

Mother Teresa

- **Occupation:** Catholic Nun
- **Born:** August 26, 1910 in Uskub (now in Macedonia)
- **Died:** September 5, 1997 in Calcutta, India
- **Best known for:** Fighting for the rights of the sick and helpless



Biography:

Mother Teresa was a humanitarian. This means she did things to help out other people. Her entire life was fully devoted to helping the poor, the sick, the needy, and the helpless.

Where did Mother Teresa grow up?

Mother Teresa was born in Uskub, Ottoman Empire on August 26, 1910. This city is now called Skopje and is the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. Her birth name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Her father died when she was eight and she was raised by her mother.

Agnes grew up in the Roman Catholic Church and decided to devote her life to God at an early age. When she turned 18, Agnes joined the Sisters of Loreto to become a missionary to India. Before she could go to India, she had to learn English. She spent a year in Ireland learning to speak English at the Loreto Abby.

A year later, Agnes began her missionary work in Darjeeling, India. She learned the local language, Bengali, and taught at the local school. In 1931, she took her vows as a nun and chose the name Teresa. She taught for many years in India becoming the headmistress at a school in eastern Calcutta.

What did Mother Teresa do?

When she was 36 years old, Mother Teresa felt the call from God to help the poor of India. She received some basic medical training and then set out to help the sick and needy. This wasn't an easy task in 1948 India. She had very little support and, while trying to feed and help the poorest of the poor, she herself was constantly hungry and even had to beg for food.

Missionaries of Charity

In 1950, Mother Teresa formed a group within the Catholic Church called the Missionaries of Charity. She described the purpose of the Missionaries of Charity as an organization that would take care of "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".

Wow! Mother Teresa had some lofty goals. If you consider that she herself was starving

only a few years earlier, she accomplished some amazing things. When she first started the Missionaries of Charity there were only 13 members. Today, the group has over 4,000 members who care for people all over the world.

It wasn't an easy task to build such an organization and to keep the focus on the poorest people. She worked almost up until her death on September 5, 1997.

Fun facts about Mother Teresa

- Mother Teresa has been beatified by the Catholic Church. This is a step on the way to becoming a Saint. She is now called Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.
- She never saw her mother or sister again after leaving home to become a missionary.
- Albania's international airport is named after her, the Aeroporti Nene Tereza.
- She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Rather than have the traditional Nobel honor banquet, she asked that the money for the banquet be donated to the poor of India.
- She once traveled through a war zone to rescue 37 children from the front lines.
- She received numerous awards for all her charity work including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from [President Ronald Reagan](#).