efforts of American TV icon, Oprah Winfrey, who is working very hard to enrich the lives of millions of viewers. Besides inspiring and empowering viewers' lives, and helping them to arrive at the conclusion, "I did not see it that way before," she is improving and increasing their levels of reading and general knowledge. Oprah's remarkable charity work through Angel Network proves how much good resides within.

One can also draw from the enormous talent, goodness, and allegiance of graceful Susan Sarandon, and from her generosity as she donates to the charities or tries to improve the living conditions of the Indian women.

I also respect Ivana Trump, a business icon, because of her hard work and perseverance, and her contributions to charities. It was through the Juvenile Diabetes cause in 1992, that we first met, also, Kathie Lee Gifford's efforts to improve the condition of the children and help the sick ones. I am impressed with Halli Berry's beauty that comes from inside, and some of the best qualities of Maria Shriver, her strive, dedication and positive attitude, as well, as the talent and vigor of the proclaimed poet/writer Maya Angelou.

We can also draw from the devotion of Goldie Hawn, the courage of anchorwoman Peggy Finnegan, the honour of the late Jackie Kennedy-Onassis, the grace of Her Royal Highness, the late Princess of Wales, and from the remembrance of charisma and simplicity of the late Caroline Kennedy-Bisset.

I often think of the courage of Kim Phue, who ran for life from her burned village in Vietnam, on June 8, 1972. The picture of her running as a tiny, nine year old naked girl, as her

clothes were burned by napalm, seared itself forever in my mind. I am glad, that I had the opportunity to meet her and talk to her as she addressed St. Martin's graduating class, in 1998.

One can draw strength from the example of the late Indira Gandhi who was the first women Prime Minister of India, and one of the first women leaders to lead a Government in the world. She provided a strong Government for India and helped stabilize democracy in India. Through the marriage to Firoz (a Parsi by background), she proved that not only interracial, but also interreligious harmony can coexist.

We can also draw from the crusade for justice and equality of Coretta Scott King, as she continues an "undying dream", leaving her mark on history's peace rallies, interracial coalitions and human rights.

I feel the agony of super model Waris Dirie, as she runs for days through the desert, as a thirteen-year old girl, after surviving her painful childhood to escape from her native Somalia, and her father, who wanted to sell her to a sixty-year old man for three camels. Her struggle for the human rights of African women and the women in the Middle East, is very commendable.

I am inspired by the talent, stability and devotion of beautiful Sophia Loren, also, by Tina Turner's strength to stand up against abuse to flourish and succeed in a new life. One can draw from the persistence of hard-working Susan Lucci, and try to capture the wit of Ekaterina Gordeeva.

One can also draw from the example of Margaret Trudeau as she provides the villages in Africa with drinking water, from the strife of tennis queen Iva Majoli, and from the wisdom of Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers. I also think of the mercy mission of Audrey Hepburn, Gloria Steinmen's spirited message about equality and self-esteem, Aung San Suu Kyi's message of peace (a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1991), about dedication and endurance of the former First Lady of America, Hilary Clinton, as she strives to improve medical and other conditions, especially those of children, and Elizabeth Dole's leading role in the Red Cross, and yours, in your own unique way. As for me, I am on the way to meet Mother Teresa who is an inspiration to all of us.

The souls on Calcutta's streets appear very happy to have invited one another into their space. You cannot sense any perplexing and ambivalent feelings in their relationships. Even the sounds of the commotion are engaged in a harmony. I get struck by the defenceless melancholy of the human circumstance; however, this is the time when, because of our humility, it is easy to confuse gratitude with misplaced guilt. We should help others because we respect them, not because we feel sorry for them. It is here that you can take "The View from The Edge" of the world. Calcutta's homeless are the world's outcry.

"Today, the same Christ is in people who are unwanted, unemployed, uncared for, hungry, naked, and homeless. They seem useless to the state and to society; nobody has time for them. It is you and I as Christians, worthy of the love of Christ if our love is true, who must find them, and help them; they are there for the finding. "There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of the work.

*This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in - that we do it for God, for Christ, and that's why we try to do it as beautifully as possible."*¹
Mother Teresa

I felt perilously close to the homeless I observed. I marveled at their survival.

Yet, in the heart of Calcutta there are thousands of people on the waiting list to join the Tollygunge Club, an elite club for the rich, with all the luxuries of tennis clubs, Givency tennis outfits and hair-do's flown over from New York, and with golf courses and riding stables.

In this mess which I deem holy, you may even find the unmarked door to the empty parts of your soul that mourn the painful past, or a safe passage through the life's maze to your settled mind. After only one encounter with the streets of Calcutta and India's divine poor, you may discover a new significance to life.

Calcutta's streets in this most populated city in the world are unfolding dramas with defenseless children being trapped behind the locked gates of poverty. I feel like composing my own "Strange Fruit" protest song. I cannot understand how we can stay happy in one part of the world, while so many people suffer in the other parts, regardless as to whether the suffering was caused by economic poverty, political, or educational deprivation.

Calcutta is a living message of the Gospel, since the children are our Gospel of life. The thousands of impoverished and malnourished ones are God's most beautiful creations. What really matters in life is hidden under this colourful facade of recurring nightmares of poverty, with twelve million Bengali peasants as victims.

Calcutta is a city of both anguish and solemnity. It is a place that offers the charm of a by-gone era. Calcutta's streets are a magic garden on canvas. It makes me feel like relocating Rome's Trevi Fountain here to be able to throw coins into it to assure my return.

By the time my driver reaches Mother Teresa's home, Calcutta has already indulged itself upon me.



Mother Teresa with Ana Ganza

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